



Volunteer providing healthcare services. El Oro, March 2024. Source: Ecuadorian Red Cross (ERC).

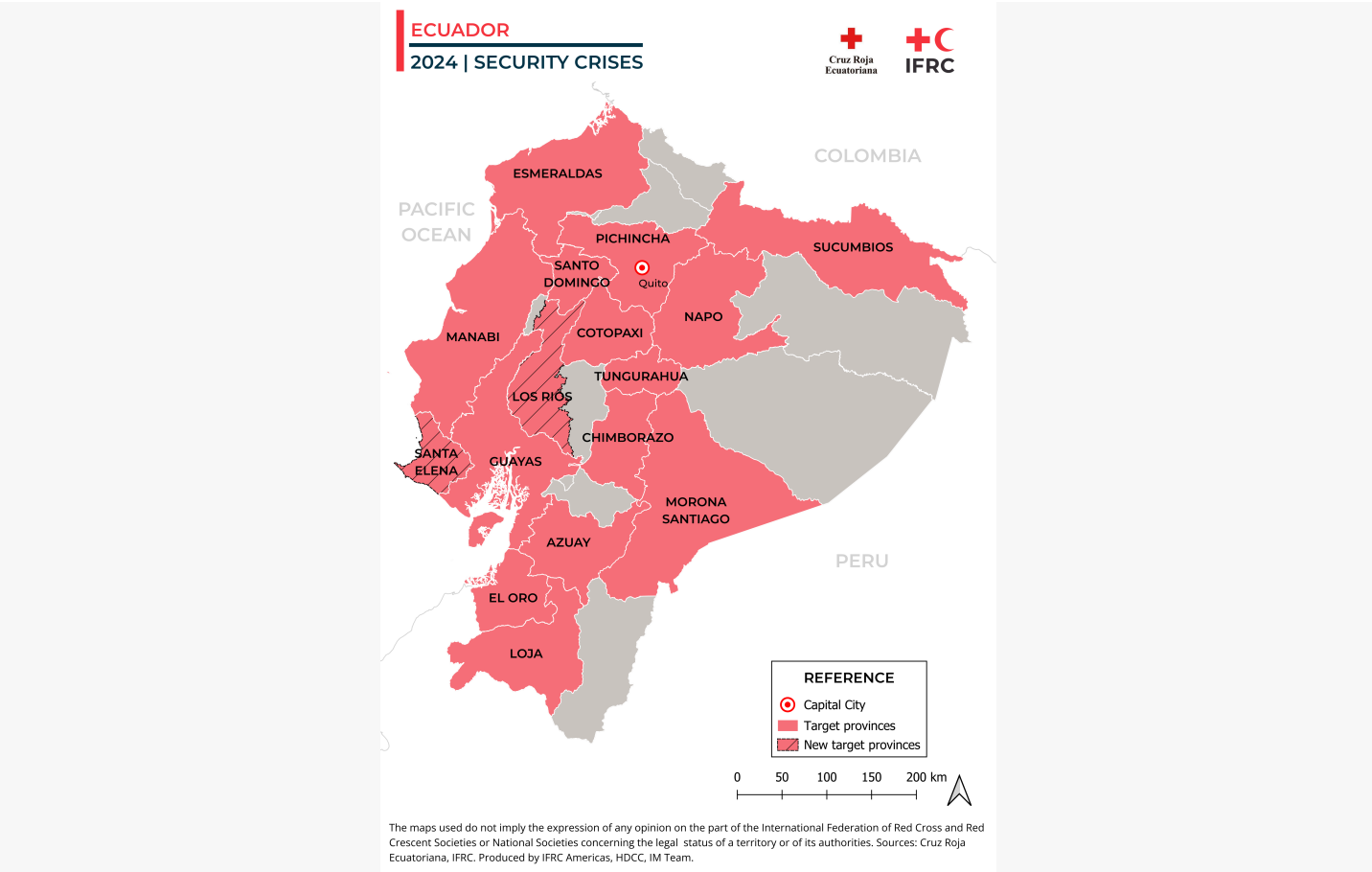
Appeal: MDREC025	Total DREF Allocation: CHF 218,956	Crisis Category: Yellow	Hazard: Other
Glide Number: -	People Affected: 0 people	People Targeted: 4,500 people	People Assisted: 10,026 people
Event Onset: Slow	Operation Start Date: 23-01-2024	Operational End Date: 31-07-2024	Total Operating Timeframe: 6 months

Targeted Regions:

Azuay, Cotopaxi, Chimborazo, El Oro, Esmeraldas, Guayas, Loja, Los Rios, Manabi, Morona Santiago, Napo, Pastaza, Pichincha, Tungurahua, Sucumbios, Santo Domingo de Los Tsachilas, Santa Elena

The major donors and partners of the IFRC-DREF include the Red Cross Societies and governments of Australia, Austria, Belgium, Britain, China, Czech, Canada, Denmark, German, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Liechtenstein, Malta, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, and the Netherlands, as well as DG ECHO, Mondelez Foundation, and other corporate and private donors. The IFRC, on behalf of the National Society, would like to extend thanks to all for their generous contributions.

Description of the Event



Map of the targeted provinces for the operation. Source: IFRC.

Date when the trigger was met

08-01-2024

What happened, where and when?

Since 2021, Ecuador has experienced a systematic escalation of criminal violence driven by Organized Criminal Groups (OCGs), primarily due to territorial disputes linked to transnational drug trafficking. In 2023, the country recorded a significant surge in homicide rates, rising from 25 to 42 violent deaths per 100,000 inhabitants, positioning Ecuador as the South American nation with the highest number of violent deaths. This critical context intensified in 2024, triggering a series of events that marked a turning point in national security.

Prison Riots and Declaration of State of Exception

On January 7, 2024, the Armed Forces and National Police conducted an operation at the Guayaquil Regional Social Rehabilitation Center (CRS) to transfer the leader of a major OCG to a maximum-security facility. Following the reported disappearance of this individual, as confirmed by the Attorney General's Office, the Public Security and State Council (COSEPE) convened an urgent meeting. On January 8, at approximately 08:00, simultaneous riots were reported in Social Rehabilitation Centers across the provinces of Guayas, Cotopaxi, Azuay, Cañar, Loja, Napo, Chimborazo, El Oro, Tungurahua, and Pichincha. Correctional officers and administrative personnel were held hostage, prompting interventions by specialized units to restore control.

In response, the President issued Executive Decree No. 110, declaring a 60-day State of Exception nationwide, restricting rights such as freedom of movement, assembly, inviolability of domicile, and correspondence. This decree authorized the mobilization of the National Police and Armed Forces. However, between the night of January 8 and the afternoon of January 9, violent incidents were reported in Pichincha, Esmeraldas, Azuay, El Oro, Chimborazo, Loja, Guayas, and Los Ríos, including car bomb explosions, vehicle burnings, kidnappings, and attempts to seize public and private spaces such as barracks, shopping centers, universities, media outlets, and hospitals. These events, broadcast live and amplified on social media, generated unprecedented collective panic.



On January 9, Executive Decree No. 111 acknowledged the existence of an internal armed conflict, designating 22 OCGs as "terrorist organizations and belligerent non-state actors" and ordering military operations to neutralize them. Subsequently, on May 22, Decree No. 275 declared a state of emergency due to internal armed conflict in Guayas, El Oro, Santa Elena, Manabí, Sucumbíos, Orellana, Los Ríos, and the Camilo Ponce Enríquez canton in Azuay.

Migration Measures and Shifts in Criminal Dynamics

On January 9, 2024, Peru declared a state of emergency along its border with Ecuador, intensifying controls in Tumbes, Piura, Cajamarca, Amazonas, and Loreto, and suspending international passenger transport between Tumbes and Huaquillas. On January 11, Ecuador's Ministry of the Interior, through Ministerial Agreement 007, mandated a Criminal Record Certificate for foreigners entering via land borders with Colombia and Peru. This measure complicated legal migration, particularly for Venezuelans and Colombians, increasing the risk of irregular crossings and vulnerabilities such as robbery, extortion, and human trafficking.

The military presence in public spaces altered OCG operations. While violent deaths decreased in Guayaquil and Esmeraldas, criminal activity shifted to Los Ríos and Manabí, particularly in Manta, where police and military presence was reinforced from June 3. According to the Ministry of the Interior, between January and March 2024, extortions doubled, and 38 kidnappings were recorded, primarily in Guayaquil, considered the country's most violent city.

Economic Measures and Energy Crisis

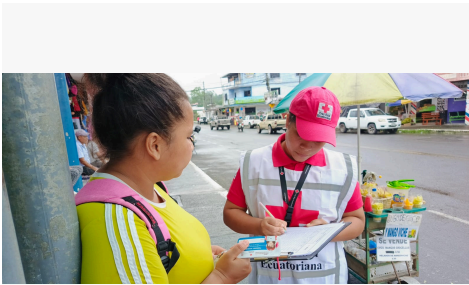
To fund the fight against drug trafficking, the government increased the Value Added Tax (VAT) from 12% to 15% effective April 1, 2024, exempting 208 basic basket products but raising gasoline and domestic gas prices. This measure, coupled with the elimination of subsidies, sparked protests in several cities. Additionally, from April 15, programmed power outages of up to nine hours were implemented, impacting critical sectors such as healthcare, education, and industry. On April 19, Decree No. 229 declared a state of exception due to the energy sector emergency, mobilizing security forces to protect energy infrastructure.

On April 30, Decree No. 250 established a new state of exception in Guayas, Los Ríos, Manabí, Santa Elena, El Oro, and Orellana, but on May 11, the Constitutional Court declared it unconstitutional, questioning the "internal armed conflict" justification. On July 2, another state of exception was declared in these provinces and Camilo Ponce Enríquez (Azuay), despite prior rejections by the Constitutional Court.

Economic measures, including the VAT increase and power outages, triggered social unrest. On July 4, groups protested in Quito against these policies, though without significant disruption. The presidential elections, held in February and April 2025, also generated significant political uncertainty amid ongoing security and governance challenges.



