



# SERBIA



## 2026-2028 IFRC network country plan

13 February 2026

### In support of the Red Cross of Serbia



**183**

National Society branches



**186**

National Society local units



**1,090**

National Society staff



**37,178**

National Society volunteers

### People to be reached in 2026



**10,000**

Climate and environment



**6,000**

Disasters and crises



**35,000**

Health and wellbeing



**13,000**

Migration and displacement



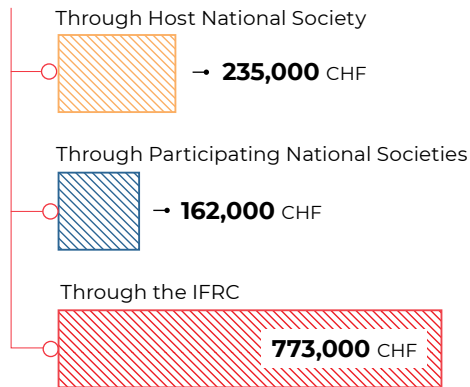
**5,000**

Values, power and inclusion

### IFRC network Funding Requirements

**2026**

**Total 1.1M CHF**



**2027**

**Total 747,000 CHF**

**2028**

**655,000 CHF**

*Projected funding requirements*

### Participating National Societies

Austrian Red Cross

Italian Red Cross\*

Swiss Red Cross

### IFRC Appeal codes

Longer-term needs:

**MAARS002**

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

## Hazards



Floods



Earthquakes



Storm



Epidemics



Drought



Population Movement

## IFRC network multi-year focus

### Longer term needs

- Climate change adaptation
- Disaster preparedness

### Capacity development

- Humanitarian diplomacy
- National Society development

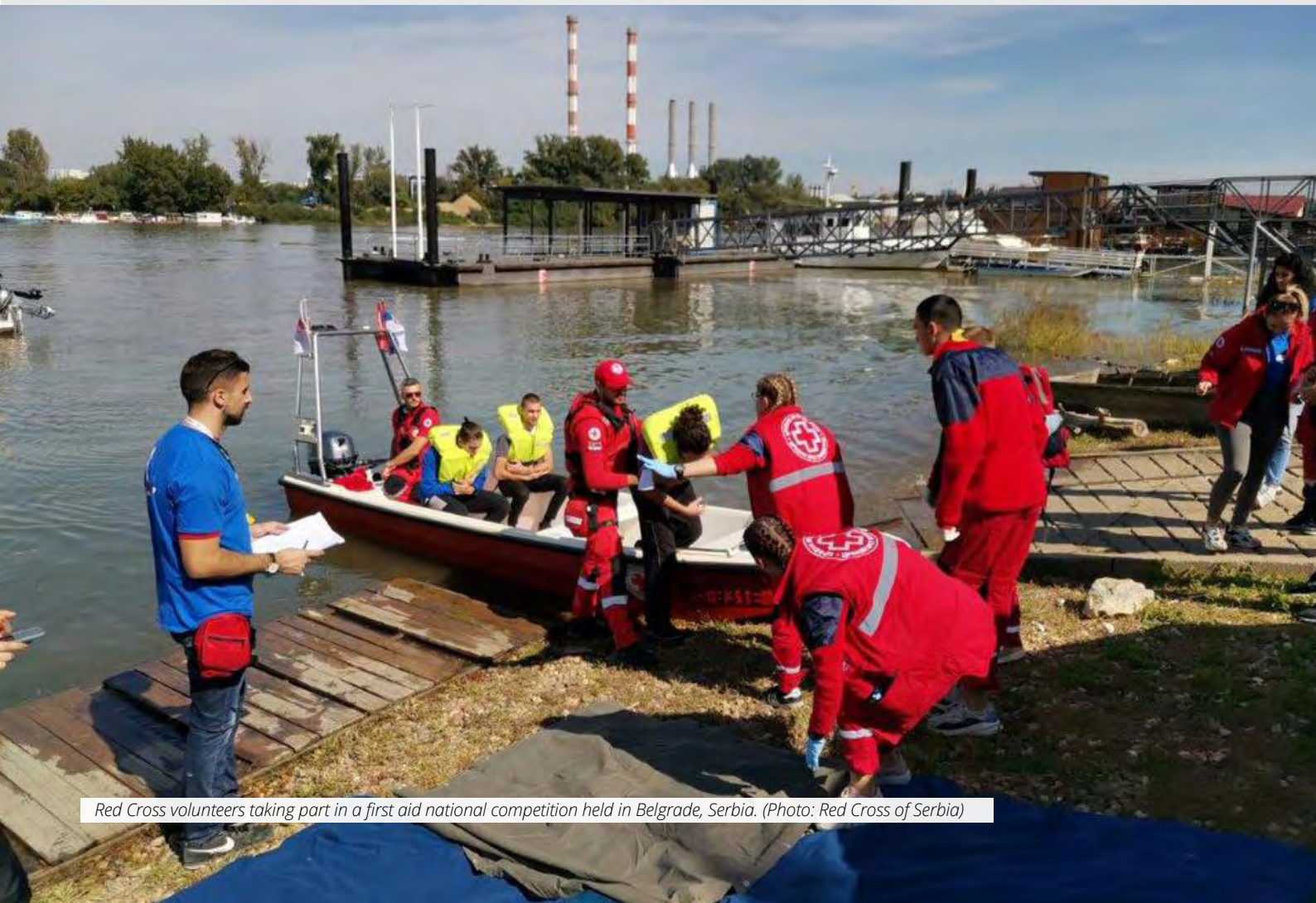
## Key country data links

INFORM Climate Change Risk Index **Low**

Human Development Index rank **62**

World Bank Population figure **6.6M**

World Bank Population below poverty line **20%**



Red Cross volunteers taking part in a first aid national competition held in Belgrade, Serbia. (Photo: Red Cross of Serbia)

