



SRI LANKA

2026-2027 IFRC network country plan



20 January 2026

In support of the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society



25

National Society
branches



302

National Society
local units



90

National Society
staff



3,895

National Society
volunteers

People to be reached in 2026



500,000

Ongoing
emergency
operations



100,000

Climate and
environment



500,000

Disasters
and crises



75,000

Health and
wellbeing



50,000

Migration and
Displacement



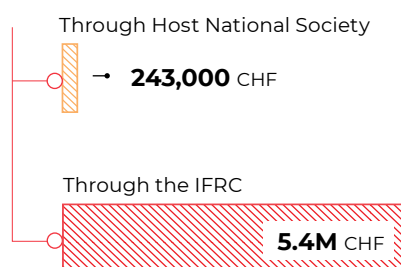
75,000

Values, power
and inclusion

IFRC network Funding Requirements

2026

Total 5.6M CHF



2027

Total 663,000 CHF

Projected funding requirements

Participating National Societies

British Red Cross*

IFRC Appeal codes

Emergency Appeal:

MDRLK023

Tropical Cyclone
Ditwah

Longer-term needs:

MAALK002

*National Societies which have contributed only multilaterally through the IFRC in 2025.

Hazards



Cyclones



Poverty



Food
insecurity



Health



Violence

IFRC network multi-year focus

Emergency response

- Cyclone

Longer term needs

- Food security and malnutrition
 - Health and migration
 - Humanitarian diplomacy
- Developing the capacity of the National Society
 - Branch strengthening

Capacity development

- Disaster preparedness
- Protection, gender and inclusion
- Community engagement and accountability
 - National Society development

Key country data links

INFORM Climate Change Risk Index

Low

Human Development Index rank

89

World Bank Population figure

21.9M



National Society volunteers providing emergency first-aid services to people affected by flood in Colombo (Photo: Sri Lanka Red Cross Society)

Detailed funding requirements

	2026		2027	
	Host National Society	IFRC	Host National Society	IFRC
Ongoing emergencies		5M		
Longer-term needs				
Climate and environment	17,000	17,000	17,000	17,000
Disasters & crises	52,000	259,000	52,000	259,000
Health & wellbeing	78,000	117,000	78,000	117,000
Migration & displacement	8,000	5,000	8,000	5,000
Values, power & inclusion	40,000	13,000	40,000	13,000
Enabling local actors	48,000	9,000	48,000	9,000
Total	243,000	5.4M	243,000	420,000

NATIONAL SOCIETY PROFILE

The **Sri Lanka Red Cross Society** was established in 1936 and was admitted to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) in 1952. It was formed as a volunteer-based organization under the name Ceylon Central Council Branch of the British Red Cross Society. Its primary purpose was to provide assistance during disasters, including the malaria epidemic. Today, the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society has an extensive national network in first aid, blood, and health services and is recognized as an essential service provider. The Sri Lanka Red Cross Society works closely with the Government of Sri Lanka, in particular with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Disaster Management.

The National Society's new Strategic Plan 2024-2030 describes three strategic goals:

- Strengthen vulnerable communities through inclusive, gender-sensitive humanitarian services and risk-reduction programs, enhancing resilience to crises and ensuring timely, coordinated disaster response and long-term recovery
- Build organizational readiness, transparency, and governance to better serve vulnerable communities, promoting volunteerism, gender equality, and humanitarian values for sustainable impact
- Advance humanitarian efforts by mobilizing resources, enhancing external relations, effective branding, and knowledge exchange, expanding partnerships, and advocating for those in need

In 2024, the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society reached 124,000 people with long-term services and development programmes and 37,000 people with disaster response and early recovery programmes.



Map of Sri Lanka Red Cross Society branches

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

JOINT SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

After experiencing its worst economic crisis in [2022](#), Sri Lanka's economy stabilized and showed encouraging growth in 2024. The [economy](#) expanded by 5 percent in the first quarter and around 5.5 percent by the third quarter, driven primarily by rebounds in the industrial and services sectors, particularly tourism. Key macroeconomic indicators improved, including a decline in inflation and a strengthening of foreign reserves. The country completed its [foreign currency debt restructuring](#) by the end of 2024, which helped it exit default status and led to upgrades in its sovereign credit rating.

The year 2024 marked a historic and transformative shift in Sri Lankan politics. The current government ran on an anti-corruption and pro-accountability platform, promising reforms and social welfare improvements. However, it faces significant challenges in managing high public expectations while adhering to fiscal realities and structural reforms required under the International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme.

