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## DREF Final Report

### Guatemala: Preparedness for Internal Unrest

 International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

<b>DREF Operations Final Report</b>	<b>Operation N°: MDRGT10</b>
<b>Date of publication:</b> 27 April 2018	
<b>Date of the disaster:</b> 27 August 2017	
<b>State date of the operation:</b> 27 August 2017	<b>Date of the end of the operation:</b> 8 November, 2017
<b>Host National Society:</b> The Guatemalan Red Cross (GRC) has one national headquarters and 21 branches throughout the country, as well as 1,684 active volunteers (56 per cent men and 44 per cent women).	<b>Operation budget:</b> 59,757 Swiss francs (CHF).
<b>N° of people affected:</b> Given the nature of the event, the number of affected people could not be estimated	<b>N° of people to be assisted:</b> 2,000 people (original target of 2,000 people was an estimation as this was a preparedness operation; however, 206 people were reached)
<b>N° of National Societies involved:</b> International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), Spanish Red Cross and Norwegian Red Cross	
<b>Financial situation:</b> This DREF operation left a balance of 17,861 Swiss francs that will be reimbursed to the DREF.	
<a href="#">Click here to view the final financial report.</a>	

## A. Situation analysis

### Description of the disaster

Over the last few weeks there were reports of protests, demonstrations and general blockades across the country aimed at dismantling government and legislative regulations issued on 27 August 2017.

The most significant events occurred on 14 September during the celebration of the nation's independence in the Guatemala Central Plaza; the protests and unrest on this day caused the president of the Republic of Guatemala to announce the cancellation of the traditional parade planned for 15 September 2017. On this day, protesters congregated around the Congress of the Republic to voice their rejection of the congressionally-approved electoral reforms, which sought to modify the criminal justice code; during this demonstration, protesters blocked the exits of the Parliamentary Chamber, prompting authorities to use force and non-lethal weapons such as pepper spray to disperse them.

On 20 December 2017, a national strike was held to protest the actions of the government and legislators, demanding the resignation of representatives because they tried to pass unpopular legislative reforms.

Groups of protestors blocked the country's main highways and announced they would intensify their protests increase of actions if their demands are not met. It is possible that if the protests and rejection of the government's actions continue they will lead to violence. It has been evidenced that the authorities, when necessary, will continue to deploy public security forces against the protestors.



Mobilization of volunteers in Quetzaltenango. Source: GRC.

## Summary of the response

### General situation of the host National Society

The Guatemalan Red Cross, in compliance with the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement's Fundamental Principles of Humanity, Impartiality, Neutrality and Independence carried out prevention and assistance actions in the areas of pre-hospital assistance, medical assistance, restoring family links (RFL) and transfers to medical centres through the actions and collaboration of hundreds of volunteers from all the GRC's branches.

With the IFRC's support, the GRC implemented a Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) that had the goal of increasing the capacities of the National Society to be prepared for social conflicts in Guatemala.

The Guatemalan Red Cross implemented a humanitarian operation designed to provide assistance to the population affected by the social situation in the country, with a specific emphasis on the protection of its volunteers, assets and institutional image as humanitarian, neutral, impartial and independent organization.

From the beginning of this event, GRC staff and volunteers from its 21 branches were alerted about the growing unrest with the goal of strengthening security recommendations and protecting the institution; the National Society disseminated information through its various social networks about the GRC's humanitarian and impartial nature, with the goal of reducing possible aggressions against its volunteers and assets.



GRC humanitarian assistance post in the central plaza. Source: GRC

The Guatemalan Red Cross established humanitarian assistance posts, which were staffed by its volunteers, to provide assistance during the protests in the Plaza de la Constitución; the volunteers attended 206 people during the protests held in Guatemala City providing free medical assistance, ambulance services and personal protective items, while the National Society's branches provided assistance to demonstrations outside of the city without any reports of major incidents.

All of the Guatemalan Red Cross' branches were on a preventative alert during the social protests that occurred in different locations in the country, especially in the provinces of Alta Verapaz, Izabal, Quetzaltenango, Retalhuleu, San Marcos and Suchitepéquez; there were no reports of affected people in the country's other provinces.

During the implementation of this plan of action, there were no direct security incidents that affected the physical safety of volunteers or the institution's assets and image. The few defamatory comments published on social networks, which questioned the GRC's credibility, were satisfactorily handled by the National Society and deemed a threat to the GRC.

### General situation of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in the country

As part of its mandate, the ICRC was a fundamental actor in the implementation of this plan of action; it helped coordinate the development of the Guatemalan Red Cross' Communication Strategy and the Safer Access programme training, which was facilitated by its cooperation officer from its regional office in Mexico.

The Spanish Red Cross and Norwegian Red Cross are fundamental partners for the Guatemalan Red Cross, as they are funding and collaborating on ongoing projects for the targeted population; however, they did not participate in this DREF.

### Summary of non-Red Cross/Red Crescent actors in the country

Guatemalan Red Cross carried out specific coordination actions with government staff or their agencies; as well as with public services such as hospitals when attending people in need of medical and humanitarian assistance. There was a presence of the human rights inspector general in mass demonstrations. The GRC's displayed the capacity to assist the affected population and evaluate its services.

### Needs assessment and planning of scenarios

The scenarios initially planned for the operation were close to what occurred, especially those related to public statements and events in which Guatemalan Red Cross volunteers and staff took part; furthermore, the planning

process allowed the National Society to adapt its preparedness approach for the contingencies that it faced and will continue to face.

