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# Emergency Plan of Action Operation Update

## Liberia: Elections Preparedness

 International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

<b>DREF Operation n°</b> MDRLR003	<b>Glide n°</b> OT-2017-000127-LBR
<b>Date of issue:</b> 1 September 2017	<b>Timeframe covered by this update:</b> 01 September to 30 November 2017
<b>Operations Manager:</b> Younos Abdul Karim (Head of Country Office)	<b>Contact person:</b> G. Ambullai Perry (Liberia National Red Cross Society (LNRCS) Head of Programmes)
<b>Operation start date:</b> September 1, 2017	<b>Operation timeframe:</b> 1 September-30 November 2017 Revised timeframe: 1 September-31 December 2017
<b>Overall operation budget:</b> CHF 85,027	<b>N° of people being assisted:</b> 10,000 persons
<b>Red Cross Red Crescent Movement partners currently actively involved in the operation:</b> International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)	
<b>Other partner organizations actively involved in the operation:</b> The National Elections Commission (NEC), and the UNCT	

## A. SITUATION ANALYSIS

Operation progress and request for time extension

The DREF operation of CHF 85,027 was launched on 1 September to support LNRCS in training and mobilization of volunteers to be deployed and organization of awareness campaign in response to potential violence during elections. LNRCS has deployed 500 volunteers in pre-identified hotspots across 15 chapters of the country to deliver first aid, psychosocial support, and safer access for people in need.

Although elections took place on 10 October, run-off of the presidential elections was announced by the NEC as no political party met the constitutional requirement of absolute majority. Therefore, these volunteers remain vigilant until the elections are over, and results are announced and continue their services wherever needs arise.

As part of the preparedness, volunteers are provided with first-aid kits and relevant non-food items for distribution among affected people. Although most of the items are in place, procurement of some items is in progress. In addition, mass awareness campaign such as radio show, peach match, etc. needed to continue for maintaining peace and harmony among people.

While elections process is yet to be concluded, the LNRCS intends to have its presence through volunteer network in dealing with anticipated pre-and post-result violence. Therefore, it seeks time extension of the DREF operation until 31 December 2017.

The expenditure stands at CHF 60,395 which is 72% of the funding.

## Description of the disaster

Liberia went to the polls on October 10, 2017. Seventy-three (73) representative seats and a President and Vice-President will be voted for by over 2 million registered voters across the country. There are 22 registered political parties' presidential candidates and 98 representative candidates set to contest the representative seats. The National Election Commission (NEC) qualified a total of 1,026 individuals to contest the 2017 elections and released the final figure of 2,183,683 from the 2017 Voter Registration Exercise.

The NEC officially declared campaign opened at 12:01 am on Monday 31 July, 2017 and closed at 11:59 pm on Sunday, 8 October, 2017.

Experience from previous elections indicate that there was no deployment of ambulances service in areas outside Monrovia and there were numerous first aid and emergency medical referral cases. Reference the role the LNRCS has played, it remains cardinal that the deployment of ambulances be considered in 2017 in the six-high risk and vote-rich counties of Montserrado, Nimba, Bong, Bassa, Margibi, and Bomi. The number of hotspots and polling centers has increased significantly and with the proliferation of political parties and their candidates, it is eminent that there will be serious needs for emergency transfer of casualties

Liberians went to the polls on October 10, 2017 to elect members of the House of Representatives and a President and Vice-President respectively. This is the first elections run and managed by Liberians since the end of the 14 years of civil disorder in 2003. Local and International monitors graded the process as being generally peaceful, although there were reported cases of lapses and irregularities.

According to NEC, 1,553,348 valid votes were cast in the presidential election during the first round. The Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC) candidate, George Weah had 38.4% while the Unity Party's (UP) Joseph Boakai had 28.8% at the first ballot. A run-off was announced by the NEC slated for 7 November 2017 between the CDC and UP on grounds that no political party met the constitutional requirement of an absolute majority or 50% plus 1 vote to be declared a winner.

Barely seven days to the conduct of the presidential run-off in line with constitutional provisions, the ruling Unity Party has declared a total lack of confidence in the Chairperson of the National Elections Commission (NEC) and the NEC's Capacity to conduct the runoff on 7 November, 2017.