Community dissemination of security measures. Napo, April 2024. Source: ERC



Registration of individuals requesting RFL services. Ecuador 2024. Source: ERC



Medical patient transfer. Chimborazo, April 2024. Source: ERC





First aid workshops. Guayas, March 2024.
Source: ERC



Pre-hospital emergency care. Pichincha, February 2024. Source: ERC



Dissemination of preventive measures. Azuay, March 2024. Source: ERC



Deployment of emergency response teams for medical assistance. El Oro, February 2024. Source: ERC



Blood donation campaign. El Oro, February 2024. Source: ERC

Scope and Scale

Security and Violence Trends

Following the issuance of Executive Decree 111 on January 9, 2024, declaring a state of emergency due to escalating gang-related violence, state organizations began publishing data on human casualties and rights violations in detention centers. However, the context of violence the country was a challenge in demonstrating the real impact on the population.

The Ministry of Government reported 3,036 homicides in the first half of 2024, a 16% reduction from 3,619 in 2023, yet higher than the 2,128 in 2022. June 2024 was the most violent month, with 592 homicides, a 400% surge from June 2023, despite military deployment under the state of emergency. The Human Rights Watch World Report 2025 reported Ecuador's homicide rate at 44.5 per 100,000 inhabitants in 2024, the highest in South America, with a 429% increase in homicides from 2019 to 2024.

The Institute for Studies and Training in Comprehensive Security's September 2024 report documented 10,700 extortion cases, a 138% increase from 4,496 in 2023. The Internal Revenue Service's August 2024 data reported 5,421 extortion complaints in Guayaquil, 2,969 in Quito, and 1,294 in Machala. Violent incidents included armed attacks in Guayaquil's commercial areas, looting in Quito's historic center, Ambato, and a Machala shopping mall, and prison shootings in Santo Domingo, Esmeraldas, Guayaquil, Cuenca, and Machala. Car bombs detonated in Quito, Guayaquil, Esmeraldas, and Ibarra.

Infrastructure damage in June, according to the Ministry of Interior, included 7 pedestrian bridges, 12 Community Police Units, 12 car bombs, 9 incinerated vehicles, 23 explosions, and one media outlet affected. During the first two days of the state of emergency (January 8–9, 2024), the Ministry of Interior reported seizing 8 controlled explosive devices, 15 Molotov cocktails, 9 firearms, 38 cartridges, 6 motorcycles, and 6 vehicles. The National Government's January 10, 2024, statement reported 11 deaths due to street violence (8 in Guayas, 3 in Esmeraldas).

Economic Impacts

The December 2024 report by the Internal Revenue Service documented a significant number of business closures attributed to heightened extortion and insecurity. Specifically, 1,242 establishments ceased operations in Guayaquil, 1,948 in Quito, and 243 in Machala, reflecting the deteriorating economic conditions exacerbated by insecurity.

In response to these challenges, the Ministry of Labor implemented a mandatory teleworking policy for both public and private sectors on January 9–10, 2024. Additionally, mobility restrictions imposed under the state of emergency severely disrupted commercial activities, drawing parallels to the economic stagnation experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic.

To mitigate the socioeconomic crisis, the government enacted the Organic Law to Address Violence and Socioeconomic Crisis on January 11, 2024, introducing a VAT increase from 12% to 15%. This fiscal adjustment resulted in higher costs for 208 essential goods, including 21 staple food items, while fuel prices rose by USD 0.07 per gallon, further escalating food transportation expenses.

The World Bank's Ecuador Poverty Assessment (October 2024) reported that 26% of the population was living below the poverty line, with 43% of rural inhabitants affected and 10.6% experiencing extreme poverty.

Migration and Displacement

The International Rescue Committee (IRC) estimated that between January and October 2024, approximately 80,000 Ecuadorians were internally displaced due to armed violence. Additionally, between January and August 2024, 14,700 Ecuadorians crossed the Darién Gap, following 57,250 crossings recorded in 2023. According to the U.S. Customs and Border Protection's Fiscal Year 2024 Report, published in October 2024, 124,023 encounters with Ecuadorians were reported at the southwest border, marking an increase from 117,487 in 2023.

Findings from the International Organization for Migration's (IOM) March 2024 survey indicated that 63% of Ecuadorians expressed a willingness to emigrate, with 58% seeking employment opportunities, 13% pursuing family reunification, and 9% aiming for improved living conditions. Notably, 52% identified the United States as their primary destination. The IOM's May 2024 report recorded a total of 43,408 Ecuadorian emigrants and 4,112 returnees from January to April 2024, resulting in a net migration of 39,296. Migration peaked in February 2024, when 12,355 individuals transited through El Salvador en route to the United States.

Health Sector

The Ministry of Health's January 9, 2024, directive suspended outpatient services and planned surgeries nationwide, maintaining only emergency services. This disrupted non-conflict emergency care and extramural activities, severely affecting vulnerable populations.

Education Sector

On January 8, 2024, the Ministry of Education issued Ministerial Agreement 2024-00001-A, ordering the nationwide suspension of in-person classes and mandating a transition to virtual learning until January 17, 2024. This measure affected approximately 4.3 million students, reflecting the government's response to ongoing security concerns.

Educational institutions were further instructed to activate reporting mechanisms for domestic and gender-based violence, reinforcing protection protocols within the school system. This directive follows the documentation of 6,700 cases of sexual violence in schools between 2014 and August 2024.

Humanitarian and Security Challenges

The February 25, 2024, CID Gallup Latin America survey ranked Ecuador as the country with the highest incidence of robbery and assault, with 47% of citizens affected in the preceding four months. The Integrated Security Service reported 30,000 ECU-911 emergency calls between May 3–5, of which 69% (20,676) were related to citizen security issues.

Meanwhile, the Public Prosecutor's Office's July 2024 report documented 27 possible extrajudicial executions in the first half of the year. Additionally, 16 military personnel were formally charged in connection with the enforced disappearance of four children in Guayaquil, later found deceased.

Government Measures and Security Operations

On April 21, 2024, Ecuador held a referendum under Presidential Decree 226, approving the implementation of military patrols and prison militarization as part of broader security measures. In February 2024, the National Government announced plans to construct two new detention centers in Pastaza and Santa Elena, under Executive Decree 165. However, this initiative faced strong opposition from the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities (CONAIE) due to a lack of prior consultation with affected communities.

In August 2024, the UN Committee Against Torture expressed concerns over arbitrary detentions and excessive use of force, urging the demilitarization of prisons.

Impact of Security Policies on Crime Trends

By the end of 2024, Ecuador's security operations, led by Ecuador's President, produced mixed results in combating organized crime.



Official records indicated over 60,000 arrests of suspected criminals, alongside the seizure of 280 tons of illicit drugs, representing a 29% increase compared to 2023. The homicide rate decreased by 15%, falling from 8,237 to 6,962 violent deaths, with a notable decline in prison-related killings.

However, violence escalated in early 2025, with 1,529 homicides recorded between January and February, averaging 26 per day. Additionally, 160 security operations targeted groups classified as “terrorist organizations”, resulting in 8 deaths among organized crime group (OCG) members, 9,473 arrests (including 241 for terrorism-related offenses), and the recapture of 34 fugitives from detention centers.

Source Information

Source Name	Source Link
1. El Universo	https://bit.ly/493F8iq
2. Info Bae	https://www.infobae.com/peru/2024/01/10/violencia-en-ecuador-suspenden-servicios-de-transporte-en-frontera-con-tumbes-por-crisis-en-pais-vecino/
3. La Razón Perú	https://larazon.pe/ff-aa-y-pnp-en-pie-de-lucha-por-aumento-de-sueldos-y-pensiones/
4. Al Jazeera	https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/1/14/ecuador-prison-staff-held-hostage-by-inmates-all-freed?utm_source=substack&utm_medium=email
5. Infobae	https://www.infobae.com/america/america-latina/2024/05/03/ecuador-aprobo-una-ley-para-que-otorga-mas-poder-a-la-fuerza-aerea-en-la-lucha-contra-el-narcotrafico/
6. CNN	https://cnnespanol.cnn.com/2024/05/22/noboa-nuevo-estado-de-excepcion-segunda-fase-lucha-narcoterrorismo-orix/
7. Human Rights Watch. (2025)	https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/03/10/ecuador-ongoing-security-crisis
8. Human Rights Watch	https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2025/country-chapters/ecuador
9. International Rescue Committee	https://www.rescue.org/article/crisis-ecuador-what-you-need-know-and-how-help
10. Fiscal Year 2024 Southwest Border Encounter Report	https://www.cbp.gov/document/annual-report/fy-2024-southwest-border-encounter-report
11. International Organization for Migration	https://www.iom.int/countries/ecuador
12. National Institute of Statistics and Censuses	https://www.ecuadorencifras.gob.ec/
13. World Bank, Ecuador Poverty Assessment	https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/ecuador
14. Pan American Health Organization	https://www.paho.org/en/countries/ecuador
15. UN Committee against Torture	https://www.ohchr.org/en/treaty-bodies/cat
16. Ministerial Agreement No. 007	https://www.fielweb.com/App_Themes/InformacionInteres/ac007inte.pdf
17. El Universo	https://www.eluniverso.com/noticias/economia/aumento-del-iva-en-ecuador-desde-cuando-estaria-vigente-el-incremento-del-15-nota/
18. The New York Times	https://www.nytimes.com/es/2024/01/09/espanol/violencia-guayaquil-ecuador.html



National Society Actions

Have the National Society conducted any intervention additionally to those part of this DREF Operation?

No

IFRC Network Actions Related To The Current Event

Secretariat

Throughout the implementation of the operation, continuous communication was maintained with the Delegation of Andean Countries and the Regional Office of the IFRC, both of which provided technical assistance to the National Society in the design, planning, execution, justification, and data analysis stages of the intervention.

The IFRC, through the technical team of the Andean Delegation, in coordination with the Regional Office, offered critical support in addressing inquiries related to procurement processes and the authorization of budgetary modifications, ensuring the smooth development of the operation.

Between February and mid-April, a Telecommunications expert was deployed under the Surge mechanism to provide technical assistance in equipment maintenance across various Provincial Branches. This intervention was complemented by training sessions for humanitarian personnel, aimed at strengthening technical competencies.

Starting in June, the IFRC Regional Office Social Sciences Specialist collaborated closely with the team, providing technical assistance in the design, implementation, and development of a study with a Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) approach. This study focused on analyzing the impact of the security crisis on humanitarian services, ensuring a data-driven approach to understanding service disruptions and community needs.

Participating National Societies

Constant communication was maintained with Partner National Societies, including the Spanish Red Cross, which funded the deployment of a Surge professional during the initial months of the DREF Operation to support the maintenance of telecommunications equipment in Provincial Branches. Additionally, the Protection of Health Services project, funded by the Norwegian Red Cross, contributed to efforts aimed at safeguarding health teams within the operational framework.

