



Operational meeting of the AzRCS President at the Lankaran regional branch

Appeal: MDRAZ005	Total DREF Allocation: CHF 90,800	Hazard: Population Movement	Country: Azerbaijan
People at Risk: -	People Targeted: -	People Assisted: -	Event Onset: Sudden
Operation Start Date: 08-03-2026	Operational End Date: 30-04-2026	Total Operating Timeframe: 45 days	Publication Date: 03-09-2026

Targeted Regions: **Astara, Bilasuvar, Lenkeran, Yardimly**

Event development

Update regarding the event’s development

The regional escalation of the conflict in the Middle East in February 2026 increased regional tensions and disrupted air traffic and regional transport connectivity. The escalation affected commercial aviation, and several countries issued guidance on alternative evacuation routes for their citizens, highlighting the potential risk of restricted mobility and increased reliance on land corridors. Azerbaijan was identified as one of the most likely transit countries for the evacuation of people crossing from the Islamic Republic of Iran. This likelihood was further reinforced by the presence of an estimated 15–23 million ethnic Azerbaijanis in Iran (approximately 16–24 % of the population), predominantly residing in the north-western provinces bordering Azerbaijan. Iranian Azerbaijanis share close linguistic, cultural and religious ties with the population of Azerbaijan, including a common language, predominantly Shia Muslim identity, and longstanding family and social connections across the border.

Scenario analysis indicated that the humanitarian impact could exceed existing response capacities if 500 or more people crossed into Azerbaijan through the Astara border crossing within a 72-hour period and required humanitarian assistance, or if the authorities confirmed that a comparable number were expected to arrive through coordinated evacuation arrangements in the following days. This threshold reflected the point at which existing reception capacity in the southern border districts could become overstretched, creating potential gaps in access to safe drinking water, basic services, First Aid, MHPSS and safe onward transportation. Reaching or exceeding this threshold would have represented a significant escalation in cross-border movements requiring immediate anticipatory humanitarian action and readiness to scale up the response should arrivals continue.

The anticipated activation period was estimated at two to four weeks, while the situation remained highly dynamic depending on the evolution of hostilities and regional transport disruptions. The main anticipated humanitarian risks included congestion at border crossing points, prolonged travel times, fatigue, dehydration and psychosocial distress among people undertaking extended journeys, as well as temporary pressure on local services and infrastructure, particularly at the Astara border crossing. Additional contingency planning also considered the potential risk of a nuclear incident in the event of attacks affecting nuclear facilities located near the Azerbaijan-Iran border, as well as the possibility of strikes affecting targets within the territory of Azerbaijan.

Overall, the anticipated scenario was characterised by a rapid, short-term and transit-oriented population movement that could generate localized humanitarian pressure at border entry points, with a possibility of subsequent larger-scale internal population movements if the situation further deteriorated.

During the operational period, the Government of Azerbaijan maintained the closure of its land borders, with exceptions granted for cargo traffic and humanitarian movements through the Astara border crossing. These movements primarily involved foreign nationals and diplomatic personnel departing the region through Azerbaijan, as well as Azerbaijani citizens returning to the country. Since the beginning of the escalation, more than 3,500 people from 76 countries were evacuated through the Astara border crossing, including more than 600 Azerbaijani nationals.

Overall, cross-border movements remained limited and did not reach the predefined trigger thresholds for the activation of large-scale humanitarian assistance. Most travellers continued their onward journey through existing arrangements or evacuation mechanisms coordinated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, resulting in only limited humanitarian needs.

As a result, the anticipated escalation scenario did not materialize. The number of people requiring humanitarian assistance remained low and did not place additional pressure on national response capacities. While preparedness measures proved justified and necessary given the uncertainty of the evolving situation, the predefined trigger thresholds for activating a large-scale humanitarian response were not reached.

Consequently, the situation remained stable throughout the operational period, and no large-scale humanitarian needs emerged that would have required activation of the planned response.

Source Information

Source Name	Source Link
1. Azernews	https://www.azernews.az/nation/257113.html



Implementation

	Sector	Activities	Budget (CHF)	Expenditure
 Early Actions	Migration	• Training for staff and volunteers • Equipment for Humanitarian Service Points and temporary sheltering (water, hygiene, first aid, restoring family links and psychosocial support) • Equipment and uniforms for volunteers • Daily monitoring and reporting of arrivals and level of vulnerability • Relief items pre-stocking and replenishment • Insurance for volunteers • Staff salary	CHF 56,250	CHF 44,781
	CEA	• CBRN and referrals information and awareness raising materials		
 Early Response	Migration	• Relief items distribution • Conducting rapid needs assessments using mobile volunteer teams	CHF 18,750	CHF 0
Sub-total			CHF 75,000	CHF 38,654
Surge Deployment (if applicable)			CHF 10,000	CHF 3,394
Indirect Cost			CHF 5,800	CHF 2,733
Total			CHF 90,800	CHF 44,781

Total Assisted Population

Assisted Women	-	Rural	-
Assisted Girls (under 18)	-	Urban	-
Assisted Men	-	People with disabilities (estimated)	-
Assisted Boys (under 18)	-		
Total Population Assisted	-		
Total Targeted Population	-		

MDRAZ005 - Azerbaijan - Population Movement

Operating timeframe: *Start date: 07-Mar-2026 End date: 30-Apr-2026*
Appeal launch date: *09-Mar-2026*

I. Summary

	Actual (CHF)
Opening Balance	0
Funds & Other Income	90,800
DREF Response Pillar	
DREF Anticipatory Pillar	90,800
Expenditure	-44,781
Closing Balance	46,020