The Board of Commissioners (BOC) of the Liberian National Election Commission (NEC) has on Friday 24 November afternoon (Constitutional deadline), ruled on the appeal of the opposition Liberty Party (LP) and ruling Unity Party (UP) against the NEC Hearing officer.

The BoC rejected the appeal, meaning that Liberia can now proceed for the runoff of the presidential election, and that there will be no rerun for the House of Representatives election. It also means that the stay order of the Supreme Court is now over.

NEC should announce soon the date of the runoff (on 12 December, or at most by the 19 December). NEC should also be able to start with the organization of the runoff.

However, there remains an option of an appeal for LP and UP to the Supreme Court against the decision of the BoC within a timeframe of 7 days. This is the most likely path that the Parties will take and should this materialize it would further delay the organization of the runoff, in case the Supreme Court give a new stay order. The runoff would therefore only take place in January 2018 with possibility of new petitions and appeals after the runoff result. This could plunge the country in a difficult constitutional situation if there is not a confirmed elect-president on 15 January (constitutional date for the investiture of the successor of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf).

Meanwhile, a Writ of Prohibition proffered by the Liberty Party was considered by the Supreme Court, thereby scheduling a hearing on Thursday, 2 November, 2017. The Supreme Court's final ruling on the complaints filed in by the Liberty Party is expected to be announced on Friday 3 November. The court put a temporary halt to the NEC activities until the hearing is conducted. Following the halting of the runoff elections and all activities, NEC conducted hearing of the Liberty Party's complaints and subsequently ruled its on 25 November, 2017. The Liberty Party has taken a final appeal to the Supreme Court.

An ECOWAS mediation team made up of the ECOWAS Chair, and the President of Guinea together with the AU, met with the key contenders to try and resolve the political impasse.

## Summary of current response

In preparation and response to as the presidential and representatives' elections in Liberia, the LNRCS has already carried out the following:

- Mobilized 500 volunteers across the 15 Chapters. The mobilization was done proportionally per chapter based on elections hotspots identified and the risk of outbreak of violence. These 500 volunteers were trained in their respective chapters in first aid, safer access framework, PSS and volunteers Code of Conduct with special emphasis on conduct during elections response activities.
- Procured/produced and distributed elections response preparedness materials and equipment including visibility materials.
- Conducted training for 15 National Surge Response Team members in psychosocial support and basic first aid.
- Procured and prepositioned assorted non-food to six (6) high risk Chapters for response during worst case scenarios.
- Established and trained 40 Emergency Response Teams in eight (8) Chapters.
- Engage with key elections actors and explain the mandate and role of the Red Cross during and after the elections.
- Conducted 2 series of radio slots/discussions on the roles of the Red Cross during and after the elections.
- Held pre-post elections briefings with volunteers and staff engaged in the process (both at HQs and the Chapters).
- Monitored and evaluated the evolving situation regularly and shared information with the key focal persons.
- Conducted supervision of high risk chapters in collaboration with IFRC Country Team.

### Overview of Host National Society

The LNRCS has extensive experience in responding to elections. Counting back to the post war elections of 2005, 2011 and 2014, the LNRCS received massive support from Movement Partners and the Government of Liberia to train Police Officers and deploy volunteers across the country in all polling places. The LNRCS has strengthened its capacity to adequately respond to elections related mass gatherings, rallies, and polling exercises. In addition to training and deploying volunteers, the LNRCS has also gauged its Emergency Response capacity in the 15 counties by training ERTs in specific aspects of emergencies such as first aid, safer access, communication, PSS, and Code of Conduct.

### Overview of Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in country

- **IFRC:** provision of financial management continues with the DREF operations. All financial aspects of the operation are handled by the IFRC Country Office while the NS implements all activities. IFRC is also engaged in coordination with other Movement partners and external agencies.
- **ICRC:** Continues support to the Movement coordination, capacity-building and communication work. ICRC remains a strong partner to the NS in achieving its transitional and long-term objectives.