## Detailed funding requirements

	2026		2027		2028	
	Host National Society	IFRC	Host National Society	IFRC	Host National Society	IFRC
<b>Longer-term needs</b>						
Climate and environment	15,000	20,000	15,000	20,000	15,000	20,000
Disasters & crises	110,000	513,000	110,000	170,000	110,000	170,000
Health & wellbeing	110,000	150,000	110,000	150,000	110,000	150,000
Migration & displacement		90,000		80,000		80,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>235,000</b>	<b>773,000</b>	<b>235,000</b>	<b>420,000</b>	<b>235,000</b>	<b>420,000</b>

### Participating National Societies bilateral support

National Society	Year	Funding Requirement	Confirmed Funding	Climate and environment	Disasters and crises	Health and wellbeing	Migration and displacement	Values, power and inclusion	Enabling Functions
Austrian Red Cross	2026	162,000	162,000		108,000			54,000	
	2027	92,000	92,000		92,000				
Swiss Red Cross	2026						-		

# NATIONAL SOCIETY PROFILE

The **Red Cross of Serbia** was established in 1876 and was admitted to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) in 1919. It is the largest and oldest humanitarian organization in the Republic of Serbia. The programmes of the Red Cross of Serbia are implemented through its strong volunteer base and staff in collaboration with its donors and partners.

The position of the Red Cross of Serbia is defined by the Law on the Red Cross of Serbia, which outlines its auxiliary role to public authorities in the humanitarian field. The auxiliary role of the Red Cross of Serbia involves disaster risk reduction, preparedness and response including evacuation, shelter, search and rescue, distribution of emergency items, water supply, sanitation, recovery support, first aid training and restoring family links (RFL). It complies with national laws and the international Red Cross Red Crescent Movement regulations on international humanitarian operations.

The Red Cross of Serbia develops its annual plans based on five main strategic goals set by its Strategic Plan 2022-2026 as follows:

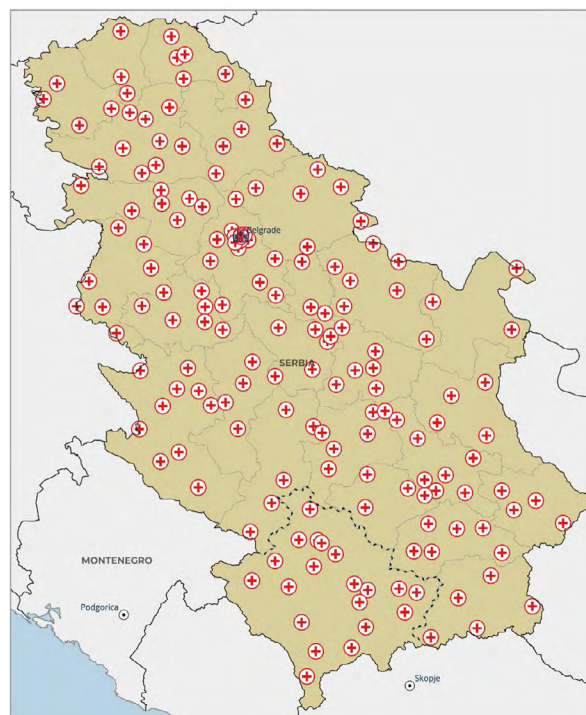
- Continue with further development (transformation) of the Red Cross of Serbia into a modern, strong organization able to respond to humanitarian challenges

- Strengthen organizational and community capacities to respond to basic life needs and dignified life of the most vulnerable population, improve work with marginalized groups and promote social inclusion
- Improve organizational and community capacities to prepare and respond to health risks, crises, chronic non-communicable diseases, epidemics, and influence the improvement of the health status of the population
- Improve capacities to contribute to disaster risk reduction and emergency management at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels with the aim of reducing harmful impacts, saving lives and emergency response to accidents, early recovery of the most vulnerable and building the resilience of local communities to respond to challenges
- Continue to promote the protection of humanitarian values, fundamental principles of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement and international humanitarian law

In 2024, the Red Cross of Serbia reached more than 473,000 people through its long term services and development programmes and more than 43,000 people through its disaster response and early recovery programmes.

## Locations of The Red Cross of Serbia

Data last updated: April 2024



Map of Red Cross of Serbia branches and local units

*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*

# IFRC NETWORK ACTION

## JOINT SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

Serbia is a landlocked country situated in Southeastern and Central Europe, specifically in the central part of the Balkan Peninsula. It shares borders with Hungary to the north, Romania to the northeast, Bulgaria to the southeast, North Macedonia to the south, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina to the west, and Montenegro to the southwest. Serbia also claims a border with Albania through the disputed territory of Kosovo. Due to ongoing political tensions in the country, there remains a risk of complex crises becoming active in relation to [Kosovo](#). It is important to maintain a high level of preparedness, given the potential regional implications.

