BACKGROUND

Country Profile

In 2020, Belarus is still facing several challenges related to humanitarian issues, including the Chernobyl legacy, the growing incidence of human trafficking, tuberculosis (TB) and HIV, a high inflow of displaced people from Ukraine, and a serious demographic crisis marked by declining life expectancy, high mortality and morbidity, rapid population ageing and deteriorating health. The Belarusian economy remains highly vulnerable and depends on trade relations with neighbouring countries. Weather-related disasters such as flooding and heatwaves occur every year. One-parent households, multi-children families, people with disabilities, older people living alone, and those with a low level of education are still vulnerable to poverty, and, as a consequence, to health-related challenges and trafficking.

This operational plan reflects the support IFRC will provide to the National Society in agreed upon areas. The focus for 2020 will be supporting the most vulnerable people with programmes in disaster risk reduction, health, migration, protection, gender and inclusion.
National Society Profile

With a total of 442 paid staff and 16,758 volunteers, Belarus Red Cross is well prepared to effectively run humanitarian operations in the country. As an auxiliary to the public authorities in the humanitarian field, Belarus Red Cross provides high quality services within its core mandate and plays an essential role in advocating for meeting the humanitarian needs of vulnerable people and communities. Belarus Red Cross programmes specifically focus on marginalized or excluded groups directly seeking to reduce discrimination and exclusion.

Belarus Red Cross aims to assist the most vulnerable population groups, such as older people, people living alone, families with low income, people with mental or physical illness, people affected by emergencies, homeless people, ex-prisoners and others.

The status of the National Society is regulated by the Law on Belarus Red Cross (2000, last modified in 2011), the Law on Usage and Protection of the Emblem of Red Cross, Red Crescent and Red Crystal (2000, last modified in 2011), and the Statutes of Belarus Red Cross (1991, last modified in 2016).

Role of the Country Cluster Office

IFRC Country Cluster Office ensures project cycle management, assists Belarus Red Cross in identification of new funding opportunities and developing new project proposals, offers technical support in all aspects of DREF operations, and maintains the dialogue with the National Society. IFRC Country Cluster Office provides technical assistance to the Belarus Red Cross in areas such as disaster management, health, institutional capacity strengthening, representation and advocacy as well as facilitation of partnerships and multilateral assistance to support vulnerable communities. As part of the country cluster including Russia and Moldova, the IFRC identifies and facilitates opportunities for Russian-speaking National Societies to exchange information and learning.

Movement Footprint

A Movement Coordination Agreement between the Belarus Red Cross Society, the ICRC and the IFRC regarding their respective roles and responsibilities and Movement coordination in Belarus was signed in July 2017. Bulgarian, Danish, Polish, Swiss and Ukrainian Red Cross are part of this Agreement. ICRC has had a country office in Belarus since 2018, and Swiss Red Cross and Danish Red Cross are present in the country, each with a Country Coordinator staff member. The main Movement partners of Belarus Red Cross are Austrian Red Cross, Danish Red Cross, Icelandic Red Cross, Italian Red Cross, Latvian Red Cross, Lithuanian Red Cross, Norwegian Red Cross, Polish Red Cross, Swiss Red Cross and Ukrainian Red Cross.
AREA OF FOCUS

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

Recurrent natural disasters, such as extreme temperatures, severe floods, forest fires and windstorms, cause widespread material damage as well as psychological distress to the Belarusian population. There is a risk of technological disasters, including potential emergencies on two oil refinery plants and increasing concern about a new nuclear power plant under construction. It has been over 30 years since the Chernobyl nuclear disaster, which caused contamination of over a quarter of the territory of Belarus, and the population and land are still recovering.

In 2020, IFRC will support Belarus Red Cross to build on their long-standing cooperation with Ministry of Emergency Situations and increase capacity to mitigate the impact of disasters on communities at risk. IFRC will reinforce the National Society’s human, material and technical resources and conduct community contingency planning and risk mapping. Given the prevalence of climate-related emergencies, IFRC will support Belarus Red Cross to develop forecast-based action plans.

OUTCOME

COMMUNITIES IN HIGH RISKS AREAS ARE BETTER PREPARED TO RESPOND TO DISASTERS

NUMBER OF COMMUNITY BASED CONTINGENCY PLANS IN PLACE

NUMBER OF PEOPLE REACHED BY CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AWARENESS RAISING CAMPAIGNS

26,000 SWISS FRANCS FUNDING REQUIREMENT
Non-communicable diseases are responsible for 89 per cent of all deaths in Belarus, and there is increasing prevalence of HIV and Multidrug-Resistant TB. Belarus has an ageing population, and 40 per cent of older people live alone. Many displaced people from Ukraine need essential medication for diseases such as cancer, diabetes and cardiovascular conditions as well as psychosocial support.

In 2020, IFRC will continue to support Belarus Red Cross in prevention of non-communicable and infectious diseases, promotion of healthy lifestyle, healthy ageing and first aid. IFRC will build the capacity of Belarus Red Cross in community-based health and first aid (CBHFA) tools and approaches, develop community groups for older people and conduct trainings in psychosocial support in emergencies.

