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Operational Meta-Analysis

2023-2025



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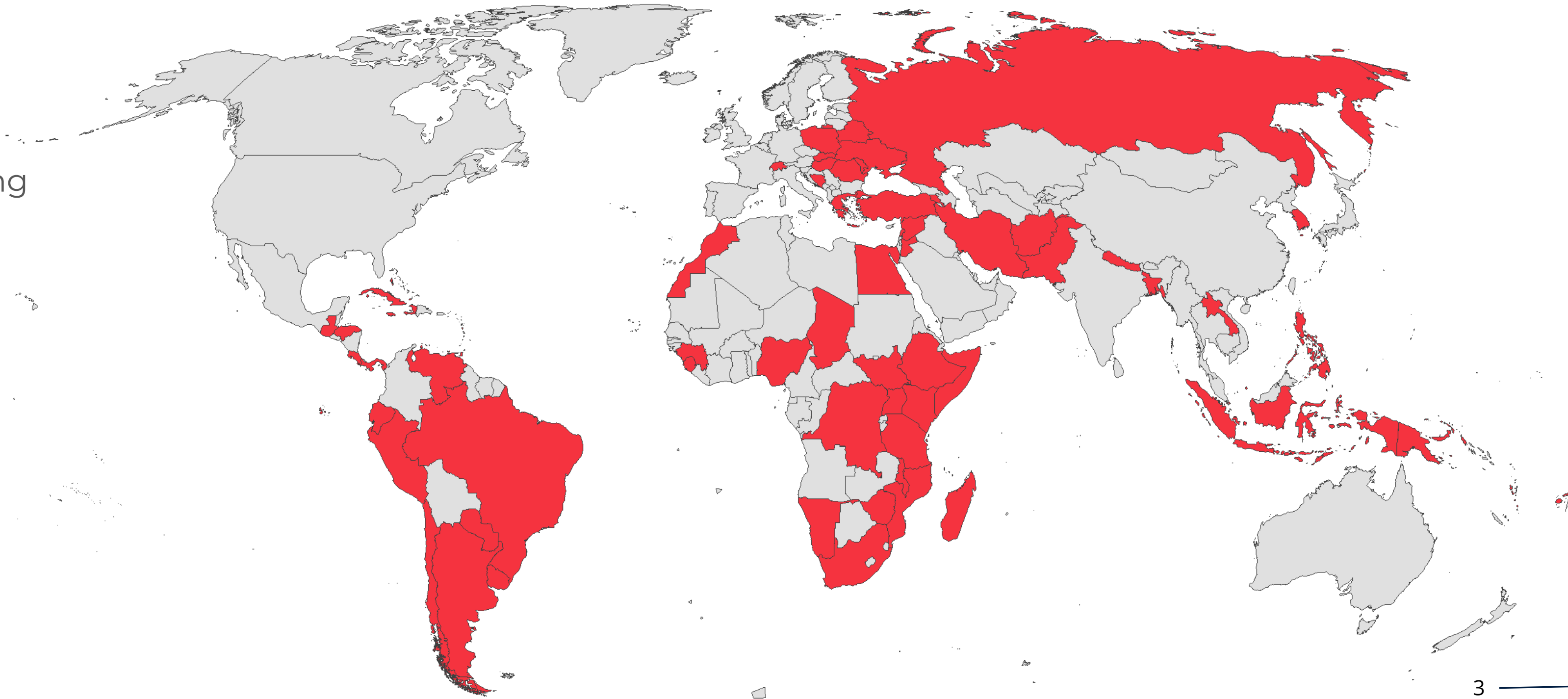
Learning across five meta-analyses



