



# MALAWI

## 2025-2026 IFRC network country plan



Multi-Year Funding Requirement **CHF 35.3M**

24 March 2025

### In support of the Malawi Red Cross Society



**33**

National Society  
branches



**2,150**

National Society  
local units



**272**

National Society  
staff



**85,000**

National Society  
volunteers

### People to be reached



**948,000**

Climate and  
environment



**2.4M**

Disasters  
and crises



**2.4M**

Health and  
wellbeing



**320,000**

Migration and  
displacement



**1.3M**

Values, power  
and inclusion

### IFRC network multi-year focus

#### Longer-term needs

- Disaster risk reduction and response
  - Food security and livelihoods
- Health, water, sanitation and hygiene
  - Climate change adaptation

#### Capacity development

- Volunteer management
- Resource mobilization

### Key country data links

INFORM Severity rating

**High**

INFORM Climate Change Risk Index

**Medium**

Human Development Index rank

**172**

World Bank Population figure

**21.1M**

World Bank Population below poverty line

**50.7%**

IFRC Country Cluster Delegation for  
Zimbabwe, Zambia & Malawi, Harare

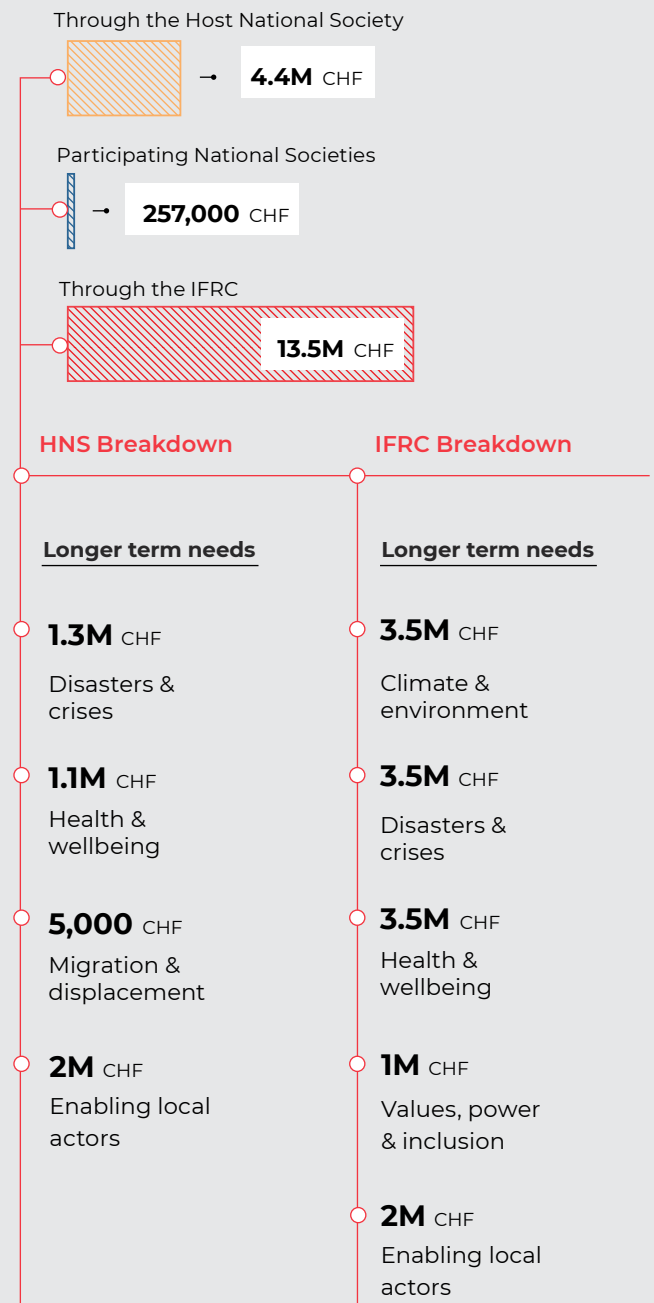
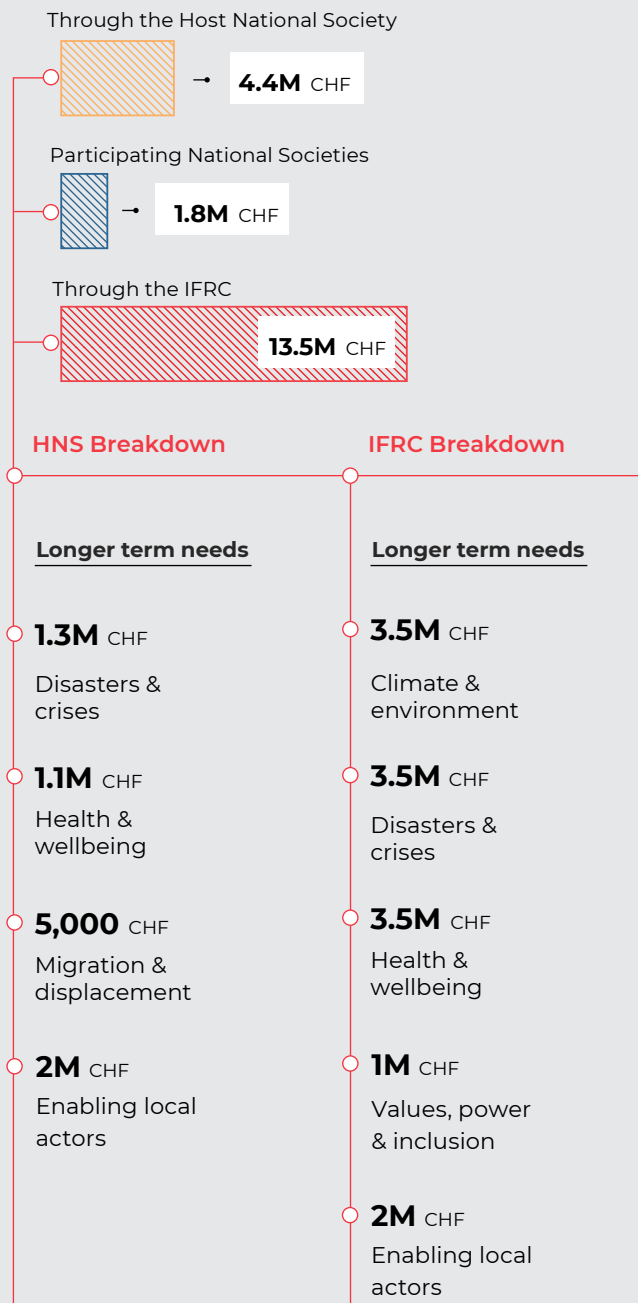
# Funding requirements