Serbia is a parliamentary democracy in which the president is elected for five years. The country is a unitary state composed of municipalities/cities, districts and two autonomous provinces, Vojvodina and Kosovo and Metohija. The southern Serbian province of Kosovo and Metohija has been under the United Nations (UN) mandate since 1999 according to the [UN Security Council Resolution 1244](#). Serbia has been a candidate for the European Union (EU) membership since 2012.

According to [the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia](#), Serbia's population in 2052 will be 5,224,762, representing a

decrease of about 1.5 million people compared to 2022. This trend, driven by a persistently negative natural increase and net migration, will also lead to a significantly older population. By 2052, the number of people over 65 is expected to be twice that of children under 14. This shift not only highlights the growing proportion of older people but also underscores additional challenges such as potential strains on the healthcare system, pension schemes and the overall workforce.

Since November 2024, Serbia has seen [months of anti-government](#) protests following the collapse of a newly renovated train station canopy in Novi Sad, which resulted in 16 fatalities. The incident, attributed to government negligence and corruption, sparked widespread public outrage and initiated a series of anti-corruption demonstrations across the country. At the forefront of what has become one of Europe's largest protest movements are students, who continue to lead calls for accountability and reform.

The World Bank revised Serbia's annual growth forecast downward from 4.2 per cent to 3.5 per cent due to political unrest and mass protests. The country is also grappling with some of the worst air quality in Europe, with more than 18 municipalities surpassing pollution limits. Additionally, poverty continues to be a pressing issue, particularly in rural areas and among people in vulnerable situations.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



### Climate and environment

Climate change affects the increase in the climate hazards, which include climate and weather conditions that can directly or indirectly cause damage to nature, property and human health and safety. During 2024 and early 2025, the country experienced prolonged periods of drought, particularly in the Vojvodina region, which negatively affected corn and wheat yields. According to the Republic Hydrometeorological Service of Serbia, average temperatures were above the long-term average in almost all regions of the country, with insufficient rainfall during key months for sowing. Children and people with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, yet there is a shortage of trained personnel

to adequately support them. In 2024, Serbia experienced its hottest summer on record, with temperatures exceeding 39°C. The heatwave led to increased health risks, particularly for people with heart and chronic conditions.

The rise in the number of severe storms, often triggered by heat waves, such as supercell storms, is having an increasingly significant impact, particularly in urban areas. Air pollution remains a chronic problem with industrial activity being the leading contributor. According to the [report by the United States Environmental Protection Agency](#) from 2024 and the IQAir platform, not a single monitoring station in the country met the new EU standards for safe air quality.

There is an ongoing deforestation and the reduction of green spaces, along with the seasonal burning of crop residues, often driven by low public awareness. [Wildfires in Serbia](#) most frequently occur in the southeastern and southwestern regions, particularly in areas with dry forests and difficult terrain, which complicates containment and rapid response. Additionally, limited public awareness around waste management has led to improper disposal, including waste being dumped into rivers and green spaces, contributing to worsening environmental degradation.

At the national level, Serbia has adopted the [Integrated National Energy and Climate Plan of the Republic of Serbia for the period up to 2030, with projections extending to 2050](#), as well as [Climate Change Adaptation Programme for the period 2023-2030](#), accompanied by an Action Plan for 2024–2026. Implementation of regulations remains limited, partly due to institutional weaknesses and challenges related to transparency and accountability.

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

The Red Cross of Serbia 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 services.

The Red Cross of Serbia has signed the [Climate and Environment charter](#) and therefore committed to scaling up its responses to the consequences of climate change. Besides this, the Governing board of the Red Cross of Serbia has adopted the Strategic orientation on climate change and climate action in 2022 and is committed to mitigating the current and future impact of climate change on the most vulnerable individuals and communities, supporting people to adapt and face the consequences and improve the adaptation to climate change and strengthen its contribution to the preservation of the environment. This complements the state's efforts in the climate change and climate action domain since they are mainly directed towards adaptation while the current state

focus is towards mitigation and decrease of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions according to its commitments undertaken by adopting the Paris Agreement.

The Red Cross of Serbia focuses on the directions set by its strategic document and aims to:

- Improve its capacities for enhanced response to humanitarian needs and help people to adapt to the impacts of the climate and environmental crisis
- Improve existing and develop additional programmes and activities for the most vulnerable groups that are at risk of climate change to assist their adaptation and mitigation approaches especially focusing on engaging children and youth at the local level
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions of its activities in line with the broader understanding of the “do no harm” principle
- Develop an approach for adapting and defining climate-smart programmes and projects

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### Planned activities in 2026

- Implement summer campaigns to raise awareness about heat waves, ensuring proactive outreach to beneficiaries throughout these periods, with a particular focus on groups in vulnerable situations such as older people, infants, children, youth and people with disabilities
- Develop the environmental policy of the National Society, including regular CO<sub>2</sub> emissions assessments and employee training on environmental impact assessment
- Create children and youth programmes on climate change that emphasize youth-led advocacy at the local level
- Develop awareness-raising programmes for educators working with children and people with disabilities, focusing on the impact of climate change on well-being

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### Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC will continue supporting the Red Cross of Serbia through its [Reference Centres](#), Hubs and Labs, which will provide specialized knowledge in disaster management, health initiatives and innovation. This collaboration will empower the Red Cross of Serbia to achieve its priorities by offering essential expertise and resources. Additionally, the IFRC will provide technical guidance, training and coordination to ensure the successful implementation of strategies.