Sri Lanka continues to navigate complex geopolitical pressures due to its strategic location in the Indian Ocean, with the government pursuing a neutral, non-aligned foreign policy to balance relations between major powers, particularly India and China.

Social and humanitarian conditions remain fragile. According to [World Bank estimates](#), the economic crisis nearly doubled the poverty rate to 24.5 percent in 2024, with projections indicating it will remain above 20 percent until at least 2026.

Widespread [food insecurity](#) was reported in 2023, and moderate hunger levels persisted in 2024, with significant rates of stunting and wasting among children. Labour force participation has declined, particularly among women, while outmigration of skilled workers is a growing challenge posing risks to the talent pool needed for economic growth. Continued

food insecurity forces livelihood-based coping strategies that undermine health and income, especially for children. The high cost of nutritious food risks pushing more families into cycles of hunger, poor health, and poverty, reducing human capital development.

Human rights concerns persist, with credible reports of unlawful killings and torture by state actors in 2024 and minimal accountability. The government continued using the Prevention of Terrorism Act and conducted a harsh anti-drug campaign, detaining thousands. Despite overall stability, recovery remains fragile. Austerity measures tied to the IMF program, such as increased VAT rates, continue to burden households and disproportionately affect lower-income populations.

While GDP contracted in 2023, recovery signs emerged in the second half of the year and are expected to continue through 2024 and 2025. [Inflation](#) slowed to single digits after peaking in 2022 and is projected to remain below 10 percent in the coming years. These trends indicate a hopeful outlook for Sri Lanka's economy. The government has initiated reforms to modernize the social safety net, including the [Aswesuma cash transfer program](#) launched in 2022. However, implementation challenges persist, particularly in identifying beneficiaries, leading to high exclusion rates among the working poor. The [Welfare Benefits Board](#) aims to streamline social protection through a centralized digital registry and the Welfare Benefits Information System. In mid-2024, a new National Social Protection Policy was approved to create a coordinated system encompassing social assistance, care, and insurance.

The [Asian Development Bank](#) emphasizes that sustaining policy reforms is essential for long-term resilience and growth, which are crucial for improving living standards and reducing debt vulnerability. While strengthened tourism and remittances contribute positively, challenges remain, including sluggish consumer demand and trade uncertainties that could impact social stability. Continued efforts to maintain macroeconomic stability and implement structural reforms will be critical for Sri Lanka's recovery and development.

ONGOING EMERGENCY RESPONSE

For real-time information on IFRC emergencies, visit IFRC GO page: [Sri Lanka](#).

Emergency Appeal name	Sri Lanka Tropical Cyclone Ditwah
IFRC Emergency Appeal code	MDRLK023
People to be assisted	518,030
Duration	02 December 2025 to 31 June 2027
Funding requirements	Federation-wide funding requirement: TBD IFRC funding requirement: CHF 5 million
Link to Emergency Appeal	Tropical Cyclone Ditwah Emergency Appeal
Link to Operational Strategy	Tropical Cyclone Ditwah Operational Strategy

Cyclone Ditwah struck Sri Lanka against a backdrop of pre-existing vulnerabilities, including widespread poverty, high levels of malnutrition, and fragile health systems, amplifying the humanitarian consequences of the disaster. The country was already facing economic instability and food insecurity, leaving large segments of the population, particularly children, women, and the elderly at heightened risk.

The cyclone's geographical scope was [nationwide](#), affecting all 25 districts, with severe floods and landslides displacing over 209,000 people and affecting approximately 1.1 million people, including 362,939 children, 326,703 older persons, and 19,513 pregnant women. Physical impacts included the destruction of homes, schools, hospitals, and transport networks, while widespread power outages and communication breakdowns disrupted essential systems.

The crisis overwhelmed health services, limiting access to maternal care, nutrition programmes, and disease prevention, while increasing the risk of waterborne disease outbreaks due to contaminated supplies. Overall, the combined effect of pre-existing socioeconomic fragilities and the cyclone's widespread destruction has created a complex humanitarian emergency.

Short description of the emergency operational strategy

This current operation will target over 500,000 people from 100,000 households across the most severely affected districts of Cyclone Ditwah, prioritising those currently displaced in safety centres, staying with relatives and communities returning to damaged homes. The selection focuses on districts experiencing the greatest impact, especially Badulla, Ampara, Kandy, Kurunegala and other severely affected areas within the targeted 20 districts. The National Society interventions will include:

Shelter: Immediate support will focus on providing emergency shelter materials, such as tarpaulins and basic household items, to protect families from the elements. Additionally, the National Society will provide support for transitional shelters as and when requested by the Government of Sri Lanka.

