



SERBIA



2025-2027 IFRC network country plan

Multi-Year Funding Requirement **CHF 2.2M**

17 February 2025

In support of the Red Cross of Serbia



186

National Society branches



186

National Society local units



1,090

National Society staff



37,178

National Society volunteers

People to be reached



15,000

Climate and environment



3,000

Disasters and crises



35,000

Health and wellbeing



10,000

Migration and displacement



30,000

Values, power and inclusion

IFRC network multi-year focus

Longer-term needs

- Disaster preparedness
- Climate change adaptation

Capacity development

- Humanitarian diplomacy
- National Society development

Key country data links

INFORM Climate Change Risk Index **medium**

Human Development Index rank **65**

World Bank Population figure **6.6M**

World Bank Population below poverty line **20%**

Funding requirements

2025

2026**

2027**

**Projected funding requirements

Total 978,000 CHF

Total 942,000 CHF

Total 281,00 CHF

Through Host National Society

→ **200,000 CHF**

Through Participating National Societies

→ **178,000 CHF**

Through the IFRC

600,000 CHF

Through Host National Society

→ **220,000 CHF**

Through Participating National Societies

→ **112,000 CHF**

Through the IFRC

610,000 CHF

Through Host National Society

→ **220,000 CHF**

Through the IFRC

61,000 CHF

HNS Breakdown

IFRC Breakdown

HNS Breakdown

IFRC Breakdown

HNS Breakdown

IFRC Breakdown

Longer term needs

Longer term needs

Longer term needs

Longer term needs

Longer term needs

Longer term needs

100,000 CHF

Disasters & crises

150,000 CHF

Climate & environment

110,000 CHF

Disasters & crises

150,000 CHF

Climate & environment

110,000 CHF

Disasters & crises

150,000 CHF

Climate & environment

100,000 CHF

Health & wellbeing

100,000 CHF

Disasters & crises

110,000 CHF

Health & wellbeing

100,000 CHF

Disasters & crises

110,000 CHF

Health & wellbeing

100,000 CHF

Disasters & crises

70,000 CHF

Health & wellbeing

80,000 CHF

Health & wellbeing

80,000 CHF

Health & wellbeing

100,000 CHF

Migration & displacement

100,000 CHF

Migration & displacement

100,000 CHF

Migration & displacement

180,000 CHF

Values, power & inclusion

180,000 CHF

Values, power & inclusion

180,000 CHF

Values, power & inclusion

See back page for explanatory note on funding requirements

Participating National Societies bilateral support for 2025

National Society name	Funding Requirement	Climate	Disasters and crises	Health and wellbeing	Migration	Values, power and inclusion	Enabling local actors
Austrian Red Cross	98,000		●	●			
Swiss Red Cross	80,000				●		

Total Funding requirement **CHF 178,000**

Hazards



Floods



Earthquakes



Storm



Epidemics



Drought



Population movement

Participating National Societies

Austrian Red Cross

Italian Red Cross*

Swiss Red Cross

**National Societies which have contributed only multilaterally through the IFRC in the first half of 2024.*

IFRC Appeal codes

Long-term needs:

MAARS002

NATIONAL SOCIETY PROFILE

The **Red Cross of Serbia** was founded in February 1876. It is the largest and oldest humanitarian organization in the Republic of Serbia and was recognized by the International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) in June 1876. The National Society was admitted to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) in its current form in 1919. The programmes of the Red Cross of Serbia are implemented through its strong volunteer base and staff in collaboration with its donors and partners. By 2022, the National Society reached 859,000 people through its long-term services and development programmes and 197,000 people through disaster response and early recovery programmes over time.

The position of the Red Cross of Serbia is defined by the Law on the Red Cross of Serbia, which outlines its auxiliary role to public authorities in the humanitarian field. Public authorities at all levels must support the work of the Red Cross. Other laws also affirm its special status in various areas.

The auxiliary role of the Red Cross of Serbia involves disaster risk reduction, preparedness and response including evacuation, shelter, search and rescue, distribution of emergency items, water supply, sanitation, recovery support, first aid training and restoring family links. It complies with national laws and the international Red Cross Red Crescent Movement regulations on international humanitarian operations.

The Red Cross of Serbia develops its annual plans based on five main strategic goals set by its Strategic Plan 2022-2026 as follows:

- Continue with further development (transformation) of the Red Cross of Serbia into a modern, strong organization able to respond to humanitarian challenges
- Strengthen organizational and community capacities to respond to basic life needs and dignified life of the most vulnerable population, improve work with marginalized groups and promote social inclusion
- Improve organizational and community capacities to prepare and respond to health risks, crises, chronic non-communicable diseases, epidemics and influence the improvement of health status of the population
- Improve capacities to contribute to disaster risk reduction and emergency management at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels with the aim of reducing harmful impacts, saving lives and emergency response to accidents, early recovery of the most vulnerable and building the resilience of local communities to respond to challenges
- Continue to promote the protection of humanitarian values, fundamental principles of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement and international humanitarian law

In 2022, the Red Cross of Serbia reached more than 800,000 people through its long-term services and development programmes and more than 190,000 people through its disaster response and early recovery programmes.