### Movement Coordination

Throughout the implementation of this DREF operation, the IFRC through the Africa Regional Office in Nairobi, coordinates the action and provides technical support for the development of the action plan. At National Society level, the LNRCS has:

- organized regular briefings and technical steering committee meetings;
- provided situational reports on the election and maintained coordination with Movement and external partners;
- held meetings with Movement partners (IFRC, and ICRC), and other external partners including Government Ministries, the National Elections Commission, and Liberia National Police.

The partners have organized an Elections Coordination meeting among themselves. This meeting is intended to plan and provide support to the LNRCS' planning process.

## Overview of non-Red Cross Red Crescent actors in country

A National Elections Security Task Force has been established by the Government through and coordinated by the Police. The Taskforce meets regularly to update on elections preparedness activities. The National Elections Commission holds regular meetings with various political parties on elections matters among other things. The LNRCS will work closely with the Ministry of Health on emergency medical services which has been convened in preparation for the polls.

The National Disaster Management Agency remains a part of the coordination through the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The UN Country Team including the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). The UNDP and UNMIL are leading the UNCT's coordination and assistance support to the elections process.

## Needs analysis and scenario planning

### Needs analysis

The need to prepare for and response to Liberia's 2017 elections is predicated on the history of recent elections in the country. In 2011, during the general and presidential elections just a week to the runoff presidential polls, there was a serious clash between the ruling Unity Party and the Congress for Democratic Change which led to injuries and deaths. The LNRCS then was the only national institution with the capacity to provide first-aid emergency services during the riot.

In Liberia, every election since 2005 has experienced some level of violence; however, the level and intensity of the violence varies from election to election. Although electoral violence may be considered less severe in Liberia than in other countries in the Sub-region. Notwithstanding, with the evolution of pre-election developments, elections violence at a higher level is eminent.

The LNRCS has been identified as a major partner for emergency assistance during this year's elections. The expectation is to perform auxiliary roles of first aid, and emergency medical services (referral and transfer) among others. The LNRCS is a member of the National Elections Security Management Taskforce. The need to prepare the LNRCS and its partners in advance to appropriately monitor and respond to incidents of emergency including pre-and post-elections violence remains crucial. The capacity of the LNRCS to adequately prepare for, mitigate and respond to elections violence will depend on collaboration with both Movement and external partners. This DREF operation was planned to assist LNRCS to mobilize, train and deploy volunteers, strengthen Chapter Emergency Response Teams (ERTs), provide basic response equipment and respond effectively to any violence in targeted hotspots.

The capacity assistance will allow the LNRCS response teams to attend rallies and monitor the situation in the run up to the elections. Volunteers will promote peace and non-violence and provide first aid during campaign and rallies and at the same time be posted at election polling centers in identified hotspots on the elections day. As part of the response, plan is to provide emergency medical referral and transport services using ambulances belonging to the LNRCS.

Since the elections are yet to be completed, LNRCS continues activities across the country. Thus, 500 volunteers will remain on the ground to deliver emergency services.

### Capacity building at National Society

All 15 Chapters have set up ERTs and trained proportional volunteers to engage in the response activities. The volunteers and ERTs were trained by ICRC and IFRC with separate funding. Under the ICRC, seven (7) chapters were provided first-aid response materials and equipment. The IFRC support to eight (8) Chapters include training of 40 ERTs, provision of pre-coded bibs, first-aid kits, stretchers, and basic kits contents to enable the ERTs and chapter volunteers adequately respond to elections violence. Already, the LNRCS has 3 FACT trained staff, 2 RDRT members, and a number of staff trained in emergency response.

### Beneficiary Selection

Generally, the beneficiaries targeted for the elections preparedness actions are of two categories:

1. Indirect/secondary beneficiaries – LNRCS volunteers, and volunteers;
2. Primary Beneficiaries – youths, men, and women engaged in elections activities such as campaign, rallies, and violence. Their targeting is based on the response services that will be provided by the LNRCS teams during the process.

### Risks assessment

The Risks identified are as follows:

1. As the runoff election gets delayed, there is a propensity of building up tensions in the various groupings and camps of the opposing political parties;
2. It is obvious that a runoff election will brew more tensions as the two political parties engaged have high hopes of winning the polls;
3. Volunteers and staff involved with the process would be exposed to injuries and other related violent actions.