2025

2026\*\*











**Total 17.1M CHF**

**Total 18.2M CHF**



See back page for explanatory note on funding requirements

## Participating National Societies bilateral support for 2025

National Society name	Funding Requirement	Climate	Disasters and crises	Health and wellbeing	Migration	Values, power and inclusion	Enabling local actors
Belgian Red Cross	246,000						
Danish Red Cross	1.3M						
Icelandic Red Cross	107,000						
Swiss Red Cross	150,000						

Total Funding requirement **CHF 1.8M**

### Participating National Societies

Belgian Red Cross

Danish Red Cross

Icelandic Red Cross

Swiss Red Cross

### IFRC Appeal codes

Long-term needs:

**MAAMW003**

### Hazards



Tropical storms



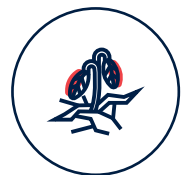
Disease outbreak



Floods



Food insecurity



Drought

# NATIONAL SOCIETY PROFILE

The **Malawi Red Cross Society** was established by an Act of Parliament in 1966 and admitted to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) in 1971. It has acted as an auxiliary to the public authorities since its inception, providing support in disaster preparedness, risk reduction and response, and the strengthening of Malawi's legal and policy framework for disaster risk management.

The National Society is present across the country with its vast network of volunteers and 33 branches in 28 districts and many local units. At a national level, it has a pool of 120 trained national disaster response team members specialized in different fields, including: water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), relief, shelter, nutrition, food security, livelihoods, protection, gender and inclusion (PGI), data management and communications. The National Society's staff, volunteers, communities and community leaders have been trained on community engagement and accountability (CEA), and it has integrated this way of working into its programming. It has also institutionalized cash and voucher assistance (CVA) by implementing cash transfers since 2009. Staff and volunteers

are trained in community-based health, first aid and disease surveillance, and focus on active case finding. The National Society has substantial experience in implementing health programmes, including health care in emergencies. The Malawi Red Cross Society provided vital support to the health authorities for the COVID-19 response, working in partnership with the Ministry of Health, and was also one of the leading humanitarian organizations to support the government in the fight against the cholera outbreak in 2022.

As the Malawi Red Cross Society Strategic Plan 2020–2024 concludes, preparations are underway to develop a new plan for 2025–2030. Key focus areas of the current strategy will include disaster risk reduction, organizational development, health, WASH and strengthening internal controls.

In 2023, The Malawi Red Cross Society reached about nine million people by its long term services and development programmes, and approximately eight million people by disaster response and early recovery programmes over time.

# IFRC NETWORK ACTION

## JOINT SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

Malawi is split by the Great Rift Valley in the North and the mass of Lake Malawi, with its amazing biodiversity running from North to South. The area of the country is 118,480 square kilometres; however, the length of the country makes access and logistics more difficult. The capital city is Lilongwe, and the other main cities include Blantyre, Zomba and Mzuzu. Malawi has a population of over 21 million people, ranking it 62nd out of 196 countries for population density. The total population is increasing by approximately three per cent per year due to a fertility rate of 3.7 births per woman. The population is expected to double by 2038.

Malawi is a peaceful country and has had stable governments since independence in 1964. One-party rule ended in Malawi in 1993, and since then, multi-party presidential and parliamentary elections have been held every five years. The last presidential elections were held in June 2020.

Malawi is one of the poorest countries in the world and is ranked 169 out of 189 countries in the Human Development Index (HDI), making it one of the world's least developed countries. This slower level of development is due in part to its landlocked position, poor utilization of natural resources, over reliance on rain-fed agriculture and low levels of social and technical innovation. Despite implementing significant economic and structural reforms to build economic growth (the country moved up by 45 per cent in the HDI ranking in the past 30 years), the economy remains heavily dependent on rain-fed agriculture. Between 80 per cent to 90 per cent of the population, primarily residing in rural areas, live on overcrowded plots and grow subsistence crops. This makes them extremely vulnerable to disasters, particularly climatic shocks and yield is low, with hunger and malnutrition widespread.

The economic situation has worsened, in part due to COVID-19, but also due to inflation rates which continue to rise in 2022 from 12 per cent in January to around 28 per cent as of August 2023. This is due to rising global commodity prices, fuel costs, the impact of the conflict in Ukraine, the depreciation of the kwacha and evolving economic conditions. This also means that food inflation has risen to 39 per cent as of July 2023 due to increases in maize prices and non-food inflation has risen to 16 per cent due to global commodity price increases.

Malawi is prone to disease outbreaks and faced a significant cholera outbreak in 2022 and 2023, which infected almost 27,000 people nationwide, killing 881. The country also faces major climate change and environmental challenges, and recent high temperatures and weather extremes are having a serious impact on environmental ecosystems. In March 2023, Tropical Storm Freddy struck southern Malawi, delivering 300-400mm of rainfall within the first 48 hours. This brought sudden, violent and destructive flash floods and landslides, causing severe devastation, the destruction of livelihoods and loss of life. Deforestation, limited water supply, old farming practices (that cause soil erosion and reduced yields) and declining fisheries create further challenges. There is also limited institutional capacity to manage Malawi's natural resources.