Map of the regional branches of the Red Cross of Serbia

The map does not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of the IFRC or the National Society concerning the legal status of a territory or its authorities

IFRC NETWORK ACTION

JOINT SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

The Republic of Serbia is a landlocked country in Southeastern and Central Europe, situated at the crossroads of the Pannonian Basin and the Balkans. The terrain of the central part of the country consists chiefly of hills traversed by rivers. Mountains dominate the southern third of Serbia, making [floods and earthquakes](#) the highest risk related to the geographical and typological conditions of the country.

Serbia was been ranked among the top four European countries in terms of carbon emissions per unit of gross domestic product (GDP) at [purchasing power parity](#) (PPP), being 2.5–3.5 times more carbon intense than other European Union countries. In Western Balkan cities, life expectancy has been reduced by 13–16 months due to air pollution. The premature deaths of individuals under age 65 years account for approximately 20 per cent of years of life lost due to air pollution exposure. Climate change is also likely to increase the spread and intrusion of new vector-borne diseases, including an increased risk of [West Nile Virus in Serbia](#) due to a rise in temperature.

The ageing of the population and the exodus of the workforce continue to be major drivers of social change influencing health and wellbeing in the country. Since the beginning of the 1990s, Serbia's death rate has continuously exceeded its

birth rate. Additionally, it is estimated that [300,000 people left Serbia](#) during the 1990s, out of whom 20 per cent had higher education. Currently, the ratio of educated people among those who emigrate is not estimated to be much different from those who [stay behind](#). The latest estimates are that by 2040, 24 per cent of the population of Serbia will be over 65 while 7.4 per cent will be over 80 ([this share was 4.6 per cent in 2021](#)).

According to data from the [World Bank](#), Serbia has rebounded strongly from the impact of the global pandemic, with growth reaching 7.4 per cent in 2021. After a strong recovery in 2021, however, inflation and the Europe-wide negative impacts of the international armed conflict between Russia and Ukraine have caused an economic slowdown. Domestically, inflation has increased significantly, with adverse effects on the incomes of the poor and vulnerable. Over the medium term, the Serbian economy is expected to slow down and return to pre-pandemic growth levels after 2024 at the earliest. The outlook depends on the international armed conflict, further economic shocks, and the implementation of the [domestic reform agenda](#).

Serbia is among the European countries with the [highest risk of poverty](#) and social exclusion and among those with the highest social inequality. Children are the part of the population most at risk, especially those who belong to marginalized groups. Children in Serbia might be at higher risk due to factors such as low socioeconomic status, inadequate healthcare access, and limited educational opportunities. Malnutrition, exposure to violence, and unstable living conditions can also contribute



The Red Cross of Serbia scaled up their support for hospitals and medical systems through the provision of tents and containers for the examination of patients, 15 November 2020. (Photo: The Red Cross of Serbia)

to their vulnerability. Marginalized groups in Serbia encompass among others ethnic minorities (e.g., Roma), refugees, and internally displaced persons. People with disabilities, especially those in rural areas, encounter challenges in accessing services. Low-income families lack proper healthcare.

Regionally, the concept of the Open Balkans is a key part of Serbia's political narrative, as an economic and political initiative that includes Albania, North Macedonia, and Serbia. The initiative aims at increasing trade and cooperation as

well as improving bilateral relations between the states. More broadly, within Europe Serbia's primary strategic goal is EU membership. In this context, full membership negotiations with the EU started on 14 December 2015. The political and economic reforms carried out within the scope of the EU membership process constitute the driving force of the country's social and economic development. Beyond Europe, Serbia has traditionally maintained good relations with partners from both the West and the East, with the USA, but also with the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



Climate and environment

The Republic of Serbia has a moderate continental climate with July as the warmest month, and January as the coldest. However, climate scenarios predict rising temperatures in Serbia in the coming years. Under [IPCC/SRES scenarios](#), temperatures will rise by 0.5-0.9 °C in the period 2011-2040 and 1.8-2.0 °C in the period [2041-2070](#). There will be increasingly frequent and longer droughts and more frequent wildfires.

At the national level, total greenhouse gas emissions are dominated by the energy sector (80 per cent). Agriculture is in the second place, followed by waste and industrial processes. According to [Serbia's Climate Risk Profile](#), major climate stressors are expected to impact the region. If some of the worst-case scenarios come true, [countries in the Western Balkans](#) region can expect a warming of up to 3°C by mid-century, combined with increased precipitation, frequency, and duration of heat waves and droughts.

The rising temperatures and increased heat waves result in increases in diseases transmitted by mosquitos, as well as increased illness and mortality because of heat strokes. In the agriculture sector as well, rising temperatures will decrease yield in important crops such as maize and fruits, with increased intensity and frequency of heavy rainfall events causing fungal diseases and pests affecting grain and fruit produce, and increased drought conditions and dry spell reducing soil fertility.

According to IQAir's "[2023 World Air Quality Report](#)", which aggregated air quality data for over 4,000 cities globally, Serbia ranked as the 43rd most polluted country worldwide (pollution). Serbia's air pollution stems from a range of sources, including Serbia's reliance on lignite and coal-fuelled power stations, in addition, solid fuels (such as coal and wood) are frequently used to heat homes. Emissions from an ageing transport

fleet, industrial activities, waste dump sites and agricultural emissions significantly add to the problem.