Livelihoods: Assistance will be provided in instalments through a financial service provider, with targeted households identified through community consultations. National Society will conduct monitoring visits to ensure cash assistance is being used in line with the agreement.

Multi-purpose cash assistance: Cash-based assistance will be provided to families for purchasing food, medicine, clothing or materials for livelihood recovery

[Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene \(WASH\):](#) Restoring water supply systems and the distribution of sanitary napkins will be prioritised. Households will be supported with cash assistance for owner-driven toilet constructions and repairs. Hygiene promotion campaigns will be conducted to encourage safe practices such as handwashing, waste disposal, and menstrual hygiene management.

Health: Support will be provided to rehabilitate damaged health facilities and strengthen referral systems. Mobile health units and community health volunteers will ensure vulnerable groups such as children, elderly and people with chronic illnesses receive timely care.

[Community engagement and accountability \(CEA\):](#) Feedback mechanisms, such as hotlines, community meetings and volunteer outreach, will be established to capture concerns and suggestions.

[Protection, gender, and inclusion \(PGI\):](#) Safeguarding against sexual and gender-based violence, ensuring equal access to services and promoting inclusive participation in recovery efforts.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



Climate and environment

Sri Lanka is an island state in the Indian Ocean with a land area of 65,610 square kilometres and a population of 22 million. Sri Lanka is highly vulnerable to climate change, due to its high temperatures, unique and complex hydrological regime, and exposure to extreme climate events. Extreme weather conditions, such as prolonged droughts and flash floods, not only threaten people's livelihoods but also the physical and social health of local communities.

Multiple years of climate-related natural hazards have harmed vulnerable populations, damaging harvests and livelihoods which has left communities in debt, food insecure, and malnourished, reducing their ability to adapt and respond. Sri Lanka ranks 90th out of 191 countries on the INFORM risk index.

The National Disaster Management Plan of Sri Lanka states annual disaster losses totalling LKR 50 billion (USD 313 million), linked to housing, infrastructure, agriculture, and relief, due to hydrometeorological and climatological hazards.

Sea level rise, storm surges, and coastal erosion are the most intense in the west, southwest, and southern coastal belt, where about 50 per cent of Sri Lanka's population lives. Vector-borne diseases are spreading at an alarming rate due to a changing climate conducive to mosquito breeding.

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

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

The National Society is committed to developing and implementing local strategies with active community participation to integrate climate resilience into daily practices. These efforts include promoting sustainable land use, groundwater recharge and ecosystem protection to reduce vulnerability to climate impacts such as floods,

droughts and landslides. Capacity building is a key priority, with training for staff, volunteers and local stakeholders in climate risk management and environmental protection, while empowering youth to lead community-level climate actions and integrating climate education into schools to foster a culture of sustainability from an early age.

Disaster risk reduction measures are closely linked to climate resilience, focusing on anticipatory actions and collaboration with the Disaster Management Centre and other partners to strengthen early warning systems through improved forecasting, risk monitoring and preparedness planning. This includes developing mobile applications for disaster alerts and enhancing response mechanisms for climate-related emergencies.

The National Society also promotes sustainable livelihoods, including climate-resilient agriculture, to help communities adapt to environmental changes. As part of this initiative, it is working closely with the Ministry of Environment, supported by UNDP and GGGI, to implement a long-term environmental sustainability programme. Partnerships and advocacy play a central role, with collaboration planned with government bodies, international agencies and local organizations to advance climate action through policy dialogue, knowledge sharing, and participation in networks focused on disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation. These combined efforts aim to ensure that vulnerable communities across Sri Lanka are better equipped to anticipate, withstand, and recover from climate and environmental shocks.

Planned activities in 2026

- Train and capacity build on climate-smart practices for communities, stakeholders, staff, and volunteers on climate-resilient ways of agriculture
- Enhance anticipatory actions and strengthen early warning systems through improved forecasting, risk monitoring and preparedness planning.
- Develop mobile applications for disaster alerts and strengthen response mechanisms for climate-related emergencies
- Advocate for and implement practices such as reforestation, pollution reduction and biodiversity conservation

- Engage in policy dialogue, knowledge sharing, and networks focused on disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC will support the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society in advancing climate-smart and environmentally sustainable programming during 2026–2027. This includes promoting [Nature-based solutions](#) and promoting awareness and

behavioural change among affected communities, while building the capacity of youth and volunteers through training and skills development on climate change adaptation and mitigation. The IFRC will also assist the National Society in developing a roadmap for [anticipatory action](#) and [forecast-based financing](#), ensuring proactive disaster preparedness. Additionally, it will strengthen risk communication and early [warning](#) dissemination by working with community-based organizations to reach vulnerable communities with timely and actionable information.