While the Government of Malawi is committed to making reforms that would advance the country's development, poverty remains a persistent challenger. The 2063 Vision, launched in 2021, has been developed through an inclusive and participatory multi-stakeholder consultative process at a time when the country has made progress in a number of areas, such as reduced maternal and child mortality rate, increased primary school enrolment ratio, reduced prevalence of HIV/AIDS, increased life expectancy and improved uptake of technology use, especially mobile phone technology.



The Malawi Red Cross Society volunteers support people affected by hunger crisis. (Photo: Malawi Red Cross Society)

# STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



## Climate and environment

The position of Malawi as a land-locked country in southern Africa, has made it particularly vulnerable to changing climate patterns and weather shocks. A scarcity of land resources, rampant poverty and a growing population are continuing to intensify the pressure on natural resources, while heavier but less predictable rains, hotter weather and extended dry periods are making planting and harvesting more difficult. In recent years, there has been a notable increase in deforestation, coupled with a growing scarcity of water resources for communities, affecting their ability to sustain both agricultural activities and daily life.

With most livelihoods dependent on agriculture, Malawians are highly vulnerable to the effects of climate-related shocks and stresses. Subsistence farming practices also contribute to soil erosion and diminish productivity of available farmland, resulting in decreased crop yields for subsistence farmers and increasing food insecurity. This has been exacerbated by recent recurring droughts followed by intense periods of flooding, both of which have affected communities' homes and crops.

Lake Malawi is a mainstay for the country and its economy. However, changing climate, over-fishing and pollution have led to declining fish stocks, which are projected to impact the biodiversity of the area and the livelihoods of the communities who are dependent on it. Relying on small parcels of densely cultivated land for their livelihoods, rural Malawians are highly affected by climate change. Episodes of drought as well as severe flooding are increasing in frequency, intensity and unpredictability, giving the most vulnerable households inadequate time to recover.

Specifically, in the past few years, Malawi has been prone to several severe weather shocks from tropical storms and cyclones, associated with large scale flooding. Beyond their humanitarian impact (see under disasters and crisis section), the storms have had a major impact on the country's infrastructure, agricultural productivity and economy. In 2023, Cyclone Freddy caused significant economic losses estimated at about USD 500 million. Additionally, the cyclone exacerbated the cholera crisis in Malawi. The cumulative effect of these heavy storm seasons, projected to increase because of climate change, heightens the likelihood of poverty and food insecurity while decreasing the resilience of the population.

This ongoing climactic pressure cannot be managed by short-term humanitarian funding but requires longer-term environmental and infrastructure development and management. With around 18 per cent of Malawians now living in cities, there is growing pressure on the limited urban

infrastructure and systems, with overpopulation and pollution putting pressure on urban areas. Rising temperatures and scarcity of water are expected to lead to deteriorating living conditions and sanitation within these impoverished urban environments.

Climate change and environmental sustainability are anchored in several frameworks in Malawi, such as the National Resilience Strategy, National Climate Change Environmental policy, Disaster Risk Management Policy and National Adaptation Plan. Transitioning to a green economy in Malawi presents significant challenges, threatening the environmental sustainability of the country and its ability to manage or adapt to climate challenges, thereby jeopardizing the sustainability of its land resources. The Government aims to restore 4.5 million hectares of degraded land by 2030, and 1.3 million hectares have been restored so far. The planting of 60 million trees in Malawi will be a giant step towards achieving this goal. The authorities are also developing the Malawi Watershed Services Improvement Project, which aims to promote sustainable landscape management practices in priority watersheds and improve rural livelihoods.

### Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

The Malawi Red Cross is part of the IFRC Global Climate Resilience Programme, which aims to foster an unprecedented scale-up in locally led climate-smart disaster risk reduction and adaptation efforts to prevent and reduce climate-related disaster impacts, and build community-level climate resilience. The programme aims to support 500 million people in 100 of the most climate-vulnerable countries, focusing on the least supported and marginalized communities. This holistic, multi-year programmatic approach consists of four operational pillars: (1) scaling up climate-smart disaster risk reduction, anticipatory action and preparedness; (2) reducing the public health impacts of climate change; (3) addressing climate displacement; and (4) enabling climate-resilient livelihoods and ecosystem services.

The Malawi Red Cross will seek to integrate climate risk management across all programmes, operations and advocacy. It works along the following high-level objectives:

- Engage an increased number of communities in sustainable environmental management and livelihood interventions
- Involve an increased number of households in climate smart agriculture practices and tree planting initiatives
- Improve biodiversity conservation through forest management and restoration



- Support the development and dissemination of national policies addressing climate change adaptation and mitigation
- Support the government to implement climate resilient development addressing water, air and soil pollution and facilitating climate smart agriculture

- Facilitate production of paper briquettes and use energy saving stoves
- Facilitate locally acceptable climate adaptation interventions and nature-based solutions e.g. training volunteers and communities in establishment of community woodlots; planting vetiver grass
- Train farm clubs, lead farmers and volunteers as trainers in climate smart agriculture/livelihoods/SHAPE

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### Planned activities in 2025

- Promote crop diversification (drought tolerant and early maturing), agroforestry and use of manure
- Revamp irrigation scheme/clubs by lobbying for the construction and rehabilitation of irrigation schemes
- Promote irrigation farming including capacity building, rehabilitation of small irrigation schemes and provision of equipment such as water pumps
- Sensitize the communities about food budgeting and promote kitchen gardens
- Promote livestock production through pass on programme
- Lobby for the rehabilitation of roads to facilitate easy access to markets for agricultural produce
- Lobby for the construction of factories that maximize on the availability of fruits and other perishable foods such as tomato and mangoes

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### Longer-term support from the IFRC network

**The IFRC**, in collaboration with participating National Societies, will assist the Malawi Red Cross in promotion of community-led solutions to address climate-related challenges, improve behaviours and promote climate action. It will help the National Society get strategic partnerships that support sustainable environmental actions. The IFRC will support the National Society's programming to enable it to participate in the IFRC Pan-African Tree Planting and Care initiative.