## Disasters and crises

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

Serbia is highly susceptible to a variety of natural hazards, with significant impacts on agriculture and rural development. The country is ranked 124th by [INFORM](#), making it one of the most exposed and vulnerable countries in the Western Balkans. The primary risks include floods, earthquakes, epidemics, and droughts. Over the past three years, Serbia has faced [numerous disasters and crises](#), including epidemics, floods, droughts, and technological incidents.

Poverty is a significant risk factor in Serbia, with [21.2 per cent of the population at risk of poverty](#), particularly in central and southern regions where about [30 per cent of the population](#) faces financial distress. This economic vulnerability severely limits their capacity to cope with disasters, especially multi-hazard emergencies such as the combination of COVID-19 and floods. [Food security](#) remains a pressing issue in Serbia. Factors such as affordability, availability, food quality, safety, natural resources, and resilience to adverse climate conditions all contribute to this ranking. UN data indicate that [spending on agriculture has decreased](#) relative to its contribution to GDP since the early 2000s.

Decreasing water quality and insufficient water purification ability increase the risk of adverse climate change impacts on water availability, due to extreme events such as droughts, large precipitation amounts and flood events, as well as the increasing summer season dryness trend. Each year, Serbia contends with natural disasters triggered by extreme weather events.

The National Disaster Risk Reduction Platform, managed by the Sector for Emergency Management under the Ministry of Interior, aligns with United Nations recommendations on Disaster Risk Reduction and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. Sector for Emergency Management is also a focal point for the EU Civil Protection Mechanism and is legally responsible for enhancing the nation's capacity to reduce risks, respond to emergencies, and recover from disasters. However, the sector for Emergency Management currently lacks a central command and control facility to integrate all aspects of disaster management, from risk management to [decision-making during emergency responses](#).

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

The Red Cross of Serbia has adopted the Law on Fire Protection, a National Strategy for Emergency Response, and a Fire Protection Strategy, in addition to the [law on emergency situations](#). A primary goal of the Red Cross of Serbia is to improve capacities to contribute to disaster risk reduction and emergency management at the tactical, operational, and

strategic levels with the aim of reducing harmful impacts, saving lives, and emergency response to accidents and disasters, early recovery of the most vulnerable, and building the resilience of local communities to respond to challenges and problems themselves.

The strategic goals of the Red Cross of Serbia are to:

- Improve capacities to contribute to disaster risk reduction and emergency management at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels
- Reduce harmful impacts, saving lives and emergency response to accidents and disasters, early recovery of the most vulnerable and building the resilience of local communities to respond to challenges and problems themselves
- Increase the capacity of staff and volunteers to support the mental health resilience of the affected population by following mental health in emergencies and protecting and supporting staff and volunteers' mental health and psychosocial wellbeing so they can respond safely and effectively
- Integrate mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) in all activities and training programmes for volunteers and staff
- Improve disaster management systems that contribute to effective disaster response in the country at all operational and coordination levels internationally
- Strengthen operation and coordination capacities for disaster preparedness and response, including water rescue and mountain rescue
- Build a culture of local community safety, with reduced risk of disasters and reduced number of drownings and injuries in the mountains

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### Planned activities in 2026

- Update Preparedness for Effective Response (PER) and Contingency Plan with the aim of enhancing readiness and ensuring a coordinated, timely, and effective response to emergencies
- Develop strategic documents, standard operating procedures (SOPs), plans and protocols for disaster management aligned with the PER plan of action
- Continue disaster risk reduction (DRR) activities in schools and implement comprehensive training programs for staff, volunteers, local disaster response units, National Disaster Response Teams (NDRTs), as well as water lifesaving and mountain rescue education

- Conduct a feasibility study to establish an effective radio and standardized communication system for disaster response
- Strengthen regional capacity through improved equipment and stockpiles for timely and effective Red Cross disaster response
- Create a cash and voucher assistance (CVA) fund to support disaster relief efforts
- Lead initiatives to raise public awareness about drowning prevention and safe water practices

### Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC supports the Red Cross of Serbia in collaborating with partners to address disaster-related priorities within the disasters and crises sector. The IFRC offers continued technical expertise, guidance, and resources to assist the Red Cross of Serbia in creating effective disaster response strategies and programmes. The IFRC will guide the National Society in digitalization in disaster preparedness and response to ensure quick response and optimize the use of human and other resources. Since 2020, IFRC supported the National Society with five DREF operations to respond to these natural disasters.



National Society volunteers and staff assist people affected by floods with evacuations, distribution of food, hygiene items, cleaning parcels, and more. (Photo: Red Cross of Serbia)



## Health and wellbeing

The healthcare system in Serbia is experiencing a chronic shortage of care professionals, with demand growing in both the public and private sectors. According to the latest data from the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia and reports from health institutions across the country, the need for healthcare professionals has become a strategic priority. This shortage of healthcare professionals is leading to long waiting lists and is significantly hindering the timely and adequate delivery of medical services to the population.