Disasters and crises

For real-time information on emergencies, see the IFRC GO page, [Sri Lanka](#)

Sri Lanka, highly vulnerable to natural disasters and climate change, has seen decades of [development gains reversed](#). As a tropical island with two distinct monsoon seasons, monsoon-induced floods are a recurrent disaster in Sri Lanka, which is further exaggerated by the sea level temperature changes. According to [a study](#), annual average mean minimum temperatures are rising, closing the gap between maximum and minimum temperatures. This alarming forecast adds to Sri Lanka's volatile risk profile. Temperature variations disrupt climate patterns in Sri Lanka and the water cycle, exacerbating water scarcity, water quality, and water-related hazards.

Climate change further compounds these risks, with sea-level rise directly threatening 44 percent of Sri Lanka's GDP generated in coastal regions through hazards such as coastal erosion. Temperature variations disrupt climate patterns and the water cycle, exacerbating water scarcity, water quality issues, and water-related hazards.

These frequent hazards seriously affect the socio-economic status and well-being of communities in addition to the country's achievement of development goals. Most of these impacts are the result of increased vulnerability due to rapid unplanned urbanization and development, lack of good governance, and, most significantly, the direct and indirect effects of climate change.

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

The Sri Lanka Red Cross Society is working to strengthen its capacity to anticipate, prepare for and respond to disasters through updated national and branch-level contingency plans for hazards such as floods, landslides and droughts. This includes [Anticipatory Action](#) such as preparing simplified [Early Action Protocols](#), prepositioning relief stocks and establishing contingency funds for swift response. The National Society

is building and maintaining skilled Disaster Response Teams at both national and branch levels by training at least 500 volunteers and equipping them with necessary kits to ensure timely and coordinated assistance.

To enhance community resilience, technological solutions like a disaster preparedness mobile app are being developed to provide [early warnings](#) and critical information to at-risk communities, complemented by training for government stakeholders and community-based organizations. Integrated health and WASH support during emergencies is also a priority, ensuring [first aid](#), emergency health services and hygiene interventions through capacity building and partnerships to address immediate health risks.

The National Society promotes a culture of safety and preparedness by developing School Disaster Management Plans, forming School Disaster Management Groups and integrating [disaster risk reduction](#) lessons into school curricula to build safer, more resilient schools. Operational efficiency is being improved through a cluster-based warehouse management system to optimize storage and distribution of relief supplies, ensuring aid reaches affected communities effectively. The Sri Lanka Red Cross Society aims to emphasise a shift from reactive to proactive approaches, leveraging technology, community empowerment and strong institutional systems to save lives, reduce suffering and build resilient communities across Sri Lanka.

Planned activities in 2026

- Disseminate [early warning](#) messages to at-risk vulnerable communities through branch networks and volunteers to ensure evacuation to safe places
- Prepare [simplified Early Action Protocols](#) for [anticipatory action](#)
- Preposition relief stocks and establish contingency funds for swift disaster response

- Train volunteers to build skilled National and Branch Disaster Response Teams
- Develop and launch a disaster preparedness mobile app to provide early warnings and critical information to at-risk communities
- Integrate disaster risk reduction lessons into school curricular

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC will provide support to the National Society to strengthen its community-based resilience programming. This includes technical assistance in developing plans, policies and strategies, as well as facilitating collaboration with local

governments to promote locally led livelihood opportunities, including climate-friendly alternatives. The IFRC also supports cash and voucher assistance programming and improvements to community infrastructure. Additionally, it plays a key role in strengthening in-country coordination on anticipatory action through the Technical Working Group, ensuring better preparedness and response mechanisms.

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 2025, IFRC approved one DREF Early Action Protocol for dengue in Sri Lanka.



Sri Lanka Red Cross Society participated in the Clean Sri Lanka initiative for the preservation of coastal environment. (Photo: Sri Lanka Red Cross Society)



The recent economic crisis has directly impacted healthcare services in Sri Lanka, causing shortages of medicine and medical supplies. Dependency on imports, coupled with a reduced foreign currency reserve, has led to a significant decrease in the availability of pharmaceutical products. It has also led to medicines being unaffordable for many and intensified the financial strain on households.