Soil degradation in the Republic of Serbia is mainly driven by land conversion, abandonment of agricultural fields, and overexploitation of soil in agriculture. Climate change exacerbates the degradation process by triggering or accelerating natural soil degradation. Erosion is also a major contributor to soil degradation in Serbia. Deforestation is also a factor in [soil degradation in Serbia](#). The municipal waste management system in Serbia is still in its initial phase of development, dominated by waste disposal in unsanitary landfills/dump sites and illegal landfills without prior selection or treatment. Illegal landfills for municipal waste are often put on fire with [little or no concern for the environment](#).

The Ministry of Environmental Protection is responsible for [climate change on a national level](#) and for reporting under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The Republic of Serbia has ratified the UNFCCC, as well as the [Kyoto Protocol](#) to the UNFCCC and the [Doha Amendment](#) to the Kyoto Protocol. By adopting the [Paris Agreement](#), Serbia had committed to contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions on a global level in the future. Due to the ratification of this relevant international agreement, and to fulfil its obligations from [Chapter 27 Environment and Climate Change of the EU accession](#), the Republic of Serbia adopted the [Law on Climate Change in 2021](#) and established the National Council for Climate Change, adopted the [Low-Carbon Development Strategy and Action Plan](#), and began the development of a programme of adaptation to changing climate.

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

The Red Cross of Serbia is part of the IFRC [Global Climate Resilience Programme](#), which aims to foster an unprecedented scale-up in locally led, climate-smart, disaster risk reduction and adaptation efforts to prevent and reduce climate-related

disaster impacts, and build community-level climate resilience. The programme aims to support 500 million people in 100 of the most climate-vulnerable countries, focusing on the least supported and marginalized communities. This holistic, multi-year programmatic approach consists of four operational pillars: (1) scaling up climate-smart disaster risk reduction, anticipatory action and preparedness; (2) reducing the public health impacts of climate change; (3) addressing climate displacement; (4) enabling climate-resilient livelihoods and ecosystem services.

The Red Cross of Serbia has signed the [Climate and Environment charter](#) and therefore committed to scaling up its responses to the consequences of climate change. Besides this, the Governing board of the Red Cross of Serbia has adopted the Strategic orientation on climate change and climate action in 2022 and is committed to mitigating the current and future impact of climate change on the most vulnerable individuals and communities, supporting people to adapt and face the consequences and improve the adaptation to climate change and strengthen its contribution to the preservation of the environment. This complements the state's efforts in the climate change and climate action domain since they are mainly directed towards adaptation while the current state focus is towards mitigation and decrease of CO2 emissions according to its commitments undertaken by adopting the Paris Agreement.

The Red Cross of Serbia focuses on the directions set by its strategic document and aims to:

- Improve its capacities for enhanced response to humanitarian needs and help people to adapt to the impacts of the climate and environmental crisis
- Improve existing and develop additional programmes and activities for the most vulnerable groups that are at risk of climate change to assist their adaptation and mitigation approaches especially focusing on engaging children and youth at the local level
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions of its activities in line with the broader understanding of the “do no harm” principle
- Develop an approach for adapting and defining climate-smart programmes and projects



Disasters and crises

For real-time information on emergencies, see the IFRC GO page: [Serbia](#).

Serbia is highly susceptible to a variety of natural hazards, with significant impacts on agriculture and rural development. The country is ranked 124th by [INFORM](#), making it one of the most exposed and vulnerable countries in the Western Balkans.

Planned activities in 2025

- Implement [early warning systems](#), raise awareness of climate and environmental risks, as well as develop a [forecast-based financing](#) approach
- Improve understanding of heat waves and their consequences on individuals and communities in urban areas
- Raise awareness and conduct behavioural change activities focusing on the most vulnerable groups such as older people, babies, children and youth, and people with disabilities
- Develop, adapt and contextualize climate action in children and youth programmes using local knowledge and practices and globally developed approaches
- Minimize its carbon footprint and any adverse environmental impacts resulting from its operations
- Improve waste management including management of electronic waste
- Adopt [sustainable methods](#) of organizing events, meetings, seminars, and training to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transportation and waste

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC supports the Red Cross of Serbia in collaborating with key partners, including participating National Societies, IFRC reference centres, hubs, and labs. This partnership supports the priorities of the National Society by providing expertise and resources. The IFRC offers technical guidance, training, and coordination assistance to ensure effective strategy implementation. Participating National Societies contribute experience, resources, and volunteers, bolstering emergency response and community-based programmes. The [IFRC reference centres](#), hubs, and labs bring specialized knowledge, aiding in disaster management, health initiatives, and innovation.

The primary risks include floods, earthquakes, epidemics, and droughts. Over the past three years, Serbia has faced [numerous disasters and crises](#), including epidemics, floods, droughts, and technological incidents.