**Mitigation measures:**

There is special elections Code of Conduct for staff and Volunteers, SoP, Safety and Security Protocols and Incident Reporting formats.

## B. OPERATIONAL STRATEGY

### Proposed strategy

The overall objective of this operation is to provide preparedness capacity for LNRCS to effectively respond to the Liberia 2017 Presidential and Representative's Elections.

In addition to the NEC and the National Elections Security Taskforce's plan and framework for operations during the elections, the LNRCS in collaboration with its partners has also adopted a strategy for the response. Previously, before the elections, preparatory activities include mapping of elections violence hotspots, identification of triggers for violence, and appropriately targeting hotspots with volunteers' deployment. The volunteers were deployed in their various communities where they live. This allows for close monitoring of triggers for violence, and such were reported to the Chapter Filed Officers for further advice from HQ.

Six Chapters identified by the NEC as hot zones for elections related violence were also confirmed by the LNRCS risk mapping. The worst-case scenario thinking had been that those Chapters were fragile and vulnerable to violence. Preparedness action was to keep close monitoring on developments arising from those locations on a weekly basis and to preposition non-food items that would be useful in any case of displacement resulting from clashes and or violence related to the elections or runoff.

### Operational support services

#### Human resources

The LNRCS has competent experienced staff and volunteers prepared in responding to emergencies and disasters. As for the long-term programmes, the National Society has experienced and capitalized on the lessons learned from the operations implemented in the past especially the EVD response and recovery in 2014 and 2015 respectively. The LNRCS can count approximately 3,500 registered volunteers of which 100 are active in programmes and response activities. Two (2) RDRTs (generalist, logistics, relief and shelter, food security), 15 NDRTs also as First Aid Core Group, and 3 FACT (Recovery and Reintegration, DM, and Coordination). The LNRCS has experience in managing long-term programmes.

#### Logistics and supply chain

Most of the operation consist of procurement, prepositioning, deployment of materials and training, which requires a huge mobilization of transportation and storage. This would entail a good logistic planning.

#### Information Technologies (IT)

Currently, 90% of the target areas of the operation are covered by telephone networks and have acceptable internet connection network coverage. At local level, Red Cross Chapters often do not have IT equipment to support operations. The Chapters provided updates via emails and mobile phones.

#### Communications

Communication, advocacy and community awareness are coordinated to make the humanitarian work of LNRCS and IFRC visible through radio talk shows, press releases, testimonies, leaflets, photos and videos. The media is involved to ensure media coverage of the key activities carried out as part of this operation.

#### Security

In areas where there is high risk of violence, yet there has not been any report of threats to staff and volunteers involved with the operations, Red Cross and Red Crescent identified t-shirts, jackets, coded access passes and bibs are provided to volunteers involved in the operation. Before gathering and deploying the beneficiaries, the Chapter ERTs usually brief the volunteers and remind them of the Code of Conduct, and Safer Access Framework.

#### Planning, monitoring, evaluation, & reporting (PMER)

A lessons-learned workshop will be organized to analyze the successes, challenges, best practices and recommendations to be captured and applied in future programmes and emergency appeals.

## Administration and finance

The IFRC Country Office ensured the application of financial procedures. Additionally, IFRC financial staff will work closely with the Programme Department of the LRCS to ensure the proper use of financial resources, in accordance with the MoU signed between the National Society and IFRC. The management of financial resources are carried out in accordance to IFRC guidelines.

## C. DETAILED OPERATIONAL PLAN

### Outcome 1: To improve NS capacity to respond to election related violence

#### Output 1.1: LNRCS staff and volunteers are trained, equipped and ready to provide emergency first aid, emergency transfer/transport, communication, RFL and PSS support to populations in high risk areas to elections violence