ICRC Actions Related To The Current Event

Within the framework of the Cooperation Agreement between ERC and the ICRC, through the Restoring Family Links Hotline (RFL), the following items were repositioned:

- RFL emergency kits.
- Roll-up materials.
- Preventive measures materials, such as brochures and tags.
- Internet phone plans for people who need to reconnect with their loved ones.

These products contained self-care messages and recommendations designed to prevent the disruption of family ties in various contexts, being very useful as preventive measures during the emergency. Material on these measures were delivered to communities in person.



With funding from the ICRC, 40 safety helmets were procured as part of a complementary process for the 15 provinces involved in the operation. Additionally, telecommunications equipment was acquired and distributed to these provinces based on the findings of a diagnostic assessment conducted with the support of the Surge professional funded by the Spanish Red Cross. Moreover, collaboration and joint initiatives were reinforced through the application of knowledge on emblem protection and Safer Access.

Other Actors Actions Related To The Current Event

Government has requested international assistance	Yes
National authorities	<p>On 7 April, the National Government mentioned the persistence of an "internal armed conflict in the country" through Executive Decree 218, for which the Government indicated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To the Armed Forces: Execute military operations to "prevent and eradicate the activity of organized armed groups in the national territory". - To the Police and the Armed Forces: To continue with the operational and tactical deployment required to neutralize armed attacks, threats or risks orchestrated by organized crime. It also provided the necessary coordination to establish a multi-year budget for internal security, strategic intelligence and counterintelligence systems, among others. <p>Among other actions taken by the National Government, the presentation of the Foreign Minister, Gabriela Sommerfeld, at a UN hearing in Vienna on 15 March, in which she reiterated that the presidential measures have contributed to reduce violent deaths, stands out. In this regard, Sommerfeld emphasized his government's commitment to the rule of law and democracy and stressed that the measures to "restore peace and security" are not only effective but have popular support.</p> <p>On 3 June, the president issued Decree 290, announcing the relocation of the police and military leadership, including the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Defense, to the city of Manta, in response to a series of violent deaths and attacks that occurred there.</p>
UN or other actors	<p>The United Nations has repeatedly called for respect for human rights in Ecuador, emphasizing the principles of legality, necessity, proportionality, and non-discrimination. The organization has urged Ecuador to resolve the conflict within the framework of the law, ensuring full compliance with and respect for fundamental rights.</p> <p>Meanwhile, the international community has expressed its support for the National Government. Countries such as the United States have provided military equipment to law enforcement agencies to strengthen internal security, support investigations into organized crime groups, and ensure the protection of personnel in Social Rehabilitation Centers.</p>

Are there major coordination mechanism in place?

The Ecuadorian Red Cross actively participates in national and local coordination spaces within the National Decentralized Risk Management System, engaging through Emergency Operations Centers and Unified Command Posts. Additionally, it contributes to working groups focused on human mobility and the prevention of serious crimes against life, addressing preventive measures in response to potential incidents stemming from the prevailing context of violence.

Furthermore, the Ecuadorian Red Cross collaborates with the Armed Forces in the provinces of Morona Santiago, Sucumbíos, Esmeraldas, and Imbabura to conduct training sessions on International Humanitarian Law for personnel and volunteers of the National Society.

In addition, the National Society has engaged in inter-institutional coordination with the Ministry of Public Health to enhance pre-hospital care and manage requests for ambulance deployments by the Ecuadorian Red Cross. This collaboration has also strengthened the voluntary blood donation process.



Needs (Gaps) Identified



Health

Pre-hospital Care (PHC)

The context of insecurity in Ecuador led to a significant increase in the number of people affected by traffic accidents, intoxications, poisonings, and traumatic injuries, as well as medical and gynecological emergencies. This situation created an urgent need for prehospital care, as victims required immediate assistance to treat various injuries. Many of these involved more than one biological system, including pulmonary, circulatory, neurological, gastrointestinal, musculoskeletal, and integumentary systems. The wounds were frequently caused by knives or firearms, requiring a rapid response to minimize life-threatening risks to patients.

The National Health System faced overcrowding in emergency rooms and urgent care units, which, combined with the security procedures implemented, led to delays in medical care. As a result, several health units were forced to temporarily suspend their services due to threats of explosions, increasing the difficulty of accessing adequate medical care and forcing patients to travel to more distant health centers with less capacity to respond.

Pre-hospital care required the use of adequate materials and resources to ensure quality care and that responds appropriately to the individual's condition. Ambulances became a critical space for stabilizing patients, highlighting the need to maintain an adequate stock of materials, supplies, and biomedical equipment, with the primary objective of saving lives.

Furthermore, although ERC response team personnel have the skills and competencies necessary to perform basic and advanced life support maneuvers, the continued security crisis made evident the need to update the teams' training in the areas of basic first aid and pre-hospital care services.

In addition, the country faced other simultaneous emergencies, such as floods, water shortages, volcanic activity, landslides, and power outages. These natural phenomena increased the need for out-of-hospital care, exacerbating the effects on the population.

As part of the study conducted on the impact of security conditions on humanitarian needs within the operation, it was determined that one of the most pressing emerging needs is access to health services, including medical care, emergency assistance, and psychosocial support. This finding led to the strengthening of these services under the DREF Operations.

Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS)

Until April, the internal security crisis had a significant impact on the psychosocial health of individuals, families, and communities. People experienced psychological effects due to the fear caused by explosions and detonations, as well as anxiety and anguish resulting from violent deaths, assaults, and kidnappings. This situation generated panic, resulting in increased stress, sleep problems, and high consumption of psychoactive substances, along with self-medication as an inadequate response to the situation.

Humanitarian personnel, as part of the community, also faced the consequences of this crisis due to the constant state of alert and hypervigilance required to safeguard their safety and that of the population.

Regarding this need, and according to the results of the aforementioned study, it was concluded that it is important to provide workshops on managing stress and other mental health problems, followed by training in psychological first aid, and to strengthen mental health awareness and education programs.

Voluntary Blood Donation

The internal security crisis significantly influenced people's willingness to participate in blood donation. During the previous year, a considerable reduction in the number of donors was observed, which was exacerbated by the increase in violence and the fear associated with this situation, thus limiting people's mobility and their willingness to visit donation centers. This combination of circumstances has created an urgent need to strengthen operations and ensure a constant supply of blood to save lives. It should be noted that the ERC has a National Blood Center that is considered the main supplier of blood components in the national health system.





Protection, Gender And Inclusion

Due to the events, an increase in domestic violence was evident, affecting groups in vulnerable situations such as children and adolescents, women, older adults, and people with disabilities. The crisis also caused tensions in the social environment, generating situations that could lead to violence.

Likewise, economic problems also intensified due to the restriction on customer movement to businesses, which led to the closure of some establishments, looting, and extortion.

Additionally, a radio communications problem was identified in several Provincial Branches, aggravated by the country's insecurity. This environment made communication difficult during travel, both with the Government and with the National Headquarters. The lack of trained telecommunications personnel and the limited use of the existing network limited the ability to diagnose problems in a timely manner, along with the lack of adequate equipment, highlighted the vulnerability of humanitarian operations.



Migration And Displacement

The internal insecurity crisis generated an environment of violence and mistrust that negatively impacted the population's daily life. This situation was exacerbated by the occurrence of dangerous events, such as mass movements, floods, and the interruption of essential services like electricity, telephone service, and the internet.

As a result, circumstances arose that required urgent attention. The temporary loss of communication due to the suspension of electricity service left many people uncertain about the whereabouts of their loved ones in the affected areas. Furthermore, insecurity contributed to family disconnection among migrant people from Ecuador, Venezuela, and Colombia, who faced prolonged journeys without access to communication tools, such as cell phones or the internet.

The lack of knowledge on family communication plans in emergency situations and the lack of self-care measures among children and adolescents to maintain contact with their loved ones, highlighted the need to strengthen education in this area, in order to mitigate the impact of the insecurity crisis and dangerous events on the people affected.

As a result of the impact study on the context of insecurity, it was identified that one of the emerging difficulties in accessing humanitarian aid was dangerous displacement and rerouting for safety reasons. Therefore, one of the emerging needs is to learn about measures to maintain communication with loved ones.



Community Engagement And Accountability

The growing security crisis in the country created an environment conducive to misinformation, negatively impacting community communication. During the first two days of the State of Emergency, an increase in the dissemination of false messages about the activities of the ERC was observed on social media. This hindered the work of volunteers and humanitarian personnel, while also diminishing community trust in the ERC.

In this regard, the results of the study on security perceptions regarding humanitarian needs found that one of the main obstacles to people accessing humanitarian aid was the lack of information about telephone contacts, hours of operation, or services provided by the Provincial Branches, as well as a lack of knowledge about safe behaviors in crisis or emergency settings.

Operational Strategy

Overall objective of the operation

Through this IFRC-DREF Operation, the Ecuadorian Red Cross aimed to prepare its teams to provide timely and efficient care under the auxiliary role of the public authorities in the humanitarian field in the context of violence through the strengthening and evaluation of the capacities of the Provincial Branches in the lines of Health (Psychosocial support, pre-hospital care and blood donation), and Restoring of Family Links, ensuring the safety of staff and applying the cross-cutting approaches of Protection Gender and Inclusion (PGI) and Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA).

In response to the escalation of the emergency, the National Society would activate a response phase focused on implementing planned



services to assist the affected population while ensuring the safety of personnel at all times.

Through this intervention, the Ecuadorian Red Cross planned to support 4,500 people in 17 provinces by providing pre-hospital care, mental health services, and psychosocial support, as well as key messaging on gender-based violence and domestic violence. At the end of the operation, the National Society successfully implemented the preparedness and response phases, reaching 10,026 people.

Operation strategy rationale

The strategy was designed based on ERC's experience with civil unrest and violence, which has involved multiple lines of institutional action and advocacy with authorities and humanitarian actors. The trigger for this emergency was the issuance of Executive Decree 110 by the National Government, declaring a State of Exception due to severe internal unrest. The operation consisted of two phases, detailed below:

PHASE 1: PREPARATION:

Trigger No. 1 was met on January 8 with the issuance of Executive Decree No. 110 by the President of Ecuador, who declared a State of Exception (SoE) due to severe internal unrest. In the context of increasing insecurity, the ERC prioritized preparedness actions, which included equipping the Provincial Branches and strengthening the capacities of staff and volunteers.