Poverty is a significant risk factor in Serbia, with [21.2 per cent of the population at risk of poverty](#), particularly in central and

southern regions where about 30 per cent of the population faces financial distress. This economic vulnerability severely limits their capacity to cope with disasters, especially multi-hazard emergencies such as the combination of COVID-19 and floods. Food security remains a pressing issue in Serbia. Factors such as affordability, availability, food quality, safety, natural resources, and resilience to adverse climate conditions all contribute to this ranking. UN data indicate that spending on agriculture has decreased relative to its contribution to GDP since the early 2000s.

Decreasing water quality and insufficient water purification ability increase the risk of adverse climate change impacts on water availability, due to extreme events such as droughts, large precipitation amounts and flood events, as well as the increasing summer season dryness trend. Each year, Serbia contends with natural disasters triggered by extreme weather events.

The National Disaster Risk Reduction Platform, managed by the Sector for Emergency Management under the Ministry of Interior, aligns with United Nations recommendations on Disaster Risk Reduction and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. Sector for Emergency Management is also a focal point for the EU Civil Protection Mechanism and is legally responsible for enhancing the nation's capacity to reduce risks, respond to emergencies, and recover from disasters. However, the sector for Emergency Management currently lacks a central command and control facility to integrate all aspects of disaster management, from risk management to decision-making during emergency responses.

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

The Red Cross of Serbia has adopted the Law on Fire Protection, a National Strategy for Emergency Response, and a Fire Protection Strategy, in addition to the law on emergency situations. A primary goal of the Red Cross of Serbia is to improve capacities to contribute to disaster risk reduction and emergency management at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels with the aim of reducing harmful impacts, saving lives, and emergency response to accidents and disasters, early recovery of the most vulnerable, and building the resilience of local communities to respond to challenges and problems themselves.

The strategic goals of the Red Cross of Serbia are to:

- Improve capacities to contribute to disaster risk reduction and emergency management at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels
- Reduce harmful impacts, saving lives and emergency response to accidents and disasters, early recovery of the most vulnerable and building the resilience of local communities to respond to challenges and problems themselves

- Increase the capacity of staff and volunteers to support the mental health resilience of the affected population by following mental health in emergencies and protecting and supporting staff and volunteers' mental health and psychosocial wellbeing so they can respond safely and effectively
- Integrate mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) in all activities and training programmes for volunteers and staff
- Improve disaster management systems that contribute to effective disaster response in the country at all operational and coordination levels internationally
- Strengthen operation and coordination capacities for disaster preparedness and response, including water rescue and mountain rescue
- Build a culture of local community safety, with reduced risk of disasters and reduced number of drownings and injuries in the mountains

Planned activities in 2025

- Formalize and strengthen effective coordination, information sharing, and mutual support in case of emergencies on municipal, national level and cross-border level
- Coordinate cluster-based training, cross border cooperation, engagement, and joint proposal development
- Provide support in renewing the technical and logistic capacity of the Red Cross of Serbia as well as develop contingency planning
- Increase use of digital tools and AI, develop real-time information and analytics systems, pre-disaster mapping of needs/vulnerabilities, cross-border, and multi-stakeholder tools
- Scale up local use of the X-stock platform and expand support to existing online platforms for disaster preparedness online training

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC supports the Red Cross of Serbia in collaborating with partners to address disaster-related priorities within the disasters and crises sector. The IFRC offers continued technical expertise, guidance, and resources to assist the Red Cross of Serbia in creating effective disaster response strategies and programmes. The IFRC will guide the National Society in digitalization in disaster preparedness and response to ensure quick response and optimize the use of human and other resources. Since 2020, IFRC supported the National Society with five DREF operations to respond to these natural disasters.



Serbia faces a significant public health challenge due to the increased prevalence of chronic non-communicable diseases. Diseases of the heart, blood vessels, and malignant tumours accounted for 70.6 per cent of all causes of death in 2023, with circulatory system diseases responsible for almost half 49.7 per cent of all deaths.

In the period from 2014 to 2023, the general mortality rate in Serbia increased by 3.2 per cent, with an increase in the mortality rate from diabetes and malignant tumours, but also a decrease in the mortality rate from injuries, poisoning, diseases of the heart and blood vessels and obstructive lung diseases.

A quarter of the population of Serbia experienced the need for professional help due to mental health difficulties. Out of this group, 6 per cent reported that they needed professional help often or all the time, while 20 per cent stated that they needed this type of help occasionally at some point in their life. Women, on average, reported having a more frequent need for professional help than men did. Additionally, the urban population reported needing professional help more often than the rural population.

Social disconnectedness, encompassing isolation and loneliness, significantly impacts older adults and individuals with disabilities. According to the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) report, 79 per cent of older individuals in the Western Balkans and Central Asia reported experiencing moderate levels of loneliness, with 18 per cent describing their loneliness as extreme. Key risk factors contributing to loneliness include the loss of a spouse, retirement, living alone, mobility and hearing impairments, financial constraints, lack of tangible support, social anxiety, limited social network, inadequate assistance with daily tasks, health challenges, insufficient emotional support, and limited opportunities for social interaction.

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

The Red Cross of Serbia aims to improve organizational and community capacities to prepare and respond to health risks, crises, chronic non-communicable diseases and epidemics and influence the improvement of the health status of the population.