Sri Lanka is experiencing an epidemiological transition, with non-communicable diseases (NCDs) accounting for up to 90 per cent of the disease burden. This includes a rise in cardiovascular diseases, diabetes and cancers, fueled by an aging population and changing lifestyles. The economic burden of managing NCDs is significant and unequally distributed.

A significant disparity exists between healthcare services in urban and rural areas. Major urban hospitals are generally better-equipped and staffed, while rural facilities face shortages in staff, specialists, and equipment. This forces rural patients to travel long distances, increasing their financial and emotional burdens. The economic crisis has fueled a worrying brain drain, as trained health workers migrate to other countries for better economic prospects. This exacerbates the existing human resource shortages.

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

The Sri Lanka Red Cross Society's Strategic Plan 2024–2030 sets out high-level objectives under the Health and Wellbeing sector to support vulnerable populations. These objectives aim to strengthen the capacity of both communities and the National Society to address health challenges through preventive measures and emergency response. The plan focuses on reducing malnutrition and improving overall health by implementing integrated programs that cover first aid, public health, nutrition, psychological support and Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) to enhance community well-being. A key priority is to strengthen emergency and outbreak response by supporting the national health system during infectious disease outbreaks and other crises, while expanding the reach and quality of first aid training and emergency health services for vulnerable groups.

The strategy also emphasizes community-based health promotion and risk reduction, including identifying local health risks and implementing culturally appropriate interventions such as Community-Based Health and First Aid (CBHFA) to empower communities to manage their own health needs. The National Society demonstrates a strong commitment to building partnerships and enhancing internal capacity. It plans to collaborate with agencies such as the World Health Organization and relevant government bodies while implementing initiatives to strengthen the skills of its staff and volunteers. These efforts aim to ensure effective, equitable, and sustainable service delivery across all health and wellbeing programmes.

Planned activities in 2026

- Collaborate with international agencies and relevant government bodies to strengthen health partnerships
- Capacity building of staff and volunteers in health, WASH and disaster management
- Provide access to training platforms and e-learning resources, including IFRC learning tools
- Facilitate joint workshops to build internal capacity and ensure sustainable service delivery

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC will support the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society with institutional readiness. The support will assist the National Society in reaching the community level for capacity building for epidemic and pandemic preparedness. In addition, the IFRC will also provide technical support to the National Society with regard to the development and implementation of WASH Interventions including climate-smart long-term WASH programme and resilience program.

Additionally, the IFRC is supporting the National Society by providing access to training platforms, e-learning resources such as IFRC learning tools and facilitating joint workshops.



Sri Lanka is a significant country of origin, transit, and destination for many people on the move including economic migrant workers, asylum seekers and refugees, and people who have been trafficked. There remain populations of internally displaced people (IDPs) in some parts of the country from disasters or long-running civil conflict. Sri Lanka is also a major country of origin for migrant workers.

According to International Migration in South and South-West Asia, Sri Lanka has seen a tenfold increase in migrant numbers in the last two decades. More than half of such migrants are employed in the low-skilled and informal sector, including many women who work as domestic workers. The government is keen to support more people hoping to work abroad to boost remittances in order to support the foreign reserve shortages.

In 2022, the economic crisis triggered a surge in outbound migration, including highly skilled workers. Irregular migration has increased due to unlicensed recruitment agents and restrictive regulations, such as the Family Background Report for female domestic workers, contributing to human trafficking risks.

Natural hazards such as floods, landslides and droughts are now primary triggers for internal displacement, with climate change exacerbating these events and pushing vulnerable agricultural and fishing communities, especially in the Dry Zone, to migrate.

Many disaster-prone communities experience recurring displacement, often returning home temporarily after events, which heightens long-term vulnerability. Female migrants, particularly domestic workers, face severe risks including abuse, exploitation, and gender-based violence, while women and children in displacement situations encounter unsafe shelter and increased vulnerability to violence. Historically marginalized groups, such as Northern Muslims, continue to face hardship post-conflict. Both conflict-affected and displaced populations exhibit higher rates of mental health issues, including post-traumatic stress disorder and other conditions worsened by chronic daily stressors.

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

The Sri Lanka Red Cross Society plans to establish a comprehensive Migration and Displacement policy. This will be supported by the creation of a dedicated Technical Working Group at the national level to institutionalize this work area and

ensure strategic focus and coordination. The National Society will provide personalized support to families, facilitate communication and reunite those separated by disaster, conflict or migration. It also commits to delivering direct humanitarian assistance, information and referrals to migrants in irregular situations, ensuring access to essential services and protection. Capacity building is a priority, with plans to provide basic Restoring Family Links (RFL) training for 500 staff and volunteers, alongside developing and disseminating awareness materials to educate communities on preventing separation and maintaining family links during crises.