Due to widespread student protests, the planned blood donation campaign could not be carried out, leading to critically low blood reserves. While the Red Cross has initiated alternative actions to address the shortage, the impact has been limited so far. Serbia currently has seven transfusion services, plus one additional unit, but only two of them are equipped with their own mobile blood collection vehicles.

The legal framework for first aid education has not yet been developed. There is no standardized first aid curriculum in schools and related activities are conducted on a case-by-case basis, depending on individual initiatives and local capacities. Additionally, there is currently no regulatory framework governing the use or placement of Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs), and publicly accessible AED devices are not yet available.

There is a noticeable increase in the number of people struggling with addiction, particularly those dependent on stimulants. In Serbia, patient numbers have risen by 10 to 20 per cent, with a growing number of people seeking treatment for cocaine and amphetamine dependence.

Air pollution remains a critical health concern as it contributes to approximately 10 per cent of deaths in Serbia, leading to

increased rates of asthma, chronic bronchitis, and other respiratory conditions, especially among children and the older people.

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

The Red Cross of Serbia aims to improve organizational and community capacities to prepare and respond to health risks, crises, chronic non-communicable diseases and epidemics and influence the improvement of the health status of the population.

The National Society also aims to scale up its mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) efforts and increase its ability to respond to emerging mental health and psychosocial needs in all segments of the population. This is to be achieved through the provision of basic psychosocial support in the work of the National Society with beneficiaries of its programmes and by mainstreaming MHPSS in key humanitarian activities while protecting and promoting the mental health and psychosocial well-being of staff and volunteers.

The National Society will also work to reduce the number of fatalities by preventing accidents and protecting human life. As part of these efforts, the Red Cross of Serbia will enhance its first aid capacity to raise awareness and conduct first aid trainings for various target groups at all levels. It will also continue to conduct legally required first aid training for driver license candidates and company employees, as well as raise general awareness about first aid through the implementation of educational campaigns. The National Society will enhance efforts to stabilize and increase the national blood reserves, while working with trained volunteers who are actively engaged in promoting, recruiting, retaining and selecting blood donors, as well as organizing blood drives.

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### Planned activities in 2026

- Develop standardized training packages in the field of public health and implement them at the local level to strengthen community health capacities

- Develop standardized educational materials on [first aid](#) for school children and youth and provide targeted training for parents to strengthen knowledge and preparedness across generations
- Providing continuous education and training for volunteers who are actively engaged in promoting, recruiting, retaining and selecting blood donors, as well as organizing blood donation drives
- Conduct First Aid Training of Trainers (ToT) and advanced training sessions for public events to ensure rapid and skilled response
- Develop digital learning models and establish an educational platform to expand access to first aid knowledge
- Carry out a feasibility study on the use of ambulance vehicles for cold transportation and commercial first aid services
- Develop support tools, including a practical guide, for staff working on the telephone helpline for older persons to ensure consistent, empathetic, and effective assistance
- Develop a mobile app based on the existing website and complement it with public campaigns featuring key messages targeted at potential blood donors

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### Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC supports the Red Cross of Serbia in developing its e-platform and different web tools for e-learning, as well as in the development and delivery of Advanced First Aid ToT, building capacities for providing advanced first aid at public events and acquiring first aid equipment. The IFRC also supports the National Society in developing training schemes for volunteers and staff as well as developing procedures to guide voluntary blood donation during emergencies.



Serbia is a key part of the Western Balkan migration route, serving as a major transit country for migrants traveling from the Greek Turkish border toward EU Member States and Schengen area countries. In total, there are 17 governmental centres in the Republic of Serbia, which are periodically open, depending on needs. Currently, only three reception centres are actively operating in Serbia: the Reception Centre in Preševo, the Asylum Centre in Krnjača (Belgrade) and the Reception Centre in Bogovađa. There is also one dedicated reception centre for displaced persons from Ukraine, including those from Russia, located in Vranje. This centre is managed by the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration of the Republic of Serbia. There is a pressing need to implement comprehensive integration activities for displaced persons from Ukraine residing in Serbia. Key areas of focus include psychosocial support (PSS), women's empowerment initiatives and programmes that facilitate their access to employment opportunities.

In 2025, 2,226 people have been registered in the centres, which is a 63.07 per cent decrease compared to the same period last year, when 6,027 people were recorded.<sup>1</sup> In June 2024, the EU and Serbia signed an agreement enhancing operational cooperation in border management with Frontex, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency. This agreement allows Frontex to deploy personnel across Serbia's borders, including those with non-EU countries like Bosnia and Herzegovina and North Macedonia, to assist in managing irregular migration and cross-border crime.

In 2025, the IFRC conducted an assessment on the potential impact of the implementation of the EU Pact on Migration, which concluded that there is a risk that Serbia may experience an increase in prolonged stays of migrants, as people may face challenges in continuing their journeys.

Serbia adheres to international laws and conventions related to refugees and migrants, including the [UN Refugee Convention](#). The legal framework includes laws on migration management, asylum, welfare, healthcare, and anti-discrimination, among others.