Continuous monitoring of the social conditions in the country led to the implementation of a series of preparedness and decision-making actions at the branch level and the national level (Country Office); these actions aimed to adapt response strategies based on available resources and capacity to attend to the requirements of this population and ensure the security and protection of the organization's volunteers, assets and the organization's institutional image.

The situation analysis required the collection of information from different sources to identify and clarify the events that occurred, the background and the expected impact.

### **Evaluation of the operation's risks**

Below is a summary of the identified or expected risks that could have affected the implementation of the operation and the GRC's mitigation measures to limit the effects of these risks:

- Violent actions committed against Red Cross volunteers: the institution alerted management committees from local branches about the probability of social unrest occurring with increasing violence and the need to provide humanitarian assistance and maintain its volunteers' security and protection. The provision of protective equipment, use of the emblem and self-care recommendations were essential factors for protecting staff and volunteers.
- Attempts to degrade the institution's image: given the level of unrest, there were many attempts to affect the GRC's image; for this reason, the GRC established a communication strategy, with the goal of containing any situation that could affect the image of the National Society and strengthening the humanitarian and impartial actions that it implemented; in response, the GRC increased its dissemination of messages on social media to inform the population about its work and mandate.
- Response capacity of the Guatemalan Red Cross: based on the initial needs assessment, it was estimated that the number of people who would need assistance would increase, which is why the strengthening of the Guatemalan Red Cross' response capacity was a priority; the GRC achieved this through the provision of materials and resources for pre-hospital assistance at all its branches.

## **B. Operation Strategy**

### **Proposed Strategy**

The GRC's focus for its response strategy was providing pre-hospital assistance through the strengthening of the organization's institutional capacity, its volunteers and its organizational processes (planning) to respond to social contingencies.

As established in this DREF, the operation included the mobilization of volunteers with different capacities, including a General National Intervention Team (NIT) and the provision of training in pre-hospital assistance, especially in Guatemala City. Additionally, the GRC's 21 branches continuously monitored the situation.

With the ICRC's support, the GRC trained 54 volunteers in the Safer Access programme, leading to the development of a permanent training strategy for the National Society.

The GRC's pre-positioning of goods and materials for pre-hospital assistance was essential given the demand for services and the high probability that the protests would continue.

Through a Regional Intervention Team (RIT)'s support, the GRC's creation of a contingency plan for social unrest and a security plan provided the National Society with a tool that it can use to continue to develop its security plan and to address the existing social conditions.

Because GRC volunteers are normally exposed to risks during these types of operations, the Guatemalan Red Cross provides its volunteers with protective items to wear such as overalls, specialized masks and helmets.

Because the GRC implemented this operation for more than three months, the National Society's monitoring was continuous, allowing it to make necessary adjustments considered the contextual situation.

## C. Detailed Operation Plan



### Health

People reached: 206

Males: 164

Females: 42

Indicators:	Target	Reached
Pre-hospital care and referrals will be provided to anyone in need (at least 2,000 people during the 2-month operation), as per the Fundamental Principles.	2,000	206
All 21 Guatemalan Red Cross branches have the capacity to provide support during road blockades as well as in Guatemala City.	21	21
<b>Narrative description of the achievements</b>		
<p>The GRC reached 206 people through this sector because there were no further protests in the affected zones after the initial ones subsided.</p> <p><i>Pre-hospital and first aid care (with no medicine), ambulance service and pre-positioning, replenishment of supplies and deployment of volunteers</i></p> <p>The GRC provided resources for the provision of pre-hospital assistance through all 21 of its branches, and it operated assistance posts during the protests in Guatemala City.</p> <p>Volunteers received basic protective items such as gas masks, overalls and helmets, and the ICRC supported the acquisition of masks to safeguard volunteers against the use of force by public security forces in the different clashes with demonstrators.</p> <p><i>Acquisition of supplies and personal protection and visibility gear for response teams. Distribution of supplies to staff and branches and Safer Access workshop.</i></p> <p>The GRC provided training to 54 volunteers on the Safer Access programme; the ICRC's cooperation officer from its Mexico office facilitated this training workshop; the ICRC co-financed this training, which meant that staff and volunteers from local branches could be assigned as focal points for Safer Access in the National Society.</p> <p>Records available indicate that more than 200 volunteers have completed the "Stay Safe" course on the IFRC's Learning Platform.</p>		
<b>Challenges</b>		
<p>One of the challenges of this operation was attending to and protecting volunteers during their work in a tense environment, in which there was a strong possibility of violence; however, the GRC's preliminary feedback and protection measures were positive, minimizing possible aggression from uninformed people. The GRC's provision of life insurance to its volunteers, which was promoted by the IFRC's headquarters in Geneva, provided the National Society with the necessary support to address the challenge of ensuring the physical protection of its volunteers.</p>		
<b>Lessons learned</b>		
<p><i>Efforts to strengthen self-care and the role of leaders in decision-making to manage social unrest should be increased.</i></p> <p><i>A workshop on managing high-stress situations is necessary.</i></p> <p><i>The training of volunteers on how to provide emergency assistance in hostile environments should always be a priority for the National Society, considering ongoing issues in the country.</i></p> <p><i>Investment in providing personal protective equipment for volunteers is essential since it ensure GRC personnel's security and allows the National Society to carry out safely its humanitarian mandate.</i></p>		

## Strengthening of the National Society

Indicators:	Target	Reached
Initial needs assessments, operation management and operational safety	1	1
The plan of action is monitored and evaluated	1