Participating National Societies will support the National Society with capacity building, funding and supervision.



## Disasters and crises

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

Malawi continues to face the risk of both natural hazards and man-made disasters, particularly the growing impact of storms, flooding and droughts. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted economic activities and led to loss of many lives. The compounded effects have heavily impacted the lives and means of those already afflicted, weakening their ability to bounce back. Moreover, the hot and arid conditions, particularly during the lean season, have heightened pressure on regions already struggling with food insecurity.

Malawi is experiencing a growing humanitarian impact, particularly in areas affected by tropical cyclones and tropical storms. An estimated 975,000 people were affected by Tropical Cyclone Idai in 2019. The major disaster event that followed was Tropical Storm Ana in January 2022 which passed through many districts of Southern Malawi, leaving devastation in its wake. According to the government's Department of Disaster Management Affairs (DoDMA), over 945,000 people were affected and needed urgent, life-saving assistance, support

for livelihoods restoration and to recover from heavy losses. Heavy rains and flooding caused damage to homes, farmland, and infrastructure, affecting 115,388 hectares (including cropland), with more than 34,000 livestock injured or killed. The impact of tropical storm Ana also displaced around 6,500 people. This was followed by tropical storm Gombe, which hit the same regions in March, causing compounding to the damage and hardship of those already affected and recovering from Ana. In 2023, Tropical Storm Freddy made landfall, exacerbating the challenges faced by the already strained districts (see also under ongoing emergency response section). This series of adverse weather events weakened the resilience of vulnerable communities even further.

Other hazards include landslides, fires and epidemics, while political protests also pose a risk to the safety of the people who participate and nearby communities. The impact of such events is exacerbated in an environment where approximately half the population are living below the poverty line.

The Malawi Government established a National Disaster Risk Management Policy in 2015. This led to the establishment

of the Department of Disaster Management Affairs and strengthened the country's readiness for disasters and disaster risk management. To further reduce exposure to risk, the Government also maintains a National Contingency Plan, which includes plans to address the impacts of floods, dry spells, disease outbreaks, pest infestation, strong winds and stormy rains. The Government has emphasized the importance of transitioning from relief to resilience, while addressing the root causes of food insecurity, with the aim of scaling up interventions focused on integrated resilience.

### Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

In its position as an auxiliary to the public authorities, the Malawi Red Cross is a key responder to humanitarian emergencies. It has worked with the government to strengthen the legal and policy framework for [disaster risk management](#), which is critical to reducing disasters and climate risks, and building sustainable resilience.

The Malawi Red Cross will continue to focus on preparedness and readiness to respond to shocks, enhancing community risk reduction and resilience. This includes [early warning](#), [early action](#) and anticipation to mitigate risks from multi-hazards affecting the lives, the livelihoods, homes and living conditions of vulnerable, disadvantaged and hard to reach communities.

It will prioritize the implementation of the following high-level objectives:

- Respond to and support recovery from crises and disasters
- Facilitate preparedness and capacity building processes such as preparedness for effective response (PER), [anticipatory actions](#) and the development of [early action protocols](#), multi-hazard contingency plans and cash preparedness and logistics
- Facilitate adoption of new legal instruments related to [disaster law](#)
- Provide [shelter](#) and urban strategies which include city-level coordination, partnerships with development actors and actionable municipal contingency and response plans

The Malawi Red Cross also aims to develop a more holistic approach to food security, in alignment with the [IFRC Pan-African Zero Hunger Initiative](#). This aims to deliver rapid support for food and nutrition security and livelihoods, alongside a long-term strategy that works towards zero hunger and more sustainable development.

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### Planned activities in 2025

- Develop and review of multi-hazard contingency plans and develop early action protocols ([EAP](#))
- Support the access, understanding, dissemination and use of seasonal forecast at national, district and community level
- Facilitate dissemination of community weather forecast and [early warning](#) and [anticipatory action](#) activities
- Expand collaboration with community-based organizations for risk identification, mapping, [vulnerability, impact and capacity assessments](#) and mitigation
- Support affected people with essential household items and cash delivery through financial services providers
- Orient stakeholders, staff, volunteers and communities on disaster response, assessments and distribution processes and early warning systems, including simulations, participatory approach on safe shelter awareness ([PASSA](#)) and disaster response protocols
- Support the establishment and training of village savings and loan (VSL) groups, collaborate with community-based organizations for risk assessments, and support small-scale businesses to build local resilience
- Engage stakeholders on the [disaster risk management Act](#) and cash-based approaches and participate in coordination platforms such as cash technical working groups and shelter clusters
- Establish and train early warning teams, procure and distribute early warning systems equipment and create hazard maps using participatory geographic information systems (PGIS) approaches

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### Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC mechanisms such as the Disaster Response Emergency Fund ([IFRC-DREF](#)) and Emergency Appeals will be drawn on as needed for the National Society to respond to disasters and crises. In March 2024, the IFRC provided a [DREF allocation](#) for Malawi floods to help the Malawi Red Cross in assisting 6,000 people in the Central Region and Northern Region with a budget of CHF 499,820.