PHASE 2: RESPONSE:

Trigger No. 2 would be activated if the security situation worsened and exceeded the response capacity of the Provincial Boards, following an internal analysis conducted by the ERC. This phase was implemented up until 30 April in 15 Provincial Branches, involving the following areas of intervention and support:

PRE-HOSPITAL CARE

During the preparation phase, the National Society developed a training module on Basic First Aid and Pre-hospital Care, and the use of ambulance equipment, hosted on ERC's e-learning virtual platform. This knowledge was subsequently replicated in in-person workshops across the Provincial Branches. As part of this phase, ERC also equipped ambulances in Guayas, Pichincha, and Azuay, where the largest and most frequently affected Social Rehabilitation Centers (CRS) are located, with mechanical ventilators and hemorrhage control kits, allowing for effective patient stabilization during transfers in violent situations.

During the response phase, the National Society provided pre-hospital care to the population, using the equipment and knowledge acquired in training.

MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT IN EMERGENCIES

The mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) strategy included the adaptation of the "Self-Care Guide for Responders" to prevent emotional burnout among the operational teams of the 15 prioritized Provincial Branches. Using this material, self-care sessions were organized, coordinated by MHPSS focal points, who were trained by the National technician in mitigating psychosocial effects in emergencies.

Humanitarian personnel also provided mental health support to affected people in these provinces, treating cases of post-traumatic stress, anxiety, and other conditions arising from the context of violence. Additionally, MHPSS kits were distributed, which included educational and stationery materials to implement strategies at a community level in order to address the psychosocial effects of the ongoing crisis, benefiting different age groups and strengthening community resilience.

VOLUNTARY BLOOD DONATION

The ERC activated the National Blood Center between January and April, with the aim of countering the decline in donations and ensuring an adequate blood supply in the country. A collection goal of at least 3,000 pints of blood was set in the ten prioritized provinces. This was positively received by the population, although the security crisis generated an environment of fear that limited the participation of some donors.

To facilitate collection days in these areas, mobile infrastructure kits were purchased and distributed to the ten Provincial Branches with the largest target populations (Guayas, Pichincha, Santo Domingo, Manabí, Tungurahua, Loja, El Oro, Morona Santiago, Pastaza, and Chimborazo). These kits included tents, chairs, coolers, and medical supplies, such as forceps and EDTA tubes, and enabled effective and safe care for donors at temporary collection points.

Finally, a public awareness campaign was launched, using social media and the media, to promote the importance of voluntary blood



donation. As part of the campaign, the ERC contracted the production and distribution of an informational video that reinforced the message of the importance of donating in emergency situations and helped allay public fears in a context of insecurity.

RESTORING FAMILY CONTACT

The Ecuadorian Red Cross chose to act with a preventive approach rather than only a response approach. During the operation, ERC disseminated mass messages and recommendations that were accessible and inclusive to different groups from the population (national, non-national, Quichua-speaking, and those with hearing impairments) to prevent the disruption of family ties. For this, technical teams worked through communication channels such as WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, and other social media to disseminate these key messages. In addition, face-to-face talks on preventive measures were held at strategic locations throughout the territories, sharing with the community mechanisms for maintaining communication with their loved ones.

Furthermore, and as part of the preparation phase, supplies were provided to the Provincial Branches to establish restoring family contact care points, which allowed for more dignified case management and the possible psychosocial support services that people receiving care may need.

PROTECTION, GENDER, AND INCLUSION

During the intervention, key messages on the prevention of gender-based violence and child protection in the context of internal security crises were developed and disseminated. These messages, translated into different indigenous languages, included an educational video on crisis management with children during community workshops, a video for adults on dialogue with minors in crisis situations, and informational spots in Spanish, Kichwa, and Shuar on support and awareness-raising programs regarding gender-based violence.

Likewise, as part of capacity building for the Provincial Councils, a webinar was held for humanitarian personnel on minimum standards of Protection, Gender, and Inclusion in emergency situations. The session included the participation of an ICRC specialist, who addressed the differentiated impacts of situations of violence.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY (CEA)

The ERC implemented three suggestion boxes at blood collection points, which facilitated the collection of essential information to adjust messages and actions according to the needs expressed by the community. Additionally, key messages about the services and auxiliary role of ERC were disseminated, strengthening its image and avoiding confusion with other institutions.

Moreover, ERC conducted a humanitarian needs analysis in the 10 provinces most affected by the insecurity crisis, gathering information on the impact of violence on access to humanitarian services. In coordination with the IFRC, the collection methodology was established, and a final report was prepared with the findings. This assessment included three phases:

- First phase: Collection and analysis of humanitarian service data and secondary data in the targeted provinces to identify how insecurity affects the supply and demand for these services.
- Second phase: Implementation of field surveys to capture the perceptions of humanitarian personnel and communities on humanitarian needs, using digital surveys in hard-to-reach areas.
- Third phase: Interviews with key informants to delve deeper into the findings and understand the relationship between the security context and humanitarian needs. This phase included recommendations for adapting humanitarian services to emerging demands.

NATIONAL SOCIETY STRENGTHENING

The Ecuadorian Red Cross implemented a series of strategic actions aimed at strengthening its operational and response capacity in situations of violence and humanitarian crises. In first place, a training in International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and the auxiliary role of the National Society was organized for authorities and volunteers from 15 prioritized Provincial Branches, ensuring their adequate preparation for responding to situations of violence. In second place, operational security was strengthened through the distribution of protective helmets and the development of pocket-sized "Guide for Emergency Response Teams" guides on information management and advocacy in critical situations.

- Volunteer Management and SIVOL System:

To optimize the management of its volunteer work, the National Society embarked on the decentralization of the National Volunteer System (SIVOL) through the acquisition of the Scriptcase license, which enables efficient and collaborative management of the volunteer cycle in real time. This facilitates rapid and flexible access to information for more than 8,000 volunteers in different provinces, improving the organization's response capacity in critical moments.

- Telecommunications Strengthening:



The ERC also strengthened its telecommunications capabilities to ensure reliable connectivity in hard-to-reach areas. This initiative included the installation of new equipment and preventive and corrective maintenance of systems in 24 Provincial Branches, as well as the expansion of the VHF repeater network. Additionally, technical training was provided to volunteers and focal points in the use and maintenance of this equipment, ensuring stable and secure communications for the deployment of response operations. To support this effort, a Communications Surge was deployed for two months, and a specialized consulting firm was subsequently hired to assist in the installation and design of an efficient telecommunications system for ERC.

Targeting Strategy

Who was targeted by this operation?

This operation targeted populations in 17 prioritized provinces and cantons affected by security conditions, ensuring access to pre-hospital care, mental health support, psychosocial services, and key messaging on the prevention of gender-based violence.

The intervention was structured into two main phases:

- Preparedness Phase: The focus was on strengthening the capacity of the Provincial Branches' humanitarian personnel in pre-hospital care, mental health, psychosocial support in emergency situations, and telecommunications. They were also provided with basic equipment to optimize their response capacity.
- Response Phase: Services included serving the community through voluntary blood donation campaigns, pre-hospital care, psychosocial care, and the dissemination of key messages on the prevention of gender-based violence.

The operation initially aimed to reach 4,500 people, but ultimately supported 10,026 individuals across key areas:

- 2,896 received pre-hospital care
- 2,143 received psychosocial support
- 3,648 participated in voluntary blood donation
- 1,339 received self-care guidance to prevent the disruption of family ties

The targeted provinces and cantons included Guayas (Guayaquil), Pichincha (Quito), Cotopaxi (Latacunga), Tungurahua (Ambato), Chimborazo (Riobamba), Sucumbíos (Lago Agrio), Pastaza (Puyo), Azuay (Cuenca), El Oro (Machala), Esmeraldas (Esmeraldas), Loja (Loja), Manabí (Portoviejo), Napo (Tena), Morona Santiago (Macas), Santo Domingo de los Tsáchilas (Santo Domingo de los Tsáchilas), Santa Elena, and Los Ríos.

Explain the selection criteria for the targeted population

- People affected by the context of insecurity.
- People whose mental health has been impacted by the context of violence.
- People who have lost contact with family members due to being on the move or due to lack of connectivity.
- People with catastrophic illnesses or who lack permanent access to medication due to limited health service provision.
- Priority care groups: older adults, children, adolescents, pregnant women, and people with disabilities.
- People who have not received assistance from government institutions due to the high demand for services.

Total Targeted Population

Women	1,524	Rural	30%
Girls (under 18)	785	Urban	70%
Men	1,446	People with disabilities (estimated)	1%
Boys (under 18)	745		
Total targeted population	4,500		



Risk and Security Considerations (including "management")

Does your National Society have anti-fraud and corruption policy?	Yes
Does your National Society have prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse policy?	Yes
Does your National Society have child protection/child safeguarding policy?	Yes
Does your National Society have whistleblower protection policy?	No
Does your National Society have anti-sexual harassment policy?	Yes
Please analyse and indicate potential risks for this operation, its root causes and mitigation actions.	
Risk	Mitigation action
Communication difficulties during travel to affected areas.	Radio communication equipment was provided to institutional vehicles and portable radios to volunteers. These supplies were purchased through the ICRC Cooperation Agreement and installed by a communications specialist, contracted as part of the operation.
Interference in communication during operations.	Maintenance was carried out on the telecommunications repeater systems (repeater, antenna, connectors, duplexers and power supplies).
Limited or no radio communication coverage in communities due to power outages and intermittent service.	Faulty equipment in the repeater systems was replaced, improving communication quality, especially in emergency situations.
Collateral damage to volunteers, humanitarian personnel, and institutional assets due to armed clashes.	<p>The decision was made to reduce missionary activities in areas with high levels of violence.</p> <p>Safe behavior recommendations for volunteers and humanitarian personnel were implemented, avoiding exposure in high-risk areas.</p>
Risk of damage to the institution's reputation.	Statements on the recognition of the internal security crisis were avoided in the media, social media, and other forums. Instead, the decision was made to disseminate information on social media about the ERC's auxiliary role, the Fundamental Principles, and Humanitarian Action.
Risk of assaults and detention of volunteer and paid staff.	<p>Dissemination of the ERC's auxiliary and humanitarian role.</p> <p>Sharing recommendations for safe behavior in situations of violence.</p>
Health effects due to the lack of use of personal protective equipment against active dangerous events.	Personal protective equipment were provided according to the context of the emergency.
Limited access to areas affected by violence and related to the El Niño phenomenon (land movements, flooding, structural collapse, and loss of road networks)	Continuous monitoring of the weather and the condition of access roads to the affected areas.