15
years of learning

90
operations

108
countries



2023-2025 Meta-Analytical Review

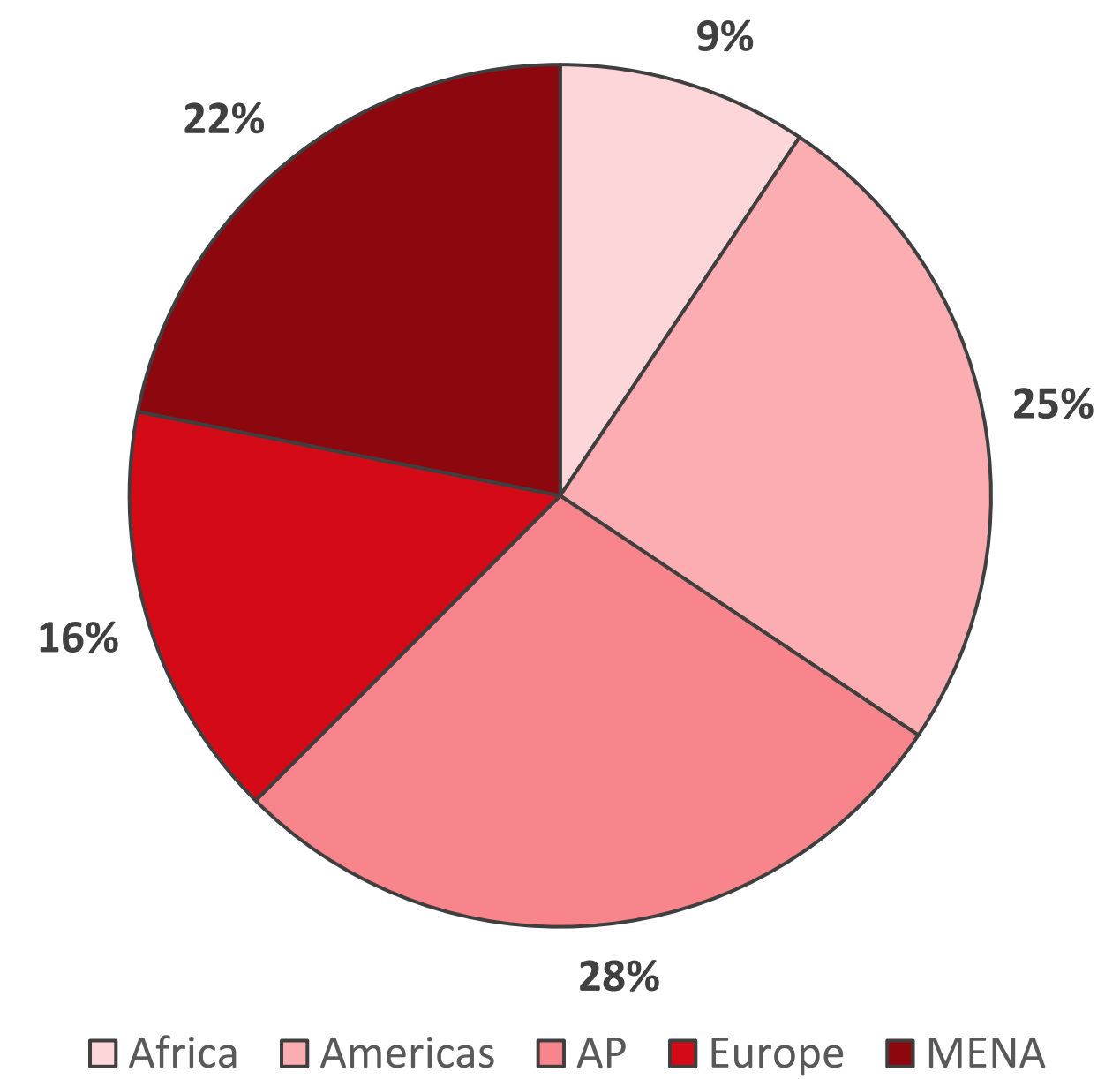


32
operations

71
source documents
(final evaluations, end of mission reports, etc.)

69
findings

Regional distribution of operations reviewed



Capturing a global perspective
covering operations in all regions

[LINK](#) to the 2025 dataset and bibliography

1. What are the big trends?

- **Coordination and collaboration** challenges are top of mind
- Surge is now **more about fit, than volume.**
- The **‘backbone’ challenges** have remained the same since 2010—and likely before.
 - Over 60% of background challenges textually match problem statements from at least two earlier meta-analyses.