Activities planned	Implementation (%)
The mobilization of volunteers will be during the pre-election period and this can further continue during the post-election period.	100
Set up and equip Elections Control Room (includes assessing the NS' IT/Telecom capacities)	Ongoing
Procure/produce response equipment including visibility materials (45 first-aid kits, 500 gloves, 500 nose masks, 10 stretchers, 500 bibs, 500 ID forms, 15 RC flags, etc.	100
Conduct training for 500 LNRCS volunteers in Code of Conduct, first aid, PSS, safer access framework	100
Conduct training for 15 National Surge Response Team members in psychosocial support, first aid, Code of Conduct, SoP, communication, coordination, safety & security and safer access, etc.	100
Preposition Chapters' response materials	100
Establish and train 40 ERTs in eight (8) Chapters	100

### Outcome 2: Strengthen LNRCS participation and engagement in national coordination

#### Output 2.1: LNRCS recognized as a national actor in the elections process and its mandate and roles respected

Engage with key elections actors and explain the mandate and role of the Red Cross during and after the elections	100
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### Outcome 3: Promotion of the principles and values through mass media

#### Output 3.1: LNRCS creates increased public awareness of its principles and values through public engagement and non-violent elections sensitization

Hold one-day Peace Matches in Monrovia and the 15 Chapters capitals	40
Conduct 20 series of radio slots/discussions on the roles of the Red Cross during and after the elections (5 in Monrovia; 15 in all Chapters)	30
Hold pre-post elections briefings with volunteers and staff engaged in the process (both at HQ and the Chapters)	40

### Outcome 4: Operation implementation is well planned, coordinated and monitored with the Chapters

#### Output 4.1: The continued monitoring and assessment of the election process informs the implementation of the operation

Monitor and evaluate the evolving situation regularly and share information with the key focal persons	100
Submit regular reports on the implementation	90
Conduct supervision of high risk chapters in collaboration with IFRC	100

## Contact Information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

### In the Liberia Red Cross Society office:

- G. Ambullai Perry, Director of Programmes, Email-[ambullai.perry@liberian-redcross.org](mailto:ambullai.perry@liberian-redcross.org), Tel: +231 7703 69308

### In the IFRC country office:

- Younos Abdul Karim, Head of Country Office, +231777589111, Younos Abdul Karim; [email: younos.karim@ifrc.org](mailto:younos.karim@ifrc.org)

### In the African Region:

- Florent Del Pinto, Acting Head of Disaster and Crisis Prevention, Response & Recovery Africa Region, Mob. (loc.): +254(0) 780930278; email [florent.delpinto@ifrc.org](mailto:florent.delpinto@ifrc.org)
- Khaled Masud Ahmed, Regional Disaster Management Delegate, Tel +254 20 283 5270 | Mob +254 (0) 731067286, email: [khaled.masud@ifrc.org](mailto:khaled.masud@ifrc.org)
- Rishi Ramrakha, Head of Regional Logistic Unit; phone +254 733888022; fax +242 202712777; email [rishi.ramrakha@ifrc.org](mailto:rishi.ramrakha@ifrc.org)

### For Resource Mobilization and Pledges:

- In the IFRC regional office for Africa: Kentaro Nagazumi, Partnerships and Resource Mobilization Coordinator, Nairobi; phone: +254731 984117 or +81 90 86899793; email: [kentaro.nagazumi@ifrc.org](mailto:kentaro.nagazumi@ifrc.org)

### In the IFRC Geneva:

- **IFRC Geneva:** Alma Alsayed, Senior Officer, Response and Recovery; phone: +41 227304566; email [alma.alsayed@ifrc.org](mailto:alma.alsayed@ifrc.org)

### For Performance and Accountability (planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting):

- Fiona Gatere, PMER Coordinator Africa Region; phone: +254 780771139; Email: [Fiona.Gatere@ifrc.org](mailto:Fiona.Gatere@ifrc.org)

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## How we work

All IFRC assistance seeks to adhere to the **Code of Conduct** for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) in Disaster Relief and the **Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response (Sphere)** in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable. The IFRC's vision is to inspire, **encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities** by National Societies, with a view to **preventing and alleviating human suffering**, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.

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The IFRC's work is guided by Strategy 2020 which puts forward three strategic aims:



**Save lives,**  
protect livelihoods,  
and strengthen recovery  
from disaster and crises.



Enable **healthy**  
and **safe** living.



Promote **social inclusion**  
and a culture of  
**non-violence** and **peace**.

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