The IFRC, in collaboration with participating National Societies, will help the National Society design and support early warning and early action initiatives. It will also help National Society in implementing the IFRC Pan Africa Zero Hunger Initiative and build its capacity in cash and voucher assistance (CVA). The IFRC will provide guidance, training and tools to strengthen community early warning, preparedness and response plans.





Over the last two decades, Malawi has made significant progress in improving its health indicators by focusing on the improved delivery of essential health services, achieving [Millenium Development Goal 4](#) on child survival and [reducing maternal mortality and HIV/AIDS infections](#) by 73 per cent and 41 per cent respectively since 2003. However, challenges persist, with HIV/AIDS affecting almost [9.6 per cent](#) of the population, high maternal mortality ratios (MMR) and [under five mortality rates](#). The country experienced a [Wild Polio outbreak in 2022](#) and undertook strong measures to re-immunize its child population. Malawi also experiences high levels of [malnutrition](#), particularly chronic malnutrition and stunting affecting 37 per cent of children under five.

Among key challenges facing Malawi, however, is the capacity and quality of its health infrastructure and systems marked by challenges such as inadequate qualified health workers and local health facilities. Addressing the health needs of marginalized groups, especially women and young people are a recognized priority, with a focus on family planning services, to mitigate [high fertility rates](#).

With over one million people living with HIV, Malawi faces approximately 34,000 new infections a year, disproportionately affecting women and leaving approximately 770,000 children orphaned. Initiatives including the emergency plan for AIDS relief (PEPFAR) aim to mitigate the social and economic impacts of the disease, particularly among vulnerable youth.

In February 2022, Malawi's Ministry of Health reported a confirmed case of [Type 1 wild poliovirus \(WPV1\)](#) in Lilongwe district, followed by a declaration of an emergency by the President. This was the first case of polio in Malawi since 1992 and the first detected case of WPV1 in Africa since 2016. In response to the polio outbreak, the Ministry of Health implemented strategies aligned with WHO guidelines, strengthening surveillance and immunization efforts. Despite previous success in eradicating polio, challenges persist due to population movement, climate change and economic factors, necessitating ongoing vaccination campaigns and surveillance interventions.

The burden of [non-communicable diseases](#) is significant in Malawi, with cardiovascular diseases being the leading cause of death among adults. According to a 2018 WHO report, 32 per cent of all deaths are attributed to cardiovascular diseases. In Malawi, rates of heart disease and diabetes are nine per cent and six per cent respectively and the prevalence of hypertension, obesity and smoking are estimated at 16.7 per cent, 18.5 per cent and 21.7 per cent respectively. In 2021, the Ministry of Health established non-communicable diseases unit and clinics across the 29 districts of Malawi to address this challenge through prevention and management.

According to [UNICEF](#), 23 per cent of child deaths in Malawi are linked to under-nutrition, with four per cent of children under five suffering from acute malnutrition. Exclusive breastfeeding remains low (61 per cent), and only eight per cent of children aged 6–23 months meet minimum dietary requirements. Additionally, 37 per cent of children are stunted. The government, in partnership with stakeholders, is addressing nutrition challenges through policies and guidelines for both regular and emergency programs.

While 80 per cent of Malawians have access to improved drinking water, four million people still lack safe water. Access to safe water and sanitation has declined in 19 of 29 districts, increasing communicable disease outbreaks. In drought-prone areas, less than 67 per cent of water points function in the dry season, leaving over 495,000 people with unreliable water, sanitation and hygiene access, heightening risks of malnutrition and disease.

Malawi faces [frequent cholera outbreaks](#). Initially documented in [1973](#), Malawi has encountered a cholera outbreak almost every year since. The southern region has borne the brunt of the highest number of cases and most recurrent outbreaks. Typically, outbreaks coincide with the rainy season (November to March), in most districts, while areas surrounding Lake Chilwa may also witness outbreaks during the dry season. The current outbreak has recorded approximately [58,000 cases](#). In an ongoing effort to prevent and control the disease, the Government of Malawi and its partners developed a [National Cholera Prevention and Control Plan in April 2017](#), subject to annual revisions and updates tailored to address any outbreaks throughout the year. The Malawi Government is committed to the elimination of cholera in the medium to long term and to that end plans to develop a [Cholera Elimination Plan](#). The Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Water and Sanitation have aligned and adapted the objectives, strategies and activities in this plan to the guidelines provided by [the global task force for cholera \(GTFCC\)](#) and also by [the Health Sector Strategic Plan III](#). The cholera epidemic preparedness and response plan is intended to contribute to the implementation of an effective, comprehensive, integrated system of cholera prevention and control in Malawi through:

- Effective leadership and coordination
- Improved surveillance system and reporting including improved laboratory and diagnosis capacity
- Health System strengthening to provide quality and equitable services for both prevention and response
- Improved water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) conditions
- Use of oral cholera vaccine
- Intensified communication and social mobilization

## Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

The Malawi Red Cross works to ensure that all people have safe and equitable access to health, WASH and adequate living conditions by expanding integrated community-based health and first aid ([CBHFA](#)) as well as [WASH](#) programmes to address the unmet needs of vulnerable or marginalized groups.

The National Society invests in [epidemic and pandemic preparedness](#) to enable local actors, networks, volunteers and community-based responders to detect and respond to disease outbreaks and other health risks. The National Society will also continue to collaborate with the government in contributing towards the cholera preparedness and response plan through its network of volunteers and community actions.