The National Society will strengthen strategic partnerships with key stakeholders such as government bodies like the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment, UN agencies including IOM, UNHCR and ILO and other organizations, positioning the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society as a key actor in providing coordinated and practical support for vulnerable individuals.

Planned activities in 2026

- Provide personalized support to families
- Conduct basic Restoring Family Links (RFL) training for staff and volunteers
- Develop and disseminate awareness materials to educate communities on preventing separation and maintaining family links during crises
- Strengthen partnerships with government bodies, national and international agencies

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC will support the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society in strengthening its capacity in migration and displacement through training, workshops, and peer support. This will include support for activities which facilitate the integration and social inclusion of migrants and displaced people into their new communities, including skills training. Technical support will also be provided in the form of regional or cross-regional discussions, consultations, and workshops to support work related to migration routes.

The ICRC will provide support to the National Society under the Restoring Family Links (RFL) initiative.



Values, power and inclusion

Sri Lanka has maintained a high national literacy rate, exceeding 90 percent in recent years, with near-universal literacy among youth. However, recent policy reforms have exposed underlying challenges within the education system, prompting renewed efforts for transformation. One notable success has been the elimination of gender disparities in school enrolment, enabling Sri Lanka to achieve an important Millennium Development Goal ahead of schedule.

Sri Lanka, emerging from a thirty-year civil conflict, remains politically, ethnically, and religiously divided, with social divisions evident through violent attacks and communal violence. During disasters, these divisions often result in discriminatory actions, compromising the right of minority groups to receive fair assistance.

Gender-based violence in Sri Lanka has been aggravated by the country's response to the COVID-19 outbreak and its ongoing economic crisis. One in five women reported experiencing marital abuse before the pandemic. Societal variables that have been linked to gender-based violence include entrenched gender stereotypes, the economic disadvantages faced by women, and widespread poverty.

Complex emergencies in Sri Lanka are causing negative coping strategies due to work and food insecurity, particularly affecting women and girls who have lower social and economic capacity to prioritize well-being and are vulnerable to breakdowns in protection mechanisms. The Sri Lanka Joint Rapid Food Security Assessment indicated that 'multiple district officials reported a rise in domestic violence, while also acknowledging that these cases are largely underreported, particularly, during the current economic crisis.

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

The Sri Lanka Red Cross Society is committed to building safer, more resilient schools and promoting a culture of preparedness by developing and testing school disaster management plans and forming disaster management groups comprising students, teachers and community members. It also seeks to integrate disaster risk reduction and climate change lessons into the formal school curriculum to equip the younger generation with the knowledge and skills to understand, mitigate and respond to disaster risks.

Promoting gender equality and social inclusion is a core priority, ensuring equal access to services and opportunities through gender-sensitive and socially inclusive approaches. Key actions include maintaining a gender balance of 60/40 among staff, volunteers and governance; providing meaningful access and participation for persons with disabilities and marginalized groups; and systematically integrating protection, gender, and inclusion (PGI) considerations across all programmes to address specific vulnerabilities and needs.

Community engagement and accountability (CEA) will be strengthened by transferring critical themes safely and personalizing information for all groups, supported by feedback systems designed to address issues such as sexual and gender-based violence, child safety concerns, sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment. The National Society will intensify efforts to bolster community-driven initiatives, enhance local networks and provide training, capacity development and in-kind support to address community-identified priorities. A significant focus will be placed on increasing the involvement of local government and community-based organizations to offer sustainable services to diverse population groups, including youth, women, transgender individuals, people living with disabilities, and resettled communities. Youth empowerment remains central to the National Society's plans, with innovative programs guided by youth policies and procedures and collaboration with the South Asia Youth Network to promote best practices, capacity building, empowerment and the values of non-violence and peace.

Planned activities in 2026

- Integrate disaster risk reduction and climate change lessons into the formal school curriculum
- Maintain gender balance among staff, volunteers and governance
- Design feedback systems to address sexual and gender-based violence, child safety concerns, sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment
- Strengthen community-driven initiatives through training, capacity development and in-kind support
- Collaborate with the South Asia Youth Network for best practices, capacity building and promotion of non-violence and peace

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC will support the National Society in mainstreaming protection, gender, and inclusion (PGI) into sectoral programming and operations. This will include assistance to the National Society in revising its PGI policy and further help to develop a policy on prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse. The IFRC will also support child safeguarding risk analysis, disability inclusion in emergencies and conducting assessments of National Society's disaster response operations.