15 years on, **eight out of nine** recurring issues persist

Streamline **corporate services procedures** in emergencies & support personnel able to **deploy**

Minimal understanding of **IFRC systems and procedures** amongst the Membership

Delayed recruitments inevitably lead to the **'pain box'** in transition from surge

IFRC **decision-making authority unclear** between institutional layers

Need to enhancement **assessment and planning** capacity within IFRC

Weakness in **operations monitoring** hinders impact demonstration

Weak volunteer management systems put volunteers at risk

Unsolicited in-kind donations continue to undermine operations

2. Coordination and collaboration





Best practice (IFRC Secretariat): The Way of Working continues to demonstrate its value in emergencies and long-term engagement

*"The IFRC's decision to focus support on Membership coordination was both **valuable and valued** as it promoted a Federation-wide approach across the [NS]-led response"*

Challenge



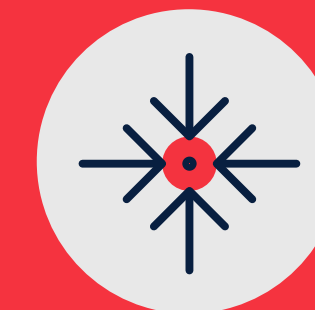
Challenge (IFRC Network) Operational pressures continue to challenge engagement between the HNS, IFRC, and Membership undermining collective ownership.



Challenge (Movement) Tensions between IFRC and ICRC produce fragmentation particularly in large, complex, and politically sensitive emergencies



Challenge (IFRC Secretariat): Unclear roles and decision-making authority within the IFRC weakens operations



System Tension (IFRC Secretariat): Structural ambiguity between IFRC's coordination role and implementing legacy continues to create tension during emergency operations.

*The National Society felt it was "not given the space and time to **participate meaningfully** in terms of programme design and prioritisation of needs...and subject to **donor principles** based on geographical targeting"*



3. Operational support





Challenge (IFRC Network) Nearly every operational review highlighted delays and inefficiencies caused by rigid financial systems that are not adapted to emergency contexts.



Challenge (Membership) Unsolicited in-kind donations continue to undermine operational efficiency and coordination



Challenge (IFRC Network): HNS sustainability remains constrained by emergency-specific funds reliance, compounded by significant appeal under-coverage and the need to improve domestic resource mobilization



*The increase in highly earmarked and restrictive funding, **accounting for ~65% of IFRC's current 2025 pledges**, limits operational flexibility, challenges absorption capacity, and can misalign with the most urgent needs on the ground.*

4. Operations



Surge is more about **fit** than volume



Best Practice (IFRC Network): Surge deployments were more effective when co-designed with National Societies and aligned with existing national programs.



Best Practice (IFRC Network): Embedded IFRC surge within HNS response structures strengthened accountability and technical delivery



Challenge (IFRC Network): Short deployments and poor continuity planning contributed to burnout and operational inefficiencies.