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### Planned activities in 2025

- Develop a comprehensive health and WASH strategic plan
- Contribute to efforts to achieve and sustain national immunization targets and promote fair and equitable access to new vaccines (including future COVID-19 vaccines through the COVAX facility)
- Roll out the Child Resilience Programme for children affected by disasters and at risk of protection issues
- Reach out to 3,318 people with contextually appropriate health services
- Reach out to 50,000 people with contextually appropriate water, sanitation and hygiene services
- Reach out to 15,000 people with mental health and psychosocial support ([MHPSS](#)) services
- Train 3,000 people in [first aid](#) and reach 10,000 people with first aid coverage

- Revamp community health structures in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and improve community health information dissemination
- Facilitate menstrual hygiene management efforts and design and implement distributions in ways that respond appropriately to the survivors of sexual and gender-based violence
- Facilitate establishment of reporting and referral systems including mobile courts and MHPSS services
- Drill boreholes, install gravity fed water systems or solar pumped boreholes with taps in water scarce communities and schools

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### Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC will support the Malawi Red Cross to:

- Identify and support community-led solutions to control epidemics and pandemics
- Participate in cholera response activities through training and cholera hotspot mapping exercises
- Effectively network and link with other actors such as Global Health Security Agenda, Africa CDC, WHO and African Union on health, nutrition, immunization and public health
- Link with other sexual, reproductive, maternal, neonatal, child and adolescent health platforms
- Promote good hygiene practices through health education and mitigation of environmental health risks

The **Swiss Red Cross** will continue supporting the National Society's work on health, WASH and blood donor recruitment.



## Migration and displacement

Political instability and social unrest in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa regions have resulted in a [continual flow of refugees into Malawi](#) for over two decades. Malawi is host to refugees and asylum seekers from countries such as Burundi, Rwanda, Somalia, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Mozambique who flee their respective countries due to [wars and political unrest](#). The country is also a route for asylum seekers moving between countries across Southern Africa, with current trends showing increased flows of such migrants. Malawi hosts about 90,000 individuals who are seeking [asylum or are refugees](#). Of these 52,678 were registered as persons of concern (PoCs) by UNHCR in December 2021.

Most of the refugees and asylum seekers live in the [Dzaleka refugee camp](#) in Dowa district, approximately 41 kilometres away from the capital city of Malawi. The camp was initially established to host up to 12,000 people but now hosts over 52,000 individuals. Dzaleka is a [protracted camp setting](#), receiving around 300 new arrivals every month (62 per cent from the DRC, 19 per cent from Burundi, seven per cent from Rwanda and two per cent from elsewhere). Of the identified persons of concern, 45 per cent are women and 48 per cent are children. Approximately 40 per cent of the overall population holds refugee status, while 60 per cent are classified as asylum seekers. This composition extends

the duration of the situation in the camp, heightening risks related to protection, disease, and food security/livelihoods for its residents. UNHCR and WFP continue to provide cash assistance and services to those in the camp, recognizing their dependence on humanitarian assistance.

The tropical storms and floods that affected Malawi in recent years have provoked significant internal displacement, often lasting several months. Families who had fled from neighbouring countries and found refuge in camps in Malawi were also affected.

Malawi serves as a transit route for migrants, primarily from Ethiopia, who use it to journey to South Africa. Additionally, there have been instances where traffickers were apprehended while attempting to transport children to South Africa. More recently, human trafficking has emerged as a significant concern along the borders of Malawi and Zambia, particularly in Chipata. This situation highlights the need for enhanced migration services, coordination and advocacy between the two countries to effectively combat this practice.

### Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

The Malawi Red Cross focuses on ensuring that all people who migrate and are displaced are safe, are treated humanely and with dignity, and have the assistance and protection support they need to thrive in inclusive societies. To this effect, the National Society will implement the following:

- Conduct a migration and displacement needs assessment and integrate migration and displacement into their strategic planning
- Operate along main migratory routes and develop the capacity to access resources to establish humanitarian service points (HSPs), providing access to assistance, protection and integration support to migrants and displaced
- Respond to the needs of migrants and displaced populations using an integrated approach
- Support the government with provision of food and essential household items including tents and camp management

The Malawi Red Cross, in collaboration with the government, will provide restoring family links (RFL) services for the refugees, asylum seekers, returnees and internally displaced

persons, to restore and maintain family links for the families separated by conflict or natural hazards and subsequent disasters. This includes restoring contact between family members through tracing, free phone calls, free internet, Red Cross messages for relatives and support for unaccompanied children. The National Society will also engage the police and prison authorities to explore the possibility of extending RFL services to detention centres so that those refugees and asylum seekers that are detained should have access to communication to allow them to contact their families.

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### Planned activities in 2025

- Support displaced communities with humanitarian assistance such as essential household items, food, dignity kits, RFL services and [shelter](#)
- Facilitate multiple channels of communication to share information with the targeted groups and to receive feedback from communities on health-related issues
- Act on feedback from targeted groups and use it to adapt activities and key messages
- Facilitate linkages and referral of migrants, displaced persons with other service providers
- Conduct awareness meetings with communities on negative impacts of human trafficking and support case reporting on human trafficking
- Conduct advocacy with authorities on the issue of people not being registered as refugees, thus ensuring that the rights of asylum seekers are respected as per the international law
- Support coordination meetings at different levels to track human trafficking in coordination with the relevant organizations

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### Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC, in collaboration with the participating National Societies, will assist the Malawi Red Cross in resource mobilization and monitor implementation of all operations. The IFRC will also link the National Society with other migration-related actors and platforms.



## Values, power and inclusion

In Malawi, women make up 52 per cent of population and 80 per cent of the workforce, with 59 per cent of employed women working in the agricultural sector. The situation of women and girls in Malawi is less advanced than that of men and boys in terms of literacy, education, political participation, land ownership and other developmental indicators. While adequate legal frameworks exist, the support on the ground is under-resourced and inadequate. Women in Malawi have little control over land and lack access to economic resources. Female-headed households are particularly vulnerable with limited productivity, income and empowerment, making them more susceptible to poverty. Social cash transfers (SCTs) are among the social protection tools used in Malawi to assist the poorest people and have contributed to a decline in extreme poverty. Working to improve women's inclusion will improve poverty and food security levels. There is also a need for improved maternal and child healthcare, family planning and reproductive health services to support women and girls to develop and strengthen their economic empowerment.