The IFRC will continue to support the National Society in the capacity-building of its staff and volunteers on the Red Cross Red Crescent Community engagement and accountability (CEA) guide, IFRC Global Strategy, toolkit and training packages.

ENABLING LOCAL ACTORS

The Sri Lanka Red Cross Society is committed to strengthening its institutional standing.

To strengthen its branches, the National Society will use the IFRC's Branch Organizational Capacity Assessment (BOCA) tool and contingency plan results to measure its achievement towards the National Society's strategic plans. The BOCA process is intended to capture the strengths and weaknesses of National Societies branches, in relation to a wide range of organizational capacities.

Given the political situation in Sri Lanka and the role of the military and other security services in disaster response, the National Society will also closely analyse methods of principled humanitarian action as a component of the Preparedness for Effective Response (PER). The PER approach is a continuous and flexible process that enables National Societies to assess, measure and analyze the strengths and gaps of its preparedness and response mechanism and take the necessary action to improve it.



Key Institutional Indicators

The National Society has put in place the following:

- Strategy to strengthen its auxiliary role
- National Society development plan
- Youth engagement strategy
- Health, accident and death compensation for volunteers
- Protection against sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) policy
- PSEA Action Plan
- Data management system
- Digital transformation roadmap
- Integrity and reputational risk mechanism



Strategic and operational coordination

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

The National Society's operational priority is to decentralize 25 district branches into clusters to enhance decision-making, delegate authority and enable quicker humanitarian responses. These clusters will be organized based on geography, hazard types and socio-economic factors to create a more responsive structure. To ensure internal alignment, the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society emphasizes robust coordination through a performance management framework, developing consolidated annual operational plans at both the National Headquarters and branch levels in alignment with strategic goals. Staff performance will be linked to these plans, fostering accountability and collaboration.

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC will support the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society to strengthen its ability to coordinate national and international learning and coordination across various platforms and clusters. It will also provide financial and technical assistance to the National Society to uphold regular shelter cluster/working groups to monitor response strategy implementation, review and contextualize key documents after medium/large responses and update Terms of Reference and Standard Operating Procedure.



National Society development

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

The Sri Lanka Red Cross Society emphasizes the need for organizational transformation to strengthen its humanitarian impact. It is committed to modernizing core systems by transitioning from manual processes to fully digitalized management in Finance, Human Resources, and Logistics, ensuring greater efficiency and accountability. Alongside this, the National Society prioritizes the development of a skilled workforce by recruiting and training thousands of volunteers, including professionals and implementing robust training and appraisal systems for both staff and volunteers. To reinforce its values, the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society seeks to enhance branch governance structures and foster a culture of transparency, integrity, and respect. Additionally, it is dedicated to achieving financial stability and sustainability through strategic partnerships, diversifying funding sources, and creating a comprehensive resource mobilization strategy.

The Sri Lanka Red Cross Society focus to increase and support multi-year investment in the institutional capacities

of local and national responders, including preparedness, response, and coordination capacities, especially in fragile contexts and where communities are vulnerable to armed conflicts, disasters, recurrent outbreaks and the effects of climate change. The National Society has developed a plan to achieve this through collaboration with development partners and incorporate capacity strengthening in partnership agreements.

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC will continue its support to the National Society to strengthen the coordination and alignment of technical and financial support provided to the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society by various partners in line with the adopted consolidated National Society development plan. The IFRC will put a stronger emphasis on working better together as a network and with others, 'thinking beyond the borders of the Red Cross and Red Crescent'.



Humanitarian diplomacy

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

The Sri Lanka Red Cross Society is committed to promoting a human rights-based approach in humanitarian settings by raising awareness of violations and emphasizing the principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence to uphold the dignity of affected populations. A key objective is to influence decision-makers by engaging with government officials and policymakers to prioritize the needs of vulnerable individuals, ensuring that humanitarian imperatives and field evidence guide their decisions.

The Sri Lanka Red Cross Society has successfully collaborated with the Ministry of Disaster Management Centres and contributed to the national Technical Working Group for Anticipatory Action and Migration, while also leading the country-level Technical Working Group on Anticipatory Action and Migration alongside other partners. It plays a vital role in supporting refugees and asylum seekers by working closely with the ICRC to strengthen the Restoring Family Links programme and by collaborating with the Immigration and Emigration Department to provide immediate humanitarian assistance to Rohingya refugees currently detained in the country.