The National Society also aims to scale up its mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) efforts and increase its ability to respond to emerging mental health and psychosocial needs in all segments of the population. This is to be achieved through the provision of basic psychosocial support in the work of the National Society with beneficiaries of its programmes and by

mainstreaming MHPSS in key humanitarian activities while protecting and promoting the mental health and psychosocial well-being of staff and volunteers.

Planned activities in 2025

- Raise awareness of the importance of practising healthy lifestyles and the importance of disease prevention with special emphasis on vulnerable groups (young persons, older persons, socially vulnerable persons and migrants)
- Implement general prevention programmes with a focus on mental health and general wellbeing, healthy lifestyles including healthy ageing and long-term care through support to informal caregivers
- Reduce the number of deaths, reduce the consequences of accidents, protect human life and health, and prevent accidents
- Improve its first aid capacities to ensure that all drivers in the country are trained in first aid and that at least one person in every household and every company has been trained
- Train volunteers and staff on both providing MHPSS to beneficiaries in a variety of settings and on self-care and protection of own mental health
- Promote, recruit and retain educated volunteers in branches to be involved in the selection of blood donors and blood drive organization
- Mainstream MHPSS and integrate it in all the health preventive activities over the coming period to protect and strengthen the psychological wellbeing of both beneficiaries and staff

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC will support the Red Cross of Serbia to reach its goals in the field of first aid. It will also assist the National Society in developing its e-platform and different web tools for e-learning, as well as support the development and delivery of Training of Trainers for Advanced First Aid, building capacities for providing advanced first aid at public events and acquiring equipment, including especially automated external defibrillators (AED). The IFRC also supports the National Society in developing training schemes for volunteers and staff as well as developing procedures to guide voluntary blood donation during emergencies.



Serbia's migration landscape has been shaped by several factors over the past three decades, including the influx of refugees from the former Yugoslavia and internally displaced persons from Kosovo and Metohija during the 1990s. Additionally, many Serbian citizens have emigrated to Western Europe and North America. The country has also seen an increase in asylum seekers from Asia and Africa, irregular migrants, and returnees under the Readmission Agreement. Serbia has naturalized over 350,000 refugees and war-affected persons from the 1996 census, but some still require integration assistance, particularly regarding housing and property rights in their countries of origin.

Serbia, part of the Western Balkans, serves as a key transit area for irregular migration flows towards EU member states. Migrants typically enter the EU through the Greek-Turkish border and then proceed through the Western Balkan route towards their destinations in the EU. As of May 2024, there were 7,662 new entries in the Republic of Serbia. At present, people originally from Syria make up 51 per cent of the migrant population in the country, followed by people from Afghanistan (17 per cent), and all other countries (32 per cent). Out of the total number of people on the move in the Republic of Serbia, 80 per cent are adult males, however, there is an increasing trend in the number of women and unaccompanied minors.

Serbia adheres to international laws and conventions related to refugees and migrants, including the UN Refugee Convention. The legal framework includes laws on migration management, asylum, welfare, healthcare, and anti-discrimination, among others.

A pressing issue is the short average stay of migrants (16 days), which complicates efforts to identify and support victims of human trafficking and exploitation. In 2022, 10 per cent of trafficking victims identified were migrants, with 80 per cent exploited along the migration route. Serbia's strategic location as a transit country for migrants heading to the EU underscores its critical role in managing migration and displacement. While significant progress has been made, particularly in legal frameworks and support systems, ongoing challenges remain in managing migration and displacement.

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

The Red Cross of Serbia is part of the IFRC three-year Global Route-Based Migration Programme, which aims to improve the safety and dignity of people on the move along deadly and dangerous land and sea-based migration routes across Africa, the Americas, Europe, and the Middle East and North Africa. The programme aims to support 4.7 million people on the move and people in host communities annually through three operational pillars: (1) improving access to assistance and protection, including through humanitarian service points;

(2) strengthening National Society capacities; and (3) local to global humanitarian diplomacy.

The Red Cross of Serbia also addresses issues of migration and displacement through its national strategy and action plan for 2023, although a dedicated migration and displacement strategy is yet to be developed. Since 1992, Serbia has been hosting refugees in collective centres, now comprising 19 government-run facilities, including seven asylum centres and 12 reception centres. The Red Cross of Serbia plays a crucial role in these centres, working closely with the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration to provide essential services and support.

The Red Cross of Serbia aims to:

- Provide humanitarian assistance and protection for migrants and host communities at key locations of the route through Serbia
- Strengthen the capacities of its branches to analyse and address the needs of migrants and influence policy change through humanitarian diplomacy and advocacy
- Strengthen its capacities to analyse and address the needs of migrants, as well as the capacities to address the needs of people on the move and adequately cooperate with all relevant partners
- Ensure needs for protection and assistance are met, especially for unaccompanied children, who are at risk of violence, abuse, human trafficking, and other kinds of exploitation