Gender-based violence (GBV) also remains a serious challenge in Malawi. Malawi Demographic Health Survey reported that an estimated 14 per cent of women have been physically abused and 25 per cent sexually abused in 2016. Food insecurity is often linked to increases in GBV, with protection risks spiking during the lean season, as food insecurity pushes women and girls to travel longer distances to seek food and water. Early marriages are also a challenge, as Malawi has one of the highest rates of child marriage in the world (approximately 42 per cent of girls are married before 18 and nine per cent before 15). Early marriages also increase the risk of pregnancy complications, low birth weight and infant mortality. Other complications include urinary tract infections, pre-eclampsia and fistula. Early marriage is one of the more regressive practices which limits girls' education and sexual and reproductive health, especially in rural areas. This has links to poverty, with cases of young women being lured or sold into early marriages in exchange of food in food insecure districts. However, communities are being engaged in programmes to get girls back into education. Additionally, organizations such as UNICEF and UNDP are working with local community leaders to eliminate child marriage.

The majority of the population of Malawi are youths (80 per cent are under 35 years of age and the median age is 17). This youthful population is one of Malawi's strongest assets. The youth in Malawi face several challenges in accessing health care, education, employment and participation. Only 51 per cent of children complete primary level education. The Malawi

2063 vision identifies youth development and empowerment as a key priority.

### Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

The Malawi Red Cross will pivot on protecting and promoting a positive change for humanity, based on humanitarian values and principles. The National Society priorities include the following:

- Reach out to the youth with skills- and values-based humanitarian education, through flagship programmes
- Ensure all operations, programmes and services provide dignity, access, participation and safety for all affected marginalized and excluded people
- Adopt innovative approaches to better understanding and engaging communities, so that it can enable them to address unhealthy and unsafe practices
- Continue to mainstream and institutionalize community engagement and accountability (CEA)

The Malawi Red Cross will also encourage inclusion and equality among its volunteers.

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### Planned activities in 2025

- Support 400 learners with education bursaries and learning materials
- Establish reporting and referral systems, including mobile courts and psychosocial support services
- Conduct training on the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence and response mechanisms

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### Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC, in collaboration with the participating National Societies, will assist the National Society with the development of community-based information, education and communication initiatives to ensure that all operations consider dignity, access, participation and safety. The IFRC will provide the necessary technical support to the Malawi Red Cross for institutionalization of community engagement and accountability (CEA). The IFRC will also support the engagement of the National Society with the education community.

## ENABLING LOCAL ACTORS

The Malawi Red Cross is committed to pursuing institutional strengthening and carried out the self-assessment part of the Organizational Capacity Assessment and Certification (OCAC)



### Strategic and operational coordination

#### Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

- Define its auxiliary role with public authorities and position itself as the partner of choice in the humanitarian field
- Significantly expand participation and leadership in national and inter-agency coordination
- Implement investment plans to sustain the image of the organization as well as resource mobilization
- Diversify local resource mobilization strategies to sustain core business

process in 2013. The self-assessment is intended to capture the strengths and weaknesses of National Societies as a whole in relation to a wide range of organizational capacities.

- Explore prospects within the corporate sector, focusing on areas such as livelihood improvement, education and financial literacy, among others
- Implement strategies that will strengthen more visibility to the corporate partners and beyond

#### Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC, in collaboration with participating National Societies, will support the Malawi Red Cross with all the relevant documentation, tools and information to strengthen its auxiliary role. The IFRC will also support operationalization of the resource mobilization framework, in accordance with the National Society's implementation plan.



### National Society development

#### Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

- Review branch organizational capacity assessment (BOCA) plans for 10 divisions
- Ensure that youth, volunteers and emerging community leaders actively participate in decision-making processes, encouraging innovation and enhancing the local network
- Provide volunteer insurance cover
- Review the youth engagement strategy
- Extend insurance coverage to all volunteers

- Develop branch expansion strategies that leverage social media platforms to amplify outreach efforts, employ online data management systems for efficient operations, enhance branding initiatives and facilitate crowdfunding campaigns

#### Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC will ensure that the National Society development plan is aligned with the National Society priorities and in line with the Movement standards. The IFRC will support the National Society in implementing youth designed programmes and initiatives, and assist in aligning branch development with the priorities of the National Society.



## Humanitarian diplomacy

### Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

- Develop communication and public advocacy resources along with guidance to enhance impact, build public trust and improve understanding of its role and activities
- Unpack the [humanitarian diplomacy](#) guidance notes
- Conduct humanitarian diplomacy initial and refresher training for staff

### Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC will assist the Malawi Red Cross in accessing training opportunities and peer support networks focused on skills and strategy development in the realm of influencing. The IFRC will provide communications and public advocacy resources to the National Society.



## Accountability and agility (cross-cutting)

### Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

- Integrate a functional risk and accountability framework, based on the recently conducted high-level risk assessment and developed organizational-wide risk register
- Develop a security risk register and mitigation measures aimed to reduce prevailing risk to an acceptable level
- Extend awareness and training of staff and volunteers on the Code of Conduct, prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) and [safeguarding-child](#) protection
- Develop and disseminate data protection policy and conduct data protection training
- Disseminate the planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting (PMER) policy
- Ensure the existence of a functioning intranet, a full-time IT officer and an information and communications technology system

### Longer-term support from the IFRC Network

The IFRC will provide the National Society with financial training and internal controls including security assessment training, knowledge sharing and better direct support through coaching on a case-by-case basis. The IFRC will also assist the Malawi Red Cross in the development of a [security](#) risk register and mitigation measures, aimed at reducing risks to an acceptable level.