The National Society focuses on empowering grassroots advocates by equipping local communities, volunteers and branches with training and resources to strengthen advocacy capacity. Additionally, the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society emphasizes leadership in official coordination mechanisms, such as UN-led cluster meetings, to shape the national humanitarian agenda, build collaboration and address complex humanitarian challenges in Sri Lanka.

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC will support the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society in its humanitarian diplomacy and public communication efforts. It will connect the National Society with high-level political forums to ensure the voices of vulnerable Sri Lankans are represented in decision-making. It provides external resources to strengthen advocacy campaigns, including expertise in policy analysis, communication strategies and funding for impactful research and materials. Additionally, the IFRC will also support capacity building of the National Society staff, volunteers and community members for a strategic and sustainable grassroots mobilization.



Accountability and agility (cross-cutting)

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

The Sri Lanka Red Cross Society aims to implement robust systems for Project Management, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting (PMER), while enhancing internal accountability and publishing audited reports. It will establish feedback channels for beneficiaries to help shape interventions and move Finance, HR and Logistics to digital platforms to improve efficiency. Continuous training and a strong performance appraisal system will be provided for staff and volunteers to

ensure effective crisis response. Additionally, a risk register will be maintained at both the national headquarters and chapter level to strengthen governance and risk management

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC will continue to support the National Society in strengthening its human resources department. The IFRC will also support the National Society with institutionalizing fraud and corruption prevention.

THE IFRC NETWORK

The IFRC

The IFRC is at present the main supporter of the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society. The support focuses on strategic and operational coordination, including supporting the National Society to execute its auxiliary role in emergency and disaster response, National Society development, and humanitarian diplomacy. It also supports accountability as a cross-cutting theme and aims to create better coordination with other international humanitarian organizations.

In recent years the IFRC supported the National Society through a number of [Disaster Response Emergency Fund \(DREF\)](#) and Emergency Appeal operations in relation to multiple floods in [southwestern provinces](#), [central provinces](#), and [Sabaragamuwa](#) in addition to a [dengue outbreak](#). In June 2025, the IFRC approved a [DREF Early Action Protocol](#) for dengue.



Sri Lanka Red Cross Society distributing non-food relief items to affected people as part of Cyclone Fengal response. (Photo: Sri Lanka Red Cross Society)

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 contributing to reinforcing National Societies in their respective countries, including through their auxiliary role.

During the 2004 Tsunami operations, up to 23 participating National Societies were supporting the National Society and have now left the country after completing their projects. Participating National Societies currently providing remote support and assistance during emergency operations include the **Red Cross Society of China, Kuwait Red Crescent Society, Singapore Red Cross Society** and the **Turkish Red Crescent Society**.

Movement coordination

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

The ICRC supports the National Society with migration, [restoring family links](#), humanitarian values, safer access, first aid, and the dissemination of international humanitarian law. In Sri Lanka, the ICRC helps people affected by the past conflict, including detainees, the families of missing persons and economically vulnerable households. The ICRC also works with ministries, armed forces, police and universities to promote international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

Coordination with other actors

The National Society has extensively collaborated with various ministries of the Sri Lankan government, particularly the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Disaster Management. It is set to expand its intervention in climate-smart practices by partnering with the Ministry of Agriculture and supporting the government in implementing the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) for climate.

The National Society maintains active and steadfast relationships with national and international partners in the public, non-governmental, and corporate sectors.

At the country level, the National Society and IFRC serve as observers and actively participate in meetings of the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), convened during both disasters and non-emergency periods. They are involved in relevant government-led cluster information sharing, planning and analysis, with IFRC supporting the National Society's coordination efforts by representing it in other relevant clusters as required.

The IFRC and the National Society take part in Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) meetings, Inter-Sector Coordination Group (ISCG) Sri Lanka, and Accountability to Affected Population (AAP) working groups. IFRC contributed to the formulation of AAP messaging for the Sri Lanka document and the revision of the UN Humanitarian Needs and Priorities (HNP) plan. While maintaining a strong collaboration and partnership with Movement partners, the National Society seeks to maintain close engagement, alongside the IFRC with national and international partners from the public, non-governmental, and corporate sectors.

The Sri Lanka Red Cross Society maintains active and close partnerships with national and international partners in public, non-governmental and corporate sectors. It works closely with UN agencies and others such as ZOA, Oxfam and USAID in the country. The National Society works with Dettol, Manchee and Maliban at a national level, and with international corporate partners such as Coca-Cola. It also works with media networks such as Hiru TV and the Independent Television Network.



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 2026 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 network databank](#)
- 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 2026 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 Network Databank](#)
- 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 bank](#) • [Donor response reports](#)

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