Humanitarian personnel from the Ecuadorian Red Cross may be victims of sexual harassment or abuse during operations.	The teams were ensured to be mixed in gender composition, and in no case were teams made up solely of women permitted. Before deploying to the operation, the location of the nearest Community Police Unit (UPC) was identified. The operational schedules established by the Operational Security area were respected. In the event of harassment, individuals were familiar with the protocol to follow, which included: (1) immediately leaving the area where the incident occurred; (2) immediately informing the Operational Security representative in their province; and (3) calling 911 or going to the nearest Community Police Unit (UPC).
Emergency operations carry risks that affect both the physical safety and emotional well-being of staff and volunteers.	Organize and ensure the deactivation of personnel and volunteers participating in response actions, as well as the necessary psychosocial support.

Please indicate any security and safety concerns for this operation:

During the implementation of this operation, several security and safety concerns arose, including the risk of humanitarian personnel becoming victims of violence, the possibility of armed confrontations that could endanger both staff and institutional assets, and communication problems resulting from telecommunications system failures caused by the energy crisis. The internal security crisis generated an environment of mistrust and misinformation that hampered the execution of activities and exposed staff to greater risks; however, fortunately, no security incidents were reported.

The context of insecurity in Ecuador had a significant impact on the humanitarian operation, particularly affecting Voluntary Blood Donation (VBD) activities. Curfews and mobility restrictions imposed under the state of emergency complicated blood collection in several provinces. In Tungurahua, time restrictions hampered donation campaigns, reducing the number of donors and limiting the ability to mobilize personnel and equipment to carry out collections effectively.

Insecurity on transportation routes and the risks associated with violence in certain areas also affected the logistics of other community activities. The need to quickly adapt operational strategies and protect staff was crucial to mitigate the impact of these restrictions. This context highlighted the importance of flexible planning and robust security measures to ensure the continuity of operations.

Has the child safeguarding risk analysis assessment been completed?	No
---	----

Implementation



Budget: CHF 101,708
Targeted Persons: 4,500
Assisted Persons: 8,687

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
Number of people receiving pre-hospital care services	700	2,896
Number of staff and volunteers who receive training in pre-hospital care and use of equipment in ambulances	40	470
Number of people receiving care for mental health and psychosocial support needs	500	1,717

Number of humanitarian personnel receiving care and self-care interventions	300	426
Number of units of blood collected, processed and delivered to the public health system	3,000	3,648
Number of people reached by the Voluntary Blood Donation (VBD) awareness campaign	100,000	517,000

Narrative description of achievements

PRE-HOSPITAL CARE

a) Equipment

- With the goal of improving the response to hemorrhagic emergencies in the 15 provinces most affected by violence, 224 units of tactical tourniquets, chest patches, and aluminized blankets were purchased. These supplies were distributed according to the needs of each province to support immediate care in critical situations. Twenty-five units of each item were assigned to Pichincha, Azuay, and El Oro; 20 units to Santo Domingo de los Tsáchilas and Guayas; 15 units to Manabí and Loja; 10 units to Chimborazo, Cotopaxi, Tungurahua, Esmeraldas, Pastaza, Sucumbíos, and Morona Santiago; and nine units to Napo.

- Three mechanical ventilators were purchased and strategically distributed in the provinces of Azuay, Pichincha, and Guayas. This action strengthened the ambulance service's response system in the country's most populated regions. Mechanical ventilators were considered essential elements to ensure adequate ventilatory function and gas control in emergency situations, allowing healthcare personnel to ease the burden of manual airway management and reduce life-threatening risks during transport to the healthcare center.

- Ambulance materials from provincial branches to stop bleeding, such as chest pads, aluminized blankets, and tactical tourniquets, were replenished. These materials were acquired as part of this operation, along with mechanical ventilators, to provide technical care in compliance with the established protocols for each patient's condition. This acquisition has allowed pre-hospital care teams to provide effective, first-response care, ensuring that patients are treated with up-to-date equipment and receive efficient care.

b) Capacity Building

Knowledge updating for volunteers and staff was carried out in two ways. First, a virtual Basic First Aid course was held through the Ecuadorian Red Cross's e-learning platform. This was followed by an in-person workshop, which included practical exercises to assess the effectiveness of the process.

VOLUNTARY BLOOD DONATION

- During the preparation phase, Headquarters purchased portable blood donation kits, which were distributed to ten Provincial Branches prioritized by population (Guayas, Pichincha, Santo Domingo, Manabí, Tungurahua, Loja, El Oro, Morona Santiago, Pastaza, and Chimborazo). Each kit included two 3x3 folding tents, 2 folding tables, 10 folding chairs, 2 coolers, 2 tourniquets, 1 office bag, 1 donor self-exclusion box, and various medical supplies, such as 1 roller forceps, 1 curved Mayo scissors, 1 straight mosquito forceps, 600 6ml EDTA tubes, 400 4ml EDTA tubes, 200 disposable masks, 600 nitrile gloves, 300 transparent bandages, 300 lancets, and 1,200 cotton swabs. These materials optimized the infrastructure and allowed for collections to be held in safe locations. The tents facilitated donor selection and blood collection, ensuring a safe and efficient process.

- The National Blood Center was activated from January to April to facilitate voluntary blood donations, with a goal of 3,000 pints of blood in the 10 prioritized provinces. This goal was well received, despite the context of insecurity that initially affected community participation. By April, 3,648 units of blood had been collected, contributing to the national health system. CEA drop boxes were set up at voluntary blood donation sites to understand the impact of this activity and identify areas for improvement. The results were as follows: 89.9% of those surveyed expressed acceptance of the donation process; 98% expressed satisfaction with the information received before donating blood; and 85% indicated satisfaction with the facilities, noting that some sites needed air conditioning, as well as the need to replace furniture such as armchairs for those who donated.

- The collected blood was safely transported to the National Blood Center or associated blood banks, where the necessary processing was carried out to obtain the different blood components, which were then distributed to health centers throughout the country as needed. Currently, ERC provides 78% of the country's blood through an agreement with the Ministry of Health and 62 agreements with private clinics, guaranteeing the supply of an essential medical resource to save lives.



- In response to the security crisis that affected the population's willingness to donate, a communication campaign was implemented to raise awareness about the importance of blood donation in emergency situations. The campaign included a 30-second animated video, which was shared on the institution's social media channels, reaching 247,000 people nationwide, with 47,000 interactions. This video focused on raising awareness about donating less common blood types. A second video was also produced with general recommendations during a crisis, including key messages about the importance of donating blood and its implications for life. The video reached 215,000 people.

- The intervention not only met the urgent blood needs in the country but also fostered community participation and established a solid foundation for the sustainability of the donation system, thus consolidating the impact of the ERC on public health and the promotion of voluntary donation. This initiative reached 3,648 people in three months across 10 provinces: Guayas, Pichincha, Santo Domingo, Manabí, Tungurahua, Loja and El Oro, Morona Santiago, Pastaza, and Chimborazo. This collection helped counteract a nationally reported decline of approximately 12% per month during the last quarter of 2023. In this context, the impact of the communication campaign through videos with messages about the importance of blood donation, especially in emergency contexts, was evident.

- In emergency situations, such as the security crisis in the country, blood services are affected by the decrease in people coming to donate. For this reason, the initiative to increase extramural collections in safe and accessible locations for the population made it possible to meet the objective of maintaining the blood supply. Thus, 86 collection events took place.

- The Ecuadorian Red Cross established strategic coordination with companies, institutions, and community organizations to maximize the collection of blood units. The technical teams scheduled specific dates to set up donation points, which allowed for broad community participation and support.

The operation successfully exceeded its initial targets by implementing strategic actions that maximized available resources and strengthened inter-institutional coordination:

- One key factor in surpassing projections for pre-hospital care was the increase in secondary transfers between medical centers. These transfers became necessary due to limitations in the resolute capacity of facilities under the Ministry of Public Health and the Ecuadorian Social Security Institute. The ability to carry out these transfers was further enhanced by the medical supplies provided through the operation, ensuring more effective patient care.

- Additionally, inter-institutional coordination played a crucial role in expanding voluntary blood donation efforts. The agreement with the Ministry of Health and 62 private clinics nationwide facilitated access to a broader donor base, significantly increasing participation. Moreover, the implementation of targeted outreach campaigns highlighting the importance of blood donation in contexts of insecurity helped mobilize donors, contributing to the achievement of results beyond initial expectations.

Lessons Learnt

PRE-HOSPITAL CARE

- Given the prevailing safety conditions, a context analysis was conducted to refine pre-hospital care strategies in emergency situations, ensuring adherence to operational safety standards, the Safer Access Policy, and its Manual. To further enhance security and operational efficiency, additional measures were implemented, including verifying proper ambulance labeling, assessing the need to activate Code Silve (a Ministry of Health tool for identifying risk situations for pre-hospital personnel) and monitoring ambulances through the ECU 911 video surveillance system. Furthermore, efforts were made to ensure the appropriate use of protective and identification equipment and apply movement principles, ultimately strengthening staff preparedness and responsiveness to the evolving operational context.

- The Provincial Branches emphasized the importance of having materials, supplies, devices, and biomedical equipment available at the agreed times, which allowed for quality care tailored to the needs of each person served.

- Continuous staff training in patient management in safety situations has been key to an effective response. This process must be maintained to ensure quality standards in prehospital care.

- Having a jointly developed document between the IFRC team and the National Society to clarify the procurement processes for ambulance-related items would facilitate faster procedures and ensure relevance according to the needs of people affected by hazardous events.

- It is necessary to increase the typology of ambulances equipped with mechanical ventilators, ensuring that they have operating permits for Advanced Life Support.

MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT

- It is important to consider the needs and opinions of the Provincial Branches when compiling a list of the kits and teaching materials, since they are the ones who will carry out community activities and are familiar with the realities and needs of the population in the different locations.

- It is necessary to consider providing mobile devices in addition to chips to provide psychosocial care to the Provincial Branch teams.

- It is important to raise awareness among authorities and those responsible for the lines of action regarding the supervision of support



for technical staff and volunteers.