The Icelandic Red Cross will support the National Society in the development of an information and communication technology system.



# THE IFRC NETWORK

## The IFRC

The IFRC provides support to the National Society through its country cluster delegation in Harare, and an office in Malawi since obtaining a status agreement from the government in 2022. The IFRC supports the Malawi Red Cross with strategic and operational coordination, National Society development and humanitarian diplomacy, including strengthening its auxiliary role. It also supports accountability as a cross-cutting theme.

The IFRC also provides support to varied long-term programmes of the National Society, and in recent years, has supported the Malawi Red Cross through various IFRC-DREF and Emergency Appeal operations in response to floods, disease outbreaks and tropical storms. Recently completed Emergency Appeals operations include the response to flooding in Karonga and Nkhosakota Districts, the Tropical Cyclone Ana and the cholera outbreak which started in 2022.

## IFRC membership coordination

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

The Malawi Red Cross is part of the four IFRC Pan-African initiatives focusing on Tree Planting and Care; Zero Hunger; Red Ready and National Society Development.

The Malawi Red Cross collaborates with IFRC Reference Centres and hubs, including the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre, IFRC Livelihood Centre, Global First Aid Reference Centre, the 510 initiative of the Netherlands Red Cross, the Cash Hub and the Anticipation Hub. These partnerships provide the Malawi Red Cross with specialized knowledge and resources,

strengthening its operational capacity and ensuring effective, community-driven programmes.

The Malawi Red Cross is also being supported by a consortium of in-country participating National Societies. It is led by the **Danish Red Cross**, which works alongside the **Finnish Red Cross**, the **Icelandic Red Cross** and the **Italian Red Cross**. The consortium supports the National Society with shelter initiatives, European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) projects and flood recovery support. Other National Societies supporting the Malawi Red Cross include the **Belgian Red Cross**, the **Kuwait Red Crescent**, the **Netherlands Red Cross**, the **Qatar Red Crescent**, and the **Swiss Red Cross**. Specific areas of support include:

The **Finnish Red Cross** has given its support specifically on the election response and first aid.

The **Icelandic Red Cross** has focused on community resilience projects.

The **Swiss Red Cross** has supported work on health, WASH and blood donor recruitment.



Volunteers from Nkhosakota Bay district helping a health facility with the preparation of chlorination following cholera outbreak in Malawi. (Photo: Malawi Red Cross Society)

## Movement coordination

The Malawi Red Cross ensures regular exchanges with the IFRC, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and participating National Societies, for the alignment of support and action between Movement partners. In times of emergencies, closer coordination is organized. This is carried out in line with the Strengthening Movement Coordination and

Cooperation ([SMCC](#)) principles, and the newly adopted [Seville Agreement 2.0](#).

The ICRC has no permanent presence in Malawi but makes regular visits to support restoring family links services in emergencies.

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## Coordination with other actors

The Malawi Red Cross works closely with the government, which leads the overall coordination of any humanitarian emergency or disaster response through its Department of Disaster Management Affairs, which sits under the Office of the President. The disaster management structure stems from the disaster technical working group at the national level; civil protection committees at the district level; area civil protection committees at the traditional authority level; and civil protection committees at the group village level. The National Society is a member of the civil protection committee and the national disaster preparedness and relief committee that comprises the principal secretaries of all key ministries and departments, and three non-governmental organizations. It is also a member of the national disaster technical working group.

The Malawi Red Cross collaborates closely with the Ministry of Health, which provides overall technical coordination. As part of the COVID-19 response, the National Society was responsible for distributing medical equipment, raising community awareness on prevention measures and providing water, sanitation and hygiene services, and it supported the national COVID-19 vaccination campaign. For the response to the cholera outbreak in 2022, the Malawi Red Cross also worked with the Ministry of Water and Sanitation.

There is a humanitarian country team in Malawi chaired by UNDP, which is the coordination platform for all humanitarian bodies to ensure coordinated strategies and approaches. The National Society participates in all coordination meetings at the national and district levels, including clusters for shelter and camp management, search and rescue, food security and water, sanitation and hygiene. In addition to being a member of all clusters, it is also a sub-lead for the early warning cluster.

The Malawi Red Cross and IFRC co-lead the Shelter Cluster in Malawi, with the National Society also participating in its working groups. The Global Shelter Cluster (GSC) is an Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) coordination mechanism and IFRC has been leading the shelter cluster in disaster contexts since the establishment of the cluster approach in 2005. This critical mandate places IFRC as one of the lead agencies in the international humanitarian coordination system. IFRC leverages its leadership position in the shelter cluster for improved coordination, stronger policies and standards across the sector, and better support for affected people in their recovery.

The Global Shelter Cluster and country Shelter Clusters work collectively with national response actors, including local and national governments, to support people with timely, effective and predictable shelter and settlement responses. As such, the Malawi Red Cross' shelter cluster leadership role significantly contributes towards the localization efforts of the international humanitarian system. Its local knowledge and understanding of the context, along with its network and established community relationships, enhance the effectiveness, relevance, and connectedness of the overall humanitarian shelter response.

In Malawi, notable partners of the National Society are UNICEF, Médecins Sans Frontières, World Food Programme, GOAL Malawi, Eagle Relief, Care Malawi, World Vision, Habitat for Humanity International and ShelterBox. The National Society has developed multiple partnerships with companies from the private sector and philanthropic foundations that have supported it with financial contributions and donations. Some of the civil society organizations it works with include Civil Society Network for Climate Change (CISONEC), Civil Society Agriculture Network (SISANET), Health Network and National Civic Education (NICE), among others.



## The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)

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

### About the plan

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

### Explanatory note on funding requirements and definitions

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

### Additional information

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

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