II. Expenditure by planned operations / enabling approaches

Description	Budget	Expenditure	Variance
P001 - Shelter and Basic Household Items			
P002 - Livelihoods			
P003 - Multi-purpose Cash			
P004 - Health			
P005 - Water, Sanitation & Hygiene			
P006 - Protection, Gender and Inclusion			
P007 - Education			
P008 - Migration		16,441	-16,441
P009 - Risk Reduction, Climate Adaptation and Recovery	90,525	28,339	62,186
P010 - Community Engagement and Accountability			
P011 - Environmental Sustainability			
Planned Operations Total	90,525	44,781	45,745
EA01 - Coordination and Partnerships			
EA02 - Secretariat Services			
EA03 - National Society Strengthening			
Total	90,525	44,781	45,745

III. Expenditure by budget category & group

Prepared on 25-Aug-2026

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[Click here for the complete financial report*](#)

*Discrepancies can be found between the migration narrative and the budget due to identified budget alignment issues. The current budget should be considered provisional and will be updated once the budget revision process has been completed.

Explain any variances or modifications to the implemented activities

At the request of the AzRCS, all operational expenditures were managed directly by the IFRC Country Office in Baku, rather than through direct financial transfers to the National Society. This approach resulted in cost efficiencies, particularly in procurement and HR-related expenditures.

Following further operational planning and consultations with AzRCS, and taking into account the National Society's existing capacities and the anticipated scale of humanitarian needs, it was agreed to establish three mobile humanitarian service points instead of the larger response capacity initially envisaged. This was considered sufficient to meet the most likely response scenario while ensuring efficient use of available resources.

In addition, the planned surge deployment was replaced, in agreement with AzRCS and the IFRC ROE technical teams, by a technical support mission of a Procurement and Logistics Specialist from the IFRC Country Cluster Delegation based in Moscow. This arrangement enabled the required technical support to be provided while reducing the overall operational costs.

Mitigation efforts and achievements.

A total of 74 AzRCS volunteers from branches located along the border with the Islamic Republic of Iran (Lankaran, Astara, Lerik, Jalilabad and Yardimli) were trained by AzRCS specialists with IFRC support through four training sessions. The training covered the establishment and operation of humanitarian service points, First Aid, Psychosocial First Aid (PFA), CBRN risk awareness and emergency response procedures, strengthening volunteer preparedness for potential cross-border population movements.

IFRC procured and prepositioned 500 hygiene kits, together with relief items and operational equipment, in the AzRCS warehouse in Baku to enable the rapid deployment of assistance in the event of a cross-border population influx.

IFRC procured and prepositioned equipment for the establishment of three mobile humanitarian service points, which was delivered to the AzRCS central warehouse. The equipment included 3 × 4 m tents, ground mats, folding tables and chairs, mobile phones, Wi-Fi routers, charging stations, loudspeakers, petrol generators and LED lighting sets.

To support service delivery at the humanitarian service points, IFRC also procured and prepositioned 50 power banks, 50 MHPSS kits, 10 large and 50 small First Aid kits, hand sanitizers, wet wipes, and PPE (rubber gloves and face masks). In addition, 100 branded volunteer vests were procured and provided to AzRCS volunteers to support response operations and ensure their visibility during humanitarian activities.

A total of 1,500 First Aid and CBRN information leaflets were developed, printed and prepositioned to support risk communication activities. In addition, CBRN risk awareness and community engagement were integrated into the preparedness and response training for AzRCS volunteers, further strengthening their capacity to communicate risks effectively and support affected populations during complex emergencies.

Lessons learnt and challenges

Lessons learnt:

- Preparedness measures strengthened operational readiness despite the absence of a response.

The operation demonstrated the value of anticipatory preparedness in a rapidly evolving regional context. Investments in volunteer training, contingency planning and the prepositioning of relief items and operational equipment ensured that AzRCS was prepared to provide timely humanitarian assistance should the anticipated scenario materialize.

- Strong coordination supported evidence-based decision-making.

Close coordination between AzRCS, IFRC, international organizations (such as IOM) and authorities enabled continuous monitoring of the evolving situation and regular review of response scenarios. This ensured that preparedness measures remained proportionate to the assessed risks and operational context.

- Flexible implementation improved operational efficiency.

The ability to adapt the operational approach during implementation, including adjusting the planned response capacity and replacing the planned surge deployment with a targeted technical support mission, resulted in more efficient use of available resources while maintaining the required level of preparedness.

- The operation contributed to longer-term preparedness capacity.

Although the anticipated humanitarian response was not activated, the operation strengthened AzRCS preparedness through trained volunteers, prepositioned operational equipment and relief items, enhanced CBRN risk awareness, and improved readiness procedures that will support future emergency operations.

Challenges:

- High operational uncertainty required continuous scenario review.

The rapidly evolving regional security situation required continuous monitoring and regular reassessment of planning assumptions, requiring a flexible operational approach throughout the implementation period.

- Population movement remained difficult to predict.

Potential cross-border movements depended largely on external political and security developments, making it difficult to accurately forecast the scale, timing and humanitarian impact of potential arrivals.

- Limited procurement and logistics capacity within the IFRC Country Office.

The absence of a dedicated procurement and logistics function in the IFRC Country Office required temporary technical support from the IFRC Country Cluster Delegation. While this arrangement proved effective, it highlighted the importance of ensuring sustainable logistics and procurement capacity to support future operations.



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