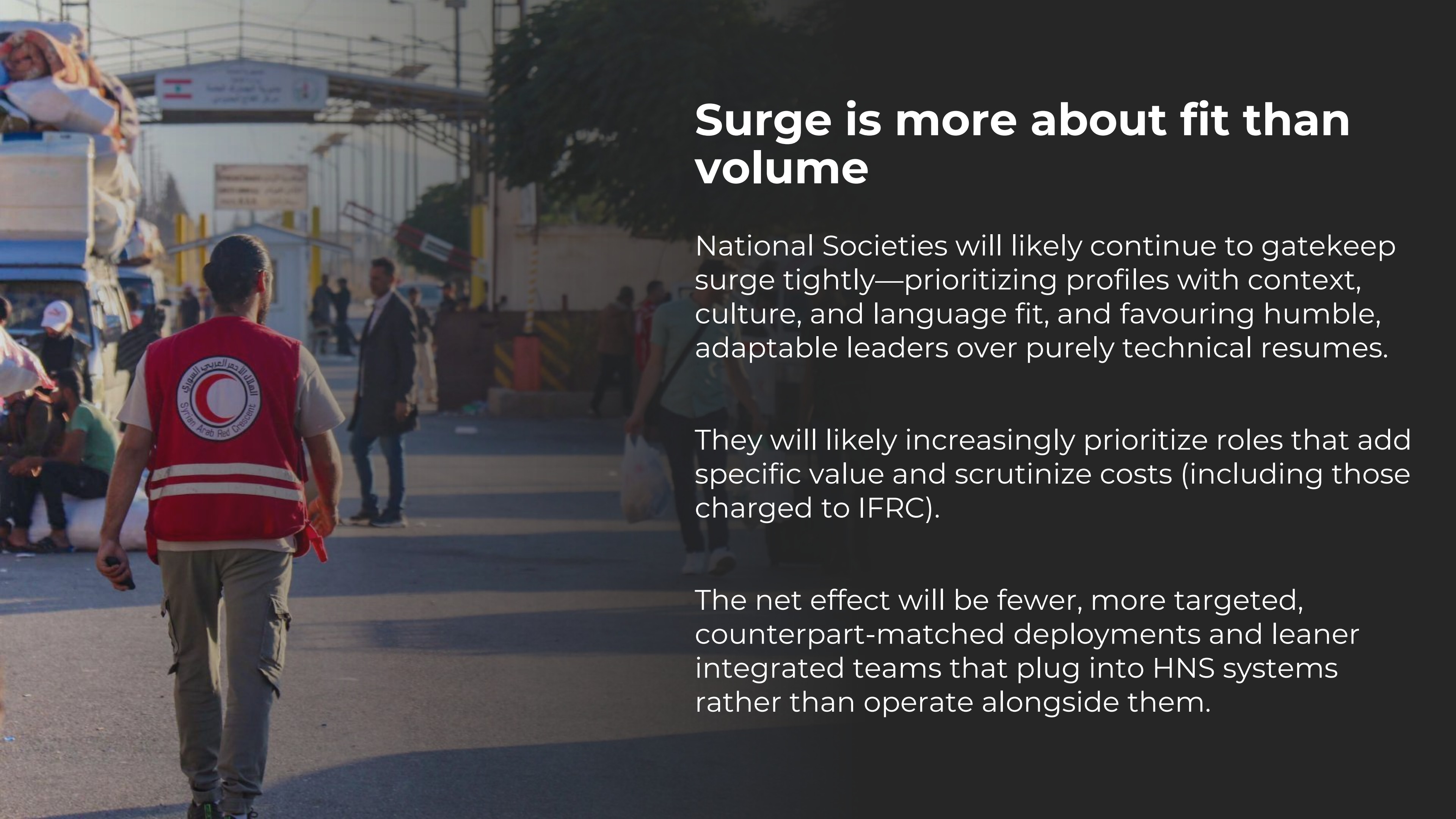
Challenge (IFRC Secretariat): Weakness in operations monitoring undermines our ability to demonstrate our impact, raise resources, and ensure quality delivery

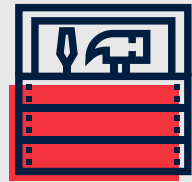
Surge is more about fit than volume

National Societies will likely continue to gatekeep surge tightly—prioritizing profiles with context, culture, and language fit, and favouring humble, adaptable leaders over purely technical resumes.

They will likely increasingly prioritize roles that add specific value and scrutinize costs (including those charged to IFRC).

The net effect will be fewer, more targeted, counterpart-matched deployments and leaner integrated teams that plug into HNS systems rather than operate alongside them.





Best Practice (IFRC Network): Recovery planning has been used strategically to reposition operations in Governments' long-term development agendas.



Best Practice (IFRC Network): Humanitarian analysis is more impactful when embedded within coordination and decision-making structures

5. Policy and strategy





Best Practice (IFRC Network): Strategically planned senior leadership visits have strengthened IFRC Network positioning and operational credibility.



Best Practice (IFRC Network): Coordinated humanitarian diplomacy strengthens HNS visibility, credibility, and integration with national systems



Challenge (IFRC Secretariat): Some strategic decisions—particularly around appeal funding request size—were perceived as top-down and lacking clear, communicated rationale



Challenge (Membership): Gaps in recognition of the auxiliary role by local authorities continue to limit National Societies' advocacy and access during emergencies.

*The absence of a clear legal status and legislative framework for the [National Society] **limited its ability to act effectively as an auxiliary to the government***"



A woman wearing a red Red Cross uniform and cap is speaking into a red and white megaphone. She is standing in a refugee camp with several tents and people in the background. The text 'CROIX ROUGE LA RDC' is visible on her uniform. The background shows a busy camp environment with people walking and tents made of plastic and fabric.

6. Addressing systemic issues

In response to recurring issues, in the last two years, **several initiatives** have either been launched or become mainstreamed:

- Immediate Response Protocols (IRP)
- Emergency Response Framework (ERF 2.0)
- Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP)
- IFRC Network Results Based Management framework
- Membership Coordination in Emergencies guidelines
- The National Society Preparedness Framework
- The Unified Planning process



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