A pressing issue is the short average stay of migrants (16 days), which complicates efforts to identify and support victims of [human trafficking and exploitation](#). In 2022, [10 per cent](#) of trafficking victims identified were migrants, with 80 per cent exploited along the migration route. Serbia's strategic location as a transit country for migrants heading to the EU underscores its critical role in managing migration and displacement. While [significant progress has been made](#), particularly in legal frameworks and support systems, ongoing challenges remain in managing migration and displacement.

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

The Red Cross of Serbia is part of the IFRC three-year [Global Route-Based Migration Programme](#), which aims to improve the safety and dignity of people on the move along deadly and dangerous land and sea-based migration routes across Africa, the Americas, Europe, and the Middle East and North Africa. The programme aims to support 4.7 million people on the move and people in host communities annually through three operational pillars: (1) improving access to assistance and protection, including through humanitarian service points; (2) strengthening National Society capacities; and (3) local to global humanitarian diplomacy.

The Red Cross of Serbia also addresses issues of migration and displacement through its national strategy and action plan for 2023, although a dedicated migration and displacement strategy is yet to be developed. Since 1992, Serbia has been hosting refugees in collective centres, now comprising 19 government-run facilities, including seven asylum centres and 12 reception centres. The Red Cross of Serbia plays a crucial role in these centres, working closely with the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration to provide essential services and support.

The Red Cross of Serbia aims to:

- Provide humanitarian assistance and protection for migrants and host communities at [key locations of the route](#) through Serbia
- Strengthen the capacities of its branches to analyse and address the needs of migrants and influence policy change through humanitarian diplomacy and advocacy
- Strengthen its capacities to analyse and address the needs of migrants, as well as the capacities to address the needs of people on the move and adequately cooperate with all relevant partners
- Ensure needs for protection and assistance are met, especially for unaccompanied children, who are at risk of violence, abuse, human trafficking, and other kinds of exploitation

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### Planned activities in 2026

- Protect and empower migrants while preventing risks such as exploitation through targeted integration and prevention measures
- Continue providing humanitarian assistance in centres, alongside preventive activities and empowerment initiatives

- Build the capacity of staff and volunteers working with migrants through regular training, workshops, data collection and needs assessments
- Advocate for the inclusion of migrants and asylum seekers by promoting inclusive policies and programmes
- Develop, adopt, and promote a Migration Strategy focused on protecting groups in vulnerable situations and strengthening its capacity to advocate for the needs of both the organisation and people in vulnerable situations
- Map key partners and implement targeted advocacy related to migrant protection and inclusion to enhance collaboration and raise awareness
- Provide technical expertise in protection and assistance along migratory routes, support cross-border response planning and promote integration and inclusion
- Enhance data-driven decision-making, facilitate the development of multi-sectoral contingency plans and strengthen the capacity of field actors through harmonized technical standards and integrated monitoring mechanisms
- Strengthen route-based capacities through information sharing, peer exchange and focused approaches such as protection, gender and inclusion (PGI) and community

engagement and accountability (CEA), while also facilitating coordination, collaboration and partnerships across all levels to enable joint approaches and evidence-based programming

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### Longer-term support from the IFRC network

Through the Global Route-based Migration Programme, **the IFRC** will offer strategic coordination, policy development, and technical assistance to the Red Cross of Serbia to collectively advocate for migrant and refugee rights on a global scale. Participating National Societies provide training, resources, and expertise in providing essential services to migrants and refugees, including emergency relief, healthcare, MHPSS and legal aid. IFRC reference centres, hubs, and labs offer specialized knowledge, innovation, and research to address specific migration-related challenges, enriching the National Society's responses.

The Swiss Red Cross will provide support to deliver CVA for displaced persons from Ukraine under Restoring Family Links and in anti-trafficking interventions.

**The ICRC** provides support to the National Society under Restoring Family Links initiative.



## Values, power and inclusion

People from ethnic and religious minority groups, particularly Roma communities, often face marginalization, discrimination and exclusion from public services, including education and healthcare. The Government of the Republic of Serbia has adopted [the Strategy for the Social Inclusion of Roma and Roma Women for the period 2022–2030](#), aiming to improve the socio-economic position of the Roma national minority, ensure the full enjoyment of their minority rights and eliminate discrimination. A key component of this strategy is to increase the participation of Roma men and women in social processes, with a strong focus on ensuring their full inclusion in education at all levels—preschool, primary, secondary, and higher education—thus fostering greater equality and social inclusion.

Other groups in Serbia also face similar barriers, especially people in vulnerable situations such as children from low-income families and rural areas, who often struggle with school attendance. Additionally, women and girls, particularly in rural areas, are at high risk of gender-based violence (GBV), including domestic violence, trafficking, and abuse, further hindering their ability to access education and participate fully in society. This is compounded by broader demographic challenges, including depopulation in rural areas, where many older people are left isolated and without support. With child

poverty affecting approximately 23 per cent of the population and a growing number of older people at risk of falling into poverty, the social vulnerability of these groups continues to increase.

The Republic of Serbia has ratified the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol, along with the Council of Europe Convention on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings. While Serbia is primarily a source country for human trafficking survivors, it also serves as a destination and transit point. From January 2023 to May 2024, there were 93 formally identified survivors of human trafficking, resulting in an increase in the annual trend compared to years 2021 and 2022. The main forms of exploitation included sexual exploitation, labour exploitation, forced begging and forced criminality. Particularly groups in vulnerable situations include women, children, survivors of GBV, migrants, refugees, ethnic minorities and people with disabilities.