- It is important to generate physical and digital information necessary for promoting mental health or for the MHPSS response, both for the communities assisted and for humanitarian personnel. It is also important to manage this content on social media.
- It is necessary to provide facilities for the replication of training sessions, workshops, and inductions, both in person and not just virtually, to ensure that humanitarian personnel deployed to crisis response acquire the necessary learning.
- Paid staff must be actively involved, especially those from pre-hospital care, in strategies to prevent mental illnesses such as post-traumatic stress disorder, considering the high exposure of such personnel due to the area in which they work.

VOLUNTARY BLOOD DONATION

- The security crisis and the specific conditions of each provincial branch have demonstrated that donation campaigns must be flexible and adapt to changing contexts to ensure the continuity of citizen participation. Furthermore, it is essential to clearly inform people about the safety measures implemented, which builds donor confidence and encourages their participation.
- Maintaining assertive communication with the focal points of the voluntary blood donation line is key to ensuring that the donation processes adequately comply with the technical guidelines and achieve their objectives.
- Communication campaigns on voluntary blood donation were very well received and encouraged people to visit the donation points to receive information about them. Therefore, this strategy must be maintained as it can attract more people.

Challenges

PREHOSPITAL CARE

- Harmonizing the Ecuadorian Red Cross system with IFRC processes remains a challenge, particularly regarding the procurement of medical equipment, which highlights the need to establish a specific and more streamlined procedure to optimize response times.
- A challenge for the sustainability of activities is finding sources of funding for the renewal of training mannequins at the Provincial Branch Training Centers, which are essential to guarantee the quality of training.
- Maintaining prehospital resources in operation, along with strengthening Safer Access and Operational Security through procedures such as Code Silver and video surveillance systems, have been essential for proper management of incidents with multiple casualties; however, they have also been a challenge due to the context of insecurity.

VOLUNTARY BLOOD DONATION

- Due to the unsafe situation, it was a challenge to identify safe locations to establish blood donation points, using materials such as tents, chairs, tables, and other supplies and materials in good condition so that blood donors could come with peace of mind and confidence in receiving care in compliance with established biosafety protocols. This was also due to the fact that some areas, especially on the Ecuadorian coast, were involved in acts of violence such as takeovers of rehabilitation centers, television stations, and attacks on public roads. However, no thefts or acts of violence were reported at the collection points.

MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT

- Providing online psychosocial care was a challenge, as not all areas had internet access or signal, and some locations suffered power outages. For the safety of the volunteer team, it was not possible to travel to certain communities to provide care due to the context of violence. Therefore, one of the strategies was to transport the previously identified population to the Provincial Branches for in-person care.
- Some Provincial Branches did not feel prepared to provide psychosocial care to the families of incarcerated people, so they were referred to other specialized centers, such as health centers and civil society organizations.



Protection, Gender And Inclusion

Budget: CHF 10,118

Targeted Persons: 2,000

Assisted Persons: 301,915

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
-------	--------	--------



People reached nationwide through the dissemination/distribution of key (direct) messages:	2,000	301,915
Humanitarian personnel, and volunteers reached through PGI activities	100	123

Narrative description of achievements

Production of Materials

The following audiovisual and radio products were developed:

- 1 educational video addressing crisis management for children, which was disseminated during community sessions, published on the institution's YouTube page, and officially shared alongside a methodological guide on its use.
- 1 awareness-raising video for adults on dialogue with children in crisis situations, distributed via social media: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oaUnLwINGfY>
- 2 awareness-raising radio spots providing information on response pathways for gender-based violence, in Spanish.
- 2 awareness-raising radio spots on gender-based violence in Kichwa and Shuar.

The materials may be reviewed at the following link: https://ifrcorg.sharepoint.com/:f:/s/IFRCSharing/EneFMkCr6OVOq40RbGT1jVgBlzf0SVDdpwq1zebmRv7s_A?e=vhvDnd

Dissemination

The Spanish-language radio spots were broadcast on a nationally reaching station, significantly exceeding the initial target of 2,000 people, reaching 25,855 individuals. The spots in Indigenous languages were shared through a network of popular and community radios within Indigenous territories to ensure a broader reach, ultimately engaging 305,453 people, as confirmed by certification issued by the radio network.

The use of services for mass messaging on social media, combined with targeted radio broadcasts in local languages such as Kichwa, enabled the ERC to significantly expand its reach. These actions, focused on preventing family separation, gender-based violence, child protection, and promoting ERC's auxiliary role, helped to reach a wider audience in a massive way, receiving positive feedback and broad acceptance from communities.

Regarding the videos, the educational material was distributed, alongside its usage guide, through the Ecuadorian Red Cross territorial network, reaching not only the Provincial Branches directly involved in the project but also all 24 provinces nationwide. Meanwhile, the awareness video was disseminated through paid media outreach, significantly expanding its reach beyond initial expectations, ultimately engaging 100,000 people across the country. Additionally, beyond paid dissemination, coordination was established with local actors, such as civil society organizations in target territories, to ensure the video's integration into community activities.

The development of edu-communicational materials allowed the National Society to shift its communication strategy, moving beyond social media as the primary dissemination space to local radio networks, effectively reaching a broader audience with key messages.

The successful engagement of Indigenous communities demonstrates the application of the protection, gender, and inclusion approach, marking a significant achievement in ensuring that various Indigenous nationalities had access to essential information on gender-based violence prevention.

Technical Note: The indicator "People reached nationwide through the dissemination/distribution of key (direct) messages" includes people reached indirectly through radio broadcasts, social media, and in-person dissemination activities carried out by branches. Due to the complex security context, collecting disaggregated data on people directly reached in all dissemination activities was challenging. Therefore, the indicator reflects the estimated reach through these mass communication channels, rather than strictly direct interactions.

30% adjustment for potential duplication was applied in the calculation, acknowledging that individuals may have been reached through multiple channels, including radio broadcasts, social media, and community-based activities. This percentage was based on common practice in communication campaigns where overlapping audiences are expected, especially in contexts where security constraints limit the collection of more precise, disaggregated data. As a result, the estimated number of unique people reached nationwide is approximately 301,915.

Knowledge Reinforcement

A one-hour virtual webinar was conducted to reinforce the PGI approach in humanitarian response during emergencies, with a focus on



assistance tailored to the vulnerabilities of priority care groups, as outlined in Article 35 of the Ecuadorian Constitution: older adults, children, adolescents, persons with disabilities, persons deprived of liberty, individuals with catastrophic illnesses, those in human mobility situations, and substance users.

The webinar featured a specialist from the ICRC presenting on differentiated impacts in situations of violence. It was directed at humanitarian personnel and volunteers, reaching a total of 123 participants, exceeding the initial target of 100 attendees.

Lessons Learnt

- Given the complexity of conducting community actions during an emergency, Provincial Branches were encouraged to integrate these materials into future initiatives during periods of peace. This approach would allow humanitarian teams to become more familiar with the resources, ensuring smoother implementation when needed.
- The development of key messages in Indigenous languages allowed for greater outreach and more effective communication of awareness efforts. This experience demonstrated the value of working with popular and community spaces to ensure messages are culturally adapted. Rather than simply translating from Spanish into Indigenous languages, it was essential to mediate the cultural meaning of the messages to enhance their impact.

Challenges

- Emergencies have response times that are challenging to align with community-based risk prevention actions. Therefore, it is crucial to maintain continuous processes during regular periods to reinforce key concepts before emergencies arise. This approach is especially important in a context of persistent insecurity, where direct prevention efforts and discussions on a culture of peace were not feasible, particularly in communities affected by the presence of organized crime groups.
- Developing communication-adapted materials for the various Indigenous peoples and nationalities of Ecuador, while identifying the most suitable distribution and dissemination channels, posed a significant challenge. The objective was to expand outreach beyond social media and mainstream communication platforms, ensuring that key messages effectively reached broader and more diverse audiences.



Migration And Displacement

Budget: CHF 19,170
Targeted Persons: 300
Assisted Persons: 1,339

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
Number of people receiving talks on self-care measures to prevent the breakup of family links	300	1,339
Number of people reached by means of preventive messages received through mass messaging and social networks	1,000,000	1,101,253
Strengthened RFL service points	15	15

Narrative description of achievements

Strengthening Mobile RFL Service Points

- To enhance community support, materials were acquired to improve assistance in Restoring Family Links (RFL) cases, alongside Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) services.
- These materials were procured for 15 service points across 13 provinces and 15 locations, including Azuay, Cotopaxi, Chimborazo, El Oro, Esmeraldas, Guayas, Loja, Manabí, Morona Santiago, Napo, Pastaza, Pichincha, and Tungurahua. Sucumbíos and Santo Domingo already had these materials, funded by the ICRC.



-The materials were distributed to RFL service points in March and April.

Materials for Mobile Service Points:

- 1 3x3m tent with institutional branding
- 1 power extension cord
- 2 electrical power strips (each with 3 outlets and 2 USB ports)
- 2 USB charging power strips
- 1 voltage regulator
- 1 table
- 3 chairs
- 1 spotlight
- 1 promotional totem (only for 6 service points, specifically Azuay (2 totems), El Oro, Guayas (2 totems), and Morona Santiago, based on budget availability)

Adaptation of Preventive Measures in Spanish, English, Quichua, and Ecuadorian Sign Language

- Design and production services were contracted to create three videos on self-care measures to prevent family separation.
- Videos were produced in Spanish with subtitles in English, Quichua, and Ecuadorian Sign Language to facilitate accessibility at high-traffic locations for foreign nationals.
- The communication initiative reached 1,101,253 people, exceeding the initial target of 1,000,000 through social media dissemination, receiving widespread public approval.
- The materials included videos on RFL preventive measures and awareness messages related to RFL services.

Dissemination of Key Messages to Prevent Family Separation

To reach populations effectively across the 15 intervention provinces, two digital outreach mechanisms were used:

- Mass WhatsApp messaging service, reaching 100,000 people, with 10,291 responses received as direct feedback.
- Paid social media dissemination of preventive video messages, reaching approximately 1,101,253 people, significantly expanding the number of beneficiaries.

Additionally, provinces and municipalities with high population density, Quichua-speaking communities, and tourist areas were prioritised. These included Chimborazo, where Quichua-speaking populations are concentrated, and Morona Santiago, where Indigenous languages are widely spoken.

Community Awareness on Self-Care Measures

Preventive RFL measures were shared with communities through schools, strategic partners, mass gathering sites, events (such as Easter processions in all intervention provinces), temporary accommodations, transport terminals, educational centres, and other spaces.