Planned activities in 2025

- Engages migrants and host communities by raising their awareness of risks faced by people on the move and providing them with the necessary knowledge and skills to address them
- Enabling National Society branches to access all transit and detention centres as well as access unaccompanied minors in relevant institutions
- Enhance cross-border cooperation and international cooperation as well as participate in cross-border and international meetings to ensure the continuity of care for migrants along the route
- Undertake activities which positively shape the actions of children and youth among people on the move, as well as of the general population in Serbia, to create a more accepting, inclusive and safe environment
- Share experiences with relevant partners to encourage efficient work as well as sensitize and inform partners

and decision-makers about the National Society activities and experience in working with people on the move

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC will offer strategic coordination, policy development, and technical assistance to the Red Cross of Serbia to collectively advocate for migrant and refugee rights on a

global scale. Participating National Societies provide training, resources, and expertise in providing essential services to migrants and refugees, including emergency relief, healthcare, MHPSS and legal aid. IFRC reference centres, hubs, and labs offer specialized knowledge, innovation, and research to address specific migration-related challenges, enriching the National Society's responses.



Values, power and inclusion

Serbia's commitment to combating human trafficking is underscored by its ratification of the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol, and the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. From 2017 to 2022, [Serbia identified 320 victims](#) of human trafficking, including 150 children, with an additional 367 presumed victims. The primary forms of exploitation are sexual and labour exploitation, forced begging, and forced criminality. Vulnerable groups include women, children, victims of gender-based violence, migrants, refugees, ethnic minorities, and people with disabilities, with unaccompanied minors and the Roma community at heightened risk. Most victims are Serbian nationals, primarily involved in internal trafficking, though foreign victims from neighbouring and distant countries are also present.

The UN Sustainable Development Goal 5 aims to eliminate all forms of violence against women by 2030. [Research by the Red Cross of Serbia](#) reveals that 16 per cent of women aged 65 to 74 have experienced violence, primarily psychological. Due to fear, shame, economic dependence, and societal norms, many incidents go unreported. Additionally, 40 per cent of women have faced violence from partners since age 15, with 7.7 per cent experiencing such violence in the last year. Data from 2018 indicates that 56.2 per cent of women over 65 in the region have experienced gender-based violence (GBV).

Children from marginalized backgrounds, including underprivileged families, Roma settlements, and rural areas often face [educational setbacks and higher dropout rates](#). The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated these issues, increasing stress and reducing motivation among these children. Disadvantaged youth have limited participation in societal activities, influencing their values and increasing the potential for radical ideas. A significant percentage (48 per cent) of students experience [peer violence](#), often based on ethnicity, politics, gender, and sports affiliations. Over 60 per cent are exposed to digital violence.

The [formal education system in Serbia](#) faces several challenges, including inadequate resources, socio-economic disparities, and limited inclusivity for children with special needs. The education system struggles to keep pace with job

market demands and technological advancements, resulting in disparities in digital literacy. Non-formal education also encounters barriers such as inconsistent funding, accessibility issues, varying quality, and lack of coordination and evaluation.

Serbia's efforts to combat human trafficking and gender-based violence highlight significant strides towards the inclusion and protection of vulnerable groups. However, persistent challenges remain, especially in the realms of [educational and social inclusion for marginalized communities](#). Addressing these issues requires a continued commitment to legal frameworks, enhanced support systems, and targeted interventions to bridge educational and socio-economic gaps.

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

In the coming years, the Red Cross of Serbia will focus on achieving the following objectives:

- Respond to the needs of identified and potential victims of human trafficking
- Reduce the risk of human trafficking, alleviate human suffering caused by this phenomenon and contribute to the implementation of the strategy for the prevention and suppression of human trafficking, especially among women and children
- Improve protection of women from gender-based violence and abuse throughout their life cycle, as well as contribute to better institutional protection of women of all ages from gender-based violence and abuse through accredited training curriculum
- Strengthen the professional organizational capacities of all branches, including building volunteer resources, promoting humanitarian values and supporting sensitive groups, especially children and youth
- Establish and nurture cooperation with partners on all levels

Planned activities in 2025

- Strengthen its capacities to address the phenomenon of human trafficking and support identified victims
- Increase public awareness of human trafficking and measures to prevent it, especially among children, young people, people on the move, and other socially vulnerable target groups
- Organize awareness-raising campaigns and public events aimed at the prevention of trafficking
- Partner and cooperate with civil society organizations, system institutions and donors including the corporate sector and citizens to establish and nurture relevant joint projects
- Equip professionals and future professionals who might encounter a victim of human trafficking to adequately recognize and respond to the situation
- Prepare and improve manuals, programmes and working procedures, and implement activities aimed at strengthening organizational capacities for identifying and reacting in case of violence against children
- Conduct a series of standardized workshops to train young volunteers in promoting a healthy lifestyle, non-violence, empathy, and solidarity among children

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC will support the Red Cross of Serbia through strategic guidance, technical expertise, resource mobilization, knowledge exchange, and policy advocacy. The Red Cross of Serbia will receive specialized support in thematic areas and facilitate capacity-building, enabling the National Society to effectively address challenges such as disaster response, health, migration, and other key areas of focus.

The IFRC will further assist the Red Cross of Serbia in capacity building through the training of trainers (ToT) and educators and the exchange of experience with relevant partners and participating National Societies. The IFRC also supports the National Society in organizing awareness-raising campaigns and public events, as well as in developing educational and promotional material.