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

In the coming years, the Red Cross of Serbia will focus on achieving the following objectives:

- Respond to the needs of identified and potential victims of human trafficking

- Reduce the risk of human trafficking, alleviate human suffering caused by this phenomenon and contribute to the implementation of the strategy for the prevention and suppression of human trafficking, especially among women and children
- Improve protection of women from gender-based violence and abuse throughout their life cycle, as well as contribute to better institutional protection of women of all ages from gender-based violence and abuse through accredited training curriculum
- Strengthen the professional organizational capacities of all branches, including building volunteer resources, promoting humanitarian values and supporting sensitive groups, especially children and youth
- Establish and nurture cooperation with partners on all levels

communities and rural areas and increase their access to and participation in the education system

- Supplement, adapt, and disseminate educational and promotional materials, programmes and curricula focused on human trafficking and GBV, while standardizing the catalogue of related educational and promotional activities for the protection of people in vulnerable situations to be implemented in schools

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### Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC will support the Red Cross of Serbia in capacity building through Training of Trainers and educators, as well as facilitate the exchange of experiences with relevant partners and participating National Societies. It will also assist the National Society in organizing awareness-raising campaigns, public events, and developing educational and promotional materials. Additionally, the IFRC will provide technical guidance and financial support for activities aimed at the institutional protection of women from GBV and abuse through accredited training programmes. This support will extend to the production of manuals, the organisation of camps, seminars and training sessions. The IFRC will further assist the National Society in its advocacy efforts to increase visibility within local communities and provide access to expertise and tools that will help improve the quality of programs and services across its branches.

The **Austrian Red Cross** will provide support to the National Society under values, power and inclusion.

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### Planned activities in 2026

- Prevent human trafficking and GBV, while providing direct assistance and support to identified and potential survivors.
- Implement the project 'Strengthening Access to Healthcare, Participation and Social Equality in the Western Balkans (SHAPE)', funded by the Federal Ministry for Health, Social Protection and Consumer Protection of the Republic of Austria and the Austrian Red Cross, to improve healthcare, social equality and community participation, with a special emphasis on supporting older people and caring relatives
- Support education for groups in vulnerable situations, including children from low-income households, Roma

## ENABLING LOCAL ACTORS

The Red Cross of Serbia is committed to the Preparedness for Effective Response (PER) process and is currently in the assessment phase. The PER Approach is a continuous and flexible process that enables National Societies to assess, measure and analyse the strengths and gaps of its preparedness and response mechanism, and take necessary action to improve it. The IFRC is committed to supporting the National Society in its development according to its priorities.



### Key Institutional Indicators

The National Society has put in place the following:

- Youth engagement strategies
- Protection against sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) policy
- PSEA Action Plan



## Strategic and operational coordination

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

- Increase and strengthen cooperation and coordination with the government at local and national levels, along with research institutions, universities, United Nations (UN) agencies and other international and national level actors, focusing particularly on generating evidence to support Red Cross of Serbia programmatic and institutional development
- Enhance exchange and cooperation with neighbouring National Societies, Partner national Societies (PNSs) in European countries and the regional and cluster offices of the IFRC

- Strengthen domestic and international fundraising and resource mobilization efforts
- Adopt a timely and proactive approach to public relations, leveraging modern technologies and social networks to generate greater support from citizens, businesses and institutions for the successful fulfilment of the mission

### Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC will provide support in key areas by strengthening human capacities through continuous training of employees and volunteers, securing financial resources through project funding and identifying potential donors, as well as offering sustained assistance in the digitization process and the development of the National Society.



## National Society development

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

- Evolve the Red Cross of Serbia into a modern, resilient organisation recognized for effective humanitarian response
- Strengthen organisational structures, aligning activities with strategies
- Ensure standardization, adaptability, and effective service delivery nationwide
- Improve revenue generation and enhance vulnerability assessment capacities to secure long-term sustainability of Red Cross of Serbia network
- Continue activities under PER and branch development by conducting Branch Organizational Capacity Assessment (BOCA) in local branches
- Review trends in local branch development based on workshop results and annual development plans submitted by the branches.
- Implement the volunteer management database across all branches, ensuring evidence based operational recruitments in operations and targeted volunteer development
- Adopt and implement a comprehensive volunteering policy, including the development and enforcement of a volunteering rulebook

- Consolidate and digitize internal communication systems across all levels, encompassing 50 National Society local branches utilizing the e-office within the SharePoint portal
- Promote continuous learning among employees and volunteers, with a strong emphasis on distance training through e-learning platforms
- Enhance and further strengthen the National Society's cash preparedness capabilities
- Continue to equip elected National Society leaders and managers with the knowledge and skills required to meaningfully play their part in the Movement and effectively lead their National Societies by applying good governance principles according to the new Red Cross of Serbia Statute and its complementary policies and guidelines
- Continue to strengthen and expand dissemination efforts throughout the structure of the National Society with a view of ensuring full alignment with statutory policies and streamlined information management (IM)

### Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC will continue to support the Red Cross of Serbia, specifically in further internal regulatory alignment and its further development aligned with the newly adopted Statute, further implementation of BOCA and new development policies and supporting organisational and volunteer development.