Trained volunteers from Provincial Branches carried out these activities following a structured process, leading to high public demand and surpassing the initial targets:

- Identification and engagement with local representatives
- Distribution of preventive RFL cards and luggage tags (pre-positioned materials funded by ICRC)
- Guidance on completing and using the cards
- Awareness-raising on the importance of maintaining communication and contact with family members across different national contexts

Mental Health Support

One of the key achievements was the collaborative effort with MHPSS teams to identify individuals who, in addition to receiving preventive information, also required psychosocial support.

Lessons Learnt

- It is essential to continue adapting preventive measures to additional settings, such as educational institutions and temporary shelters, as these populations face various data protection vulnerabilities within RFL. Since preventive messaging on family separation was disseminated massively, there was no need to collect sensitive personal data, as interactions were single-instance rather than long-term follow-ups.
- Establishing a structured promotion and dissemination schedule for RFL preventive measures on institutional digital platforms is crucial. This will ensure regular dissemination of these resources, extending beyond emergency periods to provide continuous public



awareness.

- It is vital to adapt teaching and awareness mechanisms for key RFL messages based on the specific characteristics and needs of urban and rural communities. In rural areas, door-to-door visits have proven to be a more effective strategy, facilitating direct engagement and stronger community participation.

Challenges

- One of the key challenges was ensuring the continued activation of RFL preventive services in the field, working alongside key stakeholders to maintain strong community engagement. The widespread interest from the population underscored the critical need to reinforce family link protection across all contexts, including security crises. Given the prevailing instability, this issue gained significant attention, highlighting the importance of sustained outreach and protective measures.
- Another challenge was ensuring high community participation, which was achieved through effective outreach mechanisms identified by Provincial Branches, along with strong interrelations with local partners. Maintaining this level of engagement requires sustained coordination efforts.
- Implementing and raising awareness among personnel regarding the Code of Conduct for Personal Data Protection in Restoring Family Links (RFL) operations posed a challenge, as it required systematic training and adoption across various teams.
- Strengthening the network of key stakeholders involved in Restoring Family Links was an ongoing challenge, demanding coordinated action and improved collaboration to ensure effective service delivery in crisis scenarios.



Community Engagement And Accountability

Budget: CHF 20,786

Targeted Persons: 100,000

Assisted Persons: 1,040,546

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
People reached nationwide with mass messaging on key messages on the Fundamental Principles and Auxiliary Role of the State.	100,000	1,040,546
Number of people reached by feedback mechanisms	300	820
Context Assessment	1	1

Narrative description of achievements

Production of Videos and Communication Materials

- Key messages on the Auxiliary Role of the State were developed to raise community awareness regarding the primary objective of the Ecuadorian Red Cross (ERC) and facilitate a better understanding of its functions. These messages were disseminated nationwide through mass messaging campaigns, with a particular focus on provinces experiencing high levels of violence.
- Key messages related to the Red Cross emblem were produced and shared via social media, ensuring that communities understood the importance of avoiding unauthorised use of the ERC emblem. Additionally, a TikTok video highlighting the emblem's significance was circulated.
- Six 2D animated videos, each lasting approximately 30 seconds, were produced to interactively engage the public with messages on self-care, respect for the Red Cross emblem, and the Fundamental Principles. These videos were published on the institution's Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter/X accounts.

Video Promotion

- To promote self-care measures, five videos were strategically advertised on social media (Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter/X) over a one-month period. The campaign aimed to reach at least 100,000 users, targeting both men and women between 18 and 65 years old. The interactive videos on safety and self-care used sensitive language adapted to the delicate context, ensuring effective communication.
- The campaign successfully reached 1,040,546 people. This impact was made possible through strategic promotion, which expanded outreach while also allowing for an evaluation of the cost-benefit relationship in crisis communication.



- The campaign also demonstrated that sensitive topics can be addressed strategically. Direct messaging on security measures in a crisis context can be counterproductive; therefore, a preventive approach was applied in the communication materials, ensuring messages promoted protection without exposing humanitarian personnel or communities.
- Facebook proved to be the most effective platform for meeting outreach goals. The male audience (aged 18 to 64 years) showed the highest engagement, with 732 interactions across both genders.
- Twitter/X content resonated most with men aged 20 to 29 years, generating profile views, impressions, and interactions from this audience.

Community Feedback

- A suggestion box was implemented to facilitate the exchange of ideas, concerns, and needs. It also allowed community members to propose modifications to voluntary blood donation sites, ensuring their input was considered in operational planning.
- During voluntary blood donation activities in intervention Provincial Branches, the community was encouraged to share their opinions. A total of 820 satisfaction surveys were collected through closed-question surveys, evaluating various categories such as pre-donation information, facility quality, donation process, and service standards.
- 570 men and 250 women participated, aged 18 to 65 years, across the 10 provinces where this initiative was implemented.
- Results revealed an 89.9% satisfaction rate for services provided, 98% satisfaction with the information received, and 95% satisfaction with facility conditions.
- Community feedback highlighted widespread approval and recognition of the actions carried out for their benefit.

Analysis of the Impact of Security Conditions on Humanitarian Needs in Ecuador

As part of the Auxiliary Role to Public Authorities, a data collection process was conducted in nine provinces (Azuay, Sucumbíos, Esmeraldas, Santa Elena, Guayas, Pastaza, Santo Domingo, El Oro, and Manabí) which experienced high levels of violence throughout the year, with some provinces under a state of emergency.

A total of 2,332 surveys were administered: 1,415 to community members and 917 to volunteer personnel.

The study aimed to assess the impact of insecurity on humanitarian service accessibility. A final report was produced, detailing the main findings, operational recommendations, and emerging needs.

Findings revealed that the deterioration of security conditions in Ecuador has increased the demand for humanitarian services while heightening risks for communities and volunteer personnel. Emerging needs include access to healthcare services, emergency response training, safe water, and essential supplies, reflecting both traditional and newly arising demands. Additionally, the study identified barriers such as restrictions on mobility, interruptions to basic services, and heightened volunteer stress, all of which impact participation and overall well-being.

As operational recommendations, the report emphasizes the importance of inter-institutional collaboration, continuous monitoring of local dynamics, and adaptation of operational protocols to ensure safe, timely, and sustainable humanitarian responses.

Lessons Learnt

Communication

- Audiovisual material is an educational and interactive way to reach society with clear messages.
- It is important to constantly update communication strategies and products to adequately reach affected people.
- It is important that videos do not exceed 30 seconds to maintain the audience's attention.
- One of the most effective strategies for conducting a study on the impact of the insecurity context on humanitarian needs was the implementation of digital surveys combined with semi-structured interviews, which allowed for data collection in contexts with mobility restrictions and challenging security conditions. Furthermore, the use of reliable communication channels such as WhatsApp was prioritized to reach both communities and volunteers.
- The integration of community feedback mechanisms was also critical for adjusting operations in real time and strengthening trust in the territories.

Challenges

- One of the main challenges was raising awareness among Ecuadorian Red Cross (ERC) personnel regarding the importance of effectively integrating the Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) approach into all institutional actions. This required overcoming the



perception that its implementation was the responsibility of a single individual and fostering a collective commitment across the entire team.

- Maintaining trained personnel within the ERC can be complex due to the high turnover of focal points or operational leads across various territories. Ensuring continuity in expertise and knowledge transfer remains an ongoing challenge.

- A key challenge in conducting the study was the design and formulation of survey questions, considering the security context and the protection of personnel deploying the questionnaires. Efforts were made to ensure the instruments were as non-intrusive as possible, safeguarding both data integrity and responder safety.

- The Communications Department faced the challenge of ensuring that the public did not perceive the ERC as part of the State but instead understood its role in crisis and emergency response. To address this, a communication plan was developed, including the creation and dissemination of informational materials, carefully managing the institution's image and reputation. The campaign also sought to enhance visibility around the ERC's role in self-care messaging, providing clear information about the emblem and reinforcing actions based on the Fundamental Principles. The initiative was highly successful, gaining widespread acceptance on social media and reaching a significant number of users



Secretariat Services

Budget: CHF 4,526

Targeted Persons: 0

Assisted Persons: 0

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
# of monitoring visits made during operation	1	0
# of surge deployments	1	1

Narrative description of achievements

Activities carried out by Surge:

1. Provided guidance on the procurement and installation of communication systems in priority provincial branches.
2. Reviewed and updated the National Society's telecommunications training materials.
3. Conducted a comprehensive assessment of the national telecommunications system across nine branches, covering:
 - Radio network evaluation: Assessed the utilisation and operational effectiveness of the radio network, identifying areas for improvement and potential expansion.
 - Coverage testing: Conducted extensive signal coverage tests in the provinces visited to map signal intensity and identify coverage gaps.
 - Equipment inventory and maintenance review: Examined the registration and maintenance procedures for deployed equipment in the visited provinces, ensuring optimal performance and longevity.
4. Developed a national improvement proposal.

Lessons Learnt

- The use of radio communication equipment is a fundamental tool in carrying out institutional and mission-related activities, such as pre-hospital care, kit distribution, or CVA. It is also a key pillar of operational security for both volunteer and contracted personnel. Therefore, periodic maintenance of installed equipment must be prioritized.
- It is essential to share protocols and procedures related to telecommunications, strengthen personnel capabilities, and upgrade telecommunications equipment to ensure Provincial Branches have fully functional communication systems that can provide a timely response in conflict situations, particularly considering the current security challenges in the country.
- It is important for provinces to utilize the radio communication network during their regular operations, rather than restricting its use to emergency situations.
- Maintaining the National Society's radio communication network as the primary tool for ensuring continuous coordination between



humanitarian teams and the governing bodies of the National Society is vital. This will enable effective, secure, and well-coordinated responses in contexts of violence and crisis.

Challenges

- Prior to contracting the specialized company, several limitations hindered the expansion of radio connectivity nationwide. Key obstacles included geographical distances, topographic barriers, a limited number of trained personnel within the territorial network, and the high costs of radio communication equipment. These challenges were effectively addressed through the implementation of the specialized service.
- Security concerns restricted on-site monitoring by the IFRC Andean Countries Delegation, which instead conducted remote oversight of operations without in-person monitoring visits. This approach ensured continuity of support despite the limitations imposed by the security context.