Additionally, the IFRC will provide technical guidance and financial support to the National Society for activities aimed at institutional protection of women from gender-based violence and abuse through an accredited training curriculum. The support also extends to the planned production of manuals, organizing camps, seminars and training. The IFRC assists the National Society in its advocacy work to improve visibility in local communities, as well as access to expertise and tools that help its branches improve the quality of programmes and services.

ENABLING LOCAL ACTORS

The Red Cross of Serbia is committed to the Preparedness for Effective Response (PER) process and is currently in the assessment phase. The PER Approach is a continuous and flexible process that enables National Societies to

assess, measure and analyse the strengths and gaps of its preparedness and response mechanism, and take necessary action to improve it. The IFRC is committed to supporting the National Society in its development according to its priorities.



Strategic and operational coordination

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

- Develop new and existing partnerships with governmental institutions and NGOs along with implementation of core activities and programmes, including with the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Welfare, Serbian Armed Forces, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Commissariat for Refugees and Migrations, academic circles, among others
- Strengthen exchanges and cooperation with neighbouring National Societies, participating National Societies in European countries, and the regional and cluster offices of the IFRC
- Enhance the organization's reputation and visibility through more efficient relations and communication with various target groups
- Strengthen domestic and international fundraising and resource mobilization

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC will support the National Society in securing resources for the ongoing development of the organization. Key areas of support include strengthening human capacities through continuous training of employees and volunteers,

securing financial resources through project funding and identifying potential donors, as well as sustained assistance in the digitization process and the development of the National Society.



National Society development

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

- Continue efforts toward the full implementation of the Law on the Red Cross of Serbia, ensuring compliance by authorities and securing the funds guaranteed by law
- Continue developing the organisation's volunteer base through the adoption and implementation of a volunteer work policy
- Promote learning among employees and volunteers, with a focus on distance training
- Continue branch development through branch organizational capacity assessment ([BOCA](#)) workshops in local branches

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC will support the Red Cross of Serbia in creating new [statutes and policies](#). It will also provide resources for the continuous development of the organization and will support strengthening human capacities through continuous training of employees, volunteers, and financial resources through projects and finding potential donors and continued support for the digitization process and National Society development. It will also support the National Society in the creation of a volunteer policy and a National Society development policy. The IFRC will help the National Society in managing its financial resources and strengthening human capacities in the implementation of the self-assessment processes ([OCAC/BOCA](#)).



Humanitarian diplomacy

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

- Develop existing capacities for positioning the Red Cross at all organizational levels to strengthen the credibility and image of the National Society
- Apply, promote and develop international humanitarian law through constant communication and cooperation with its various partners
- Develop communication with external target groups in connection with the promotion of the mandate, mission, roles of the Red Cross, protection of the Red Cross emblem and protection and promotion of the organization's identity including its staff and volunteers

- Reach a high degree of acceptance among key stakeholders by providing relevant, context-sensitive humanitarian assistance and protection for people and communities in a manner consistent with the [fundamental principles](#) and other Movement policies

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC will support the Red Cross of Serbia in its efforts to strengthen [Humanitarian Diplomacy](#) (HD) capacities, cluster-wide exchange of information, best practices and lessons learned, as well as the development and implementation of internal and external communication strategies of the National Society.



Accountability and agility (cross-cutting)

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

- Focus on financial management and establish a strong planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting system
- Implement policies including the code of conduct, policy of prevention and protection against sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA), child protection policy, and rulebooks on prevention of corruption and conflicts of interest, regulation of procurement procedures, and internal whistle-blowing procedure in the Red Cross of Serbia
- Continue digitalization of the processes of data collection, reporting and administrative and financial procedures

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC will support the Red Cross of Serbia to enhance and diversify its fundraising efforts through new and unrestricted domestic and international funding sources, including individual, corporate, and digital avenues. Additionally, the National Society will receive network assistance in developing a volunteer policy and a National Society development policy, as well as support for its digital transformation, particularly in adapting its business-financial system and obtaining programme licenses for Microsoft SQL Server.

THE IFRC NETWORK

The IFRC

The IFRC supports the National Society through its Central and South-Eastern Europe Country Cluster Delegation located in Sarajevo and its regional office for Europe based in Budapest in the implementation of its migration-related projects. The IFRC is a key supporter in both financial and technical aspects in the event of crises and disasters affecting Serbia.

In recent years, the IFRC has supported the Red Cross of Serbia through numerous Emergency Appeals and Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF) operations in relation to the floods in 2020, 2022, and 2023. The IFRC also supported the national response plan for the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic from 2020 to 2022.



The Red Cross of Serbia volunteers provided migrants with assistance at the Presevo reception centre, 20 April 2021. (Photo: The Red Cross of Serbia)

IFRC membership coordination

IFRC membership coordination involves working with National Societies to assess the humanitarian context, agree on common priorities and jointly develop common strategies. This includes addressing issues such as obtaining greater humanitarian acceptance and access, mobilizing funding and other resources, clarifying consistent public messaging, and monitoring progress. It also entails ensuring that strategies and programmes in support of people in need incorporate clarity of humanitarian action while linking with development assistance, and contribute to reinforcing National Societies in their respective countries, including through their auxiliary role.