## Humanitarian diplomacy

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

- Strengthen the advocacy and humanitarian diplomacy capacities of Red Cross of Serbia staff through targeted training and peer exchange opportunities with more experienced National Societies
- Develop internal and external communication mechanisms
- Continue developing new and existing partnerships with governmental institutions and non-governmental organisations (NGOs)
- Implement core activities and programs in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Welfare, Serbian Armed Forces, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Commissariat for Refugees and Migrations, Academic Circles and various NGOs
- Strengthen the visibility and influence of Red Cross of Serbia by creating a communication playbook with key messages on core topics and producing tailored multimedia content for outreach to the public and national/international decision-makers

- Raise awareness of International Humanitarian Law by conducting consultations and sensitization efforts aimed at decision-makers and authorities
- Ensure the protection of the Red Cross emblem
- Increase awareness of National Society's mission and impact by effectively showcasing its auxiliary role and ongoing relevance at all levels
- Strengthen advocacy for humanitarian principles

### Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC will support the Red Cross of Serbia in further strengthening its humanitarian diplomacy capacities, facilitating cluster-wide exchange of information, best practices and lessons learned, as well as assisting in the development and implementation of internal and external communication strategies for the National Society. The IFRC will also support the National Society in enhancing capacity building in humanitarian diplomacy and support in enhancing visibility and the importance of its activities, including effective communications.



## Accountability and agility (cross-cutting)

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

- Strengthen financial management and establish strong planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting systems
- Define and implement a comprehensive framework for policy execution across all coordination levels of the National Society (Code of Conduct, Prevention and Protection against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) Policy, Child Protection Policy, as well as rulebooks on corruption prevention, conflict of interest management, procurement regulations and the internal whistleblowing procedure within the Red Cross of Serbia)

- Expand digital tools for data collection, reporting, administrative and financial procedures. Invest in digital innovation and organisational culture to support transformation, including full implementation of the volunteer database
- Conduct a comprehensive research study to assess the viability, capacity, and potential for commercial activities across the National Society

### Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC will support the Red Cross of Serbia in creating and/or updating clear, fair and up-to-date human resources (HR) policies, procedures and manuals and establishing strong planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting systems.

# THE IFRC NETWORK

## The IFRC

The IFRC supports the National Society through the IFRC Country Cluster Delegation to Central and South-Eastern Europe located in Sarajevo and its regional office for Europe based in Budapest in the implementation of its migration-related projects. The IFRC is a key supporter in both financial and technical aspects in the event of crises and disasters affecting Serbia.

In recent years, the IFRC has supported the Red Cross of Serbia through numerous Emergency Appeals and [Disaster Response Emergency Fund \(DREF\)](#) operations in relation to the floods in [2020](#), [2022](#), and [2023](#). The IFRC also supported the national response plan for the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic from 2020 to 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 cooperation with the [IFRC reference centre for psychosocial support](#) is based on the sharing of knowledge and expertise. The centre provides inputs for training and other interventions by the Red Cross of Serbia in the [mental health and psychosocial support \(MHPSS\)](#) area, including

support for training events, while the activities of the Red Cross of Serbia in this area are fed back to the centre to serve as experience sharing and case studies.

The **Austrian Red Cross** has a longstanding collaboration with the Red Cross of Serbia and this has been pivotal in advancing disaster preparedness and enhancing care for older people and people with disabilities. This partnership underscores a commitment to bolstering resilience and providing crucial support to people in vulnerable situations in times of need, with focus on supporting older people at local level in the coming years.

The **Swiss Red Cross** collaborates with the Red Cross of Serbia especially in the extended migration crisis in Europe. The crucial support provided by the Swiss Red Cross has led to direct assistance to people on the move and the RFL programme has ensured the sustainability of the Red Cross of Serbia's activities.



An awareness-raising event and CPR training for media representatives organized by the Red Cross of Serbia. (Photo: Red Cross of Serbia)

## Movement coordination

The Red Cross of Serbia 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](#).

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The ICRC provides ongoing support in addressing the [restoring family links \(RFL\)](#) needs of migrants, the [Safer Access framework](#), IHL promotion and implementation and the MHPSS project. The ICRC and the Red Cross of Serbia collaborate through SMCC mechanisms.

## Coordination with other actors

The Red Cross of Serbia is part of coordination networks with UN agencies, specifically the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), as well as the European Commission, the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse, HelpAge International, AGE Platform Europe, the European Disability Forum, the Global Alliance for the Rights of Older People and the embassies of several countries.

At the national level, Red Cross of Serbia cooperates with government institutions and line ministries and maintains thematic-based cooperation with NGOs and the private sector. It also collaborates with academic institutions,

including the Universities of Belgrade, Niš, Kragujevac and Novi Sad, particularly the Faculty of Security Studies (University of Belgrade), the Medical Faculty (University of Belgrade), the Faculty of Social Sciences, the Military Academy and the Police Academy.

Local Red Cross of Serbia branches have established cooperation with civil society organisations and local institutions, such as Centres for Social Welfare, health institutions, schools and preschools, as well as local associations supporting children and people with disabilities, Roma population and other charitable and humanitarian organisations operating at the community level.

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## 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

This 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 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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