National Society Strengthening

Budget: CHF 62,649

Targeted Persons: 0

Assisted Persons: 0

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
Implementation of the Scriptsace license to achieve the decentralization of the National Volunteering System (SIVOL)	1	1
Number of volunteers trained in Stay Safe and MSR	15	21
Number of volunteers provided with protective and visibility equipment	300	1,327
Number of government board members trained in IHL, Auxiliary Role, and Security Policy of the ERC	15	31
Lessons learned workshop	1	1
Provinces that strengthen their telecommunications network	17	17

Narrative description of achievements

Training for Governing Board Members on International Humanitarian Law (IHL), Auxiliary Role, Ecuadorian Red Cross Security Policy, and Safer Access

- With the participation of 31 individuals, including volunteers and Presidents of the 15 prioritized Provincial Branches, the primary objective of this activity was achieved. The focus was on preparing and strengthening the National Society to provide humanitarian assistance to affected populations in the prioritized provinces, ensuring safer access standards based on risk analysis and the evolution of the Internal Security Crisis.
- Participants attended from the following Provincial Branches: Azuay (2), Cotopaxi (2), Chimborazo (2), El Oro (2), Esmeraldas (3), Guayas (2), Loja (2), Manabí (2), Morona Santiago (2), Napo (2), Pastaza (2), Pichincha (2), Tungurahua (29), Sucumbíos (2), and Santo Domingo (2).
- The results of this workshop were positive, as it enabled Provincial Branch authorities and operational security focal points to develop skills in International Humanitarian Law through practical exercises. These exercises allowed participants to analyse real-life cases that could occur in their territories in violent contexts, conduct context assessments, and examine the evolution of the internal security crisis in violence-affected provinces.
- The workshop received strong engagement, demonstrating high levels of participant receptiveness, which was reflected in the practical exercises.
- To support the internal training and strengthening of the National Society, 400 copies of the Statute and Regulations of the Ecuadorian



Red Cross and 10,000 informational brochures on IHL were printed.

Learning Outcomes Of The Training

- Identifying the scope of application of IHL and the individuals under its specific protection in an International Armed Conflict (IAC) and a Non-International Armed Conflict (NIAC).
- Understanding the relationship between IHL and International Human Rights Law (IHRL), as well as the legal instruments that safeguard them.

Telecommunications Strategy

- One of the key achievements in this area was the contracting of a specialist company in telecommunications equipment maintenance, which provided technical support to the 15 Provincial Branches through their focal points. The company offered technical guidance, ensuring understanding of the installed equipment while assessing geographical barriers and other factors affecting effective communication between Provincial Branches, particularly during crises.
- The installation of telecommunications equipment acquired through the cooperation agreement in the 15 Provincial Branches was a major milestone, ensuring functional communications infrastructure, including radios and radio relay devices. These installations enabled real-time monitoring and the timely alerting of threats that could obstruct humanitarian assistance efforts. The Surge deployment complemented these installations during the first three months of the DREF operation.
- A face-to-face training session was conducted for 10 telecommunications focal points, covering antenna installation, connector assembly, and communication testing—essential topics enabling telecommunications officers to utilise the newly installed and acquired equipment in Provincial Branches.
- The deployment of a telecommunications Surge specialist was highly valuable during the first three months of operations, as it allowed for a diagnosis of existing equipment issues. This assessment involved visits to nine provinces (Santo Domingo de los Tsáchilas, Esmeraldas, Manabí, Guayas, Los Ríos, Cotopaxi, Tungurahua, Pastaza, and Napo) to evaluate the National Telecommunications System, determining the feasibility of contracting a company to continue the process initiated by the Surge specialist.

Printing Of Pocket-Sized Guides For Volunteers And Humanitarian Personnel

- Pocket-sized guides titled "Guide For Emergency Response Teams" were developed, providing clear and concise guidelines for communication in critical situations. These guides served as key tools to ensure coherence and effectiveness in humanitarian operations.
- The distribution was carried out in project-affected provinces, tailored to the specific needs of each Provincial Branch. Provinces with larger humanitarian teams received higher quantities of copies.
- The guide's content included practical recommendations, key messages supporting the Ecuadorian Red Cross's mission, and a FAQ section. This practical resource enabled designated spokespersons and humanitarian personnel to perform their duties more efficiently, providing clear and proactive guidance on how to act in crisis scenarios.

Acquisition Of Scriptcase License

With the acquisition of the Scriptcase license, the following was achieved:

- Maintenance of the SIVOL platform
- Decentralized operational functionalities within SIVOL
- New features and system enhancements within the Volunteering Management System
- Thanks to this acquisition, over 8,000 volunteers and the institution benefit from more efficient data management via SIVOL, which is used by Provincial Volunteer Coordinators.

Lessons Learned Workshop

On 18 July, the Lessons Learned Workshop was held virtually, with participation from the Provincial Branches involved in the project and the technical team at National Headquarters. The workshop lasted approximately four hours, following a participatory methodology led by the Planning Department of the Ecuadorian Red Cross. This collaborative session identified strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for improvement in strategic, technical, and operational aspects of the project's implementation.

Lessons Learnt

- High engagement in humanitarian personnel training across the territories. This was attributed to effective mobilization by Provincial Branches and the strong motivation of volunteers and humanitarian personnel to improve their emergency response capabilities. It was concluded that face-to-face training should continue, as it has demonstrated positive reception from participants.
- The implementation of activities proved appropriate within the context of insecurity, including initiatives such as voluntary blood donation.



- The distribution of 60 safety helmets, 44 acquired through DREF, across the 15 Provincial Branches, had a positive impact on both volunteers and humanitarian personnel, ensuring safe operations in the field.
- The Humanitarian Diplomacy and IHL Workshop was supported by the technical facilitation team on Principles and Values, who led practical exercises applying fundamental IHL knowledge and regulations. This workshop provided a valuable opportunity for participants to compare the principles established in IHL with the current national situation, enhancing their contextual understanding.
- A key lesson learned was the importance of continuous training on IHL and safer access for personnel. It was recommended that alternative methodologies, such as virtual courses and webinars, be incorporated to ensure regular capacity-building opportunities.
- The Communications Department identified the need to develop communication materials containing guidelines and recommendations to support designated spokespersons and humanitarian personnel, enabling them to carry out their roles more effectively.
- Ensuring the continuity of IHL training for Ecuadorian Red Cross volunteers remains a priority, reinforcing knowledge and skills for humanitarian response.
- Periodic updates on IHL and IHRL knowledge should be provided to governing bodies, ensuring that all 24 Ecuadorian Red Cross Provincial Branches receive training to strengthen institutional preparedness.
- It was essential to equip Provincial Branches with fully operational digital devices, maintain telecommunications infrastructure, and enhance the response capabilities of focal points in this area. Strengthening these systems helps mitigate potential impacts on both public and private communications networks, especially in crisis situations.
- The communication material, specifically the guide, must be reviewed, updated, and periodically shared to improve emergency and crisis response.

Challenges

- Communication focal points in the Provincial Branches tend to have high turnover, meaning not all personnel had access to or knowledge of the tools developed, such as the pocket manual or crisis communication guidelines. For this reason, it was essential to send an official directive with key action guidelines for such situations, serving as a strategic communication approach from National Headquarters.
- The delay in the helmet import process resulted in their arrival at a later stage of operations. However, Provincial Branches were still able to utilize this equipment in the project response.
- The volatile security context required ongoing monitoring, updates on potential risks, and mitigation measures for security management across the territorial network. Some risks that showed an increase included theft, extortion, homicide, and kidnapping, necessitating adjustments in routes, schedule changes for activities such as blood donation, and identification of secure locations for the implementation of other community activities.
- The Lessons Learned Workshop identified restricted schedules and other factors, such as the need to determine secure locations for blood donation sites and difficulties in user mobility due to route changes or transport schedule modifications related to the state of emergency and insecurity, as the main obstacles to the effective implementation of community activities.



Financial Report

I. Summary

Opening Balance	0
Funds & Other Income	218,956
DREF Response Pillar	218,956
Expenditure	-214,622
Closing Balance	4,334

II. Expenditure by planned operations / enabling approaches

Description	Budget	Expenditure	Variance
PO01 - Shelter and Basic Household Items			0
PO02 - Livelihoods			0
PO03 - Multi-purpose Cash			0
PO04 - Health	101,708	198,481	-96,773
PO05 - Water, Sanitation & Hygiene			0
PO06 - Protection, Gender and Inclusion	10,118		10,118
PO07 - Education			0
PO08 - Migration	19,170		19,170
PO09 - Risk Reduction, Climate Adaptation and Recovery		975	-975
PO10 - Community Engagement and Accountability	20,786		20,786
PO11 - Environmental Sustainability			0
Planned Operations Total	151,781	199,456	-47,675
EA01 - Coordination and Partnerships			0
EA02 - Secretariat Services	4,526	166	4,360
EA03 - National Society Strengthening	62,649	15,000	47,649
Enabling Approaches Total	67,175	15,166	52,009
Grand Total	218,956	214,622	4,334

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

Please explain variances (if any)

A total of CHF 218,956 was allocated from the Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF) for the implementation of this operation. By the end of the operation, total expenditures amounted to CHF 214,522. The unspent balance of CHF 4,334 will be returned to the DREF.

The most notable variances between the budgeted and actual expenditures include:

- Since the funds allocated for IFRC monitoring visits could not be utilized due to security-related travel restrictions, a request was made—as part of the Operation Update—to transfer \$15,000 from Secretariat Services to the National Society Strengthening line, enabling the



contracting of a telecommunications company to provide the following services:

- Installation of telecommunications equipment (radios) acquired through ICRC.
 - Maintenance of existing equipment in Provincial Branches, including power sources and telecommunications cables.
 - Training workshops for telecommunications focal points from Provincial Branches involved in the project.
-
- During the purchase of ventilators, only one supplier submitted a proposal, requiring IFRC approval to proceed with the procurement process.

Financial Note: Please note that while the total expenditure is accurate, the breakdown by planned operations and enabling approaches may contain approximate figures due to recent updates in IFRC's ERP system.



Contact Information

For further information, specifically related to this operation please contact:

National Society contact: Dr. Juan Carlos Vizcarra, Secretary General, jvizcarra@cuzroja.org.ec, +593 2582482

IFRC Appeal Manager: Ruben Romero, Head of Country Cluster Delegation, ruben.romero@ifrc.org

IFRC Project Manager: Julian Perez, Coordinator, Programs and Operations, julian.perez@ifrc.org

IFRC focal point for the emergency: Julian Perez, Coordinator, Programs and Operations, julian.perez@ifrc.org

Media Contact: Susana Arroyo, Manager, Regional Communications, susana.arroyo@ifrc.org

[Click here for reference](#)