The cooperation with the [IFRC reference centre for psychosocial support](#) is based on the sharing of knowledge and expertise. The centre provides inputs for training and other interventions by the Red Cross of Serbia in the [mental health and psychosocial support \(MHPSS\)](#) area, including support for training events, while the activities of the Red Cross of Serbia in this area are fed back to the centre to serve as experience sharing and case studies.

Movement coordination

The (National Society) ensures regular exchanges with the IFRC, the International Committee of the Red Cross and participating National Societies, for the alignment of support and action between Movement partners. In times of emergencies, closer coordination is organized. This is carried out in line with the [Strengthening Movement Coordination and Cooperation \(SMCC\)](#) principles, and the newly-adopted [Seville Agreement 2.0](#).

The ICRC provides ongoing support in addressing the [restoring family links \(RFL\)](#) needs of migrants, the [Safer Access framework](#), IHL promotion and implementation and the MHPSS project. The ICRC and the Red Cross of Serbia collaborate through SMCC mechanisms.

Coordination with other actors

The Red Cross of Serbia actively participates in various international and national networks, focusing on first aid education, disaster preparedness, and humanitarian response. It is part of coordination networks with the UN Agencies, specifically the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), as well as the European Commission, International Network for Prevention of Elder Abuse, HelpAge International, Age Platform Europe, European Disability Forum, Global Alliance – For the Rights of Older People, and the embassies of several countries.

At the national level, the National Society cooperates with government institutions and line ministries, thematic base

cooperation with NGOs, and the private sector. It also works with academic institutions such as the University of Belgrade, Niš, Kragujevac and Novi Sad, and more specifically Faculty for Security Studies University of Belgrade, Medical Faculty University of Belgrade, Faculty of Social Science, Military Academy, and Police Academy.

The Red Cross branches have developed cooperation with the civil society sector and institutions and the local level such as the Centre for Social Welfare, Health Institutions, schools and preschools as well as local associations for children and people with disabilities, Roma associations, other charity and humanitarian organisation working locally.



The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is the world's largest humanitarian network, with 191 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and around 16 million volunteers. Our volunteers are present in communities before, during and after a crisis or disaster. We work in the most hard to reach and complex settings in the world, saving lives and promoting human dignity. We support communities to become stronger and more resilient places where people can live safe and healthy lives, and have opportunities to thrive.

About the plan

The plan reflects the priorities of the host National Society, the IFRC and National Societies providing international support, for 2025 and subsequent years. It is aligned with IFRC [Strategy 2030](#), representing the collective ambitions of the IFRC membership, and is the result of a joint planning process and will serve for joint monitoring and reporting. It will be revised on an annual basis to adjust priorities and funding requirements to the needs in-country.

Explanatory note on funding requirements and definitions

- The total funding requirements show what the IFRC network seeks to raise for the given year through different channels: funding through the IFRC, through participating National Societies as bilateral support, and through the host National Society from non-IFRC network sources. All figures should include the administrative and operational costs of the different entities
- Host National Society funding requirements not coming from IFRC network sources can comprise a variety of sources, as demonstrated when reporting on income in the [IFRC Federation-wide Databank and Reporting System](#)
- Participating National Society funding requirements for bilateral support are those validated by respective headquarters, and often represent mainly secured funding
- IFRC funding requirements comprise both what is sourced from the IFRC core budget and what is sought through emergency and thematic funding. This includes participating National Societies' multilateral support through IFRC, and all other IFRC sources of funding
- Figures for the years beyond 2025 most often represent partial requirements that are known at time of publication. Many National Societies have annual internal approval processes for funding requirements, and lower figures do not mean a decrease in funding requirements in future years
- Missing data and breakdowns: data may not be available from all IFRC network members for funding requirements. This may lead to inconsistencies across different reporting tools as well as potential under-estimation of the efforts led by all
- Reporting bias: the data informing this Federation-wide overview is self-reported by each National Society (or its designated support entity) which is the owner and gatekeeper, and responsible for accuracy and updating. IFRC tries to triangulate the data provided by the National Societies with previous data and other data in the public domain
- **Definitions:**
 - » **Local units:** ALL subdivisions of a National Society that coordinate and deliver services to people. These include ALL levels (provincial, state, city, district branches, sections or chapters, headquarters, and regional and intermediate offices, as well as community-based units)
 - » **Branches:** A Branch has its roles, responsibilities and relationship with the National Headquarters defined through the National Society's Statutes, including the level of autonomy given, especially in the area of its legal status, mobilising local resources and building local partnerships, and the decisions it makes. It has a local-level decision-making mechanism through its Branch members, board and volunteers, equally defined through the National Society's Statutes

Additional information

- [IFRC network country plans](#) • [All plans and reports](#)
- Data on National Societies on [IFRC Federation-wide Databank and Reporting System](#)
- Live data on active emergency operations on [IFRC GO platform](#)
- Live data on [IFRC-Disaster Response Emergency Fund Response and Anticipatory pillars](#)
- [Evaluations and research databank](#) • [Donor response reports](#)

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