**OUTCOME**

Vulnerable people’s health and dignity are improved through access to relevant services

**NUMBER OF PEOPLE REACHED WITH HEALTH SERVICES AND PROGRAMMES**

710

**25,000 SWISS FRANCS FUNDING REQUIREMENT**
Over 300,000 people in Belarus have mental illnesses, and only five per cent of these people are cared for in residential clinics. The remaining 95 per cent live in society, with the majority of care taking place in hospitals with very limited rehabilitation available. More than 20 per cent of Belarus’ population are older people, and 6 per cent have disabilities. Currently there are no available statistics on the prevalence of violence against older people and people with disabilities, but local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) confirm that increasing numbers of cases are reported.

In 2020, IFRC will support Belarus Red Cross to continue essential services to people with mental illness through its “Open Home” centre in Minsk. The National Society with support from IFRC will conduct research to inform the development of a new programme to respond to violence against older people and people with disabilities. The majority of Belarus Red Cross volunteers are young and IFRC will introduce the “Youth as Agents of Behavioural Change (YABC)” approach which will empower young people and motivate them to be active members of their communities.

Key activities:

- Provide social support to people with mental illness in “Open Home” centre in Minsk
- Train state and non-state actors on social rehabilitation of people with mental illnesses and promotion of mental health
- Conduct research on violence against older people and people with disabilities and design a programme to support people affected
- Train Belarus Red Cross staff and volunteers on YABC and develop a programme on its implementation

OUTCOME

**Vulnerable people, such as those with mental illness, receive appropriate support**

**Number of people with mental illnesses with increased access to psycho-social support, rehabilitation and education**

120

90,000 SWISS FRANCS FUNDING REQUIREMENT
There are at least 80,000 people in Belarus who fled the armed conflict in south-eastern Ukraine. Belarus Red Cross’ assessments show that there over 5,000 displaced people with severe vulnerabilities who require continuous, life-saving support. Between 2002 and 2018 more than 5,000 victims of trafficking were identified and of them, over 12 per cent were minors. Traffickers target people for prostitution, forced labour, criminal activities and removal of organs.

IFRC will continue to work with Belarus Red Cross to provide tailored support to people displaced from Ukraine based on individuals’ needs and vulnerabilities. The assistance is designed to promote a dignified life, and may include employment or legal counselling, family support, vouchers, help with urgent health needs, as well as funds or materials to set up or expand micro-businesses. A programme to prevent human trafficking and to support victims will be developed, increasing access to services, improving awareness and promoting exchange of experiences.

Key activities:

- Provide case management support to displaced people from Ukraine
- Develop, select and implement micro-economic initiatives by displaced people from Ukraine
- Provide reintegration support to people affected by human trafficking
- Deliver community-based initiatives and information sessions on preventing human trafficking
- Develop a strategy for working with migrants

**Outcome**

Displaced people are empowered to meet their own needs
STRATEGY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

STRENGTHEN NATIONAL SOCIETY CAPACITIES

Belarus Red Cross is the largest humanitarian organization in the country and has developed into a strong National Society. However, it still faces some challenges and needs external partner support to strengthen its organizational development, human resource management, and fundraising capacities. IFRC will work with the National Society to develop a 2021–2025 strategy, revise the Red Cross Law, review its volunteer database, and conduct trainings or facilitate expert advice in key areas such as Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting (PMER), Community Engagement, and Accountability (CEA), and the IFRC DREF emergency response tool. IFRC will facilitate cross-learning and exchanges between Russian-speaking National Societies, thus supporting and complementing a broad range of capacity building needs.

OUTCOME

THE NATIONAL SOCIETY HAS THE SYSTEMS, STRUCTURES AND COMPETENCIES TO EFFECTIVELY SUPPORT VULNERABLE PEOPLE

ENSURE EFFECTIVE INTERNATIONAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT

IFRC will encourage participation of staff and volunteers from Belarus Red Cross in international disaster response surge trainings and deployments. Information management will be enhanced to ensure better emergency response, and IFRC will promote use of the “Go” disaster preparedness and response online platform. Needs assessment capacities will be improved through IFRC support.

OUTCOME

THE NATIONAL SOCIETY IS BETTER PREPARED TO RESPOND TO DISASTERS

28,000 SWISS FRANCS FUNDING REQUIREMENT

6,000 SWISS FRANCS FUNDING REQUIREMENT
STRATEGY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

INFLUENCE OTHERS AS LEADING STRATEGIC PARTNERS

Red Cross activities in Belarus receive significant attention from the authorities and general public. However, there remains a lack of understanding about the unique nature of the Movement. IFRC will raise awareness via local mass media and through think-tanks and networks to promote Red Cross activities especially in migration, disaster management and health. Further support will be provided in domestic resource mobilization, communication and related organizational development and a partnership meeting will be organized to share challenges and priorities.

OUTCOME

THE NATIONAL SOCIETY IS WELL POSITIONED AMONG KEY STAKEHOLDERS

17,000 SWISS FRANCS FUNDING REQUIREMENT
Contact information of the IFRC Country office, for partners who wish to find out more

IFRC Country Cluster Support Team, Moscow

Gorkhaz Huseynov
Head of Country Cluster Support Team
Russian Federation, Belarus, Moldova
gorkhaz.huseynov@ifrc.org

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Tel. +7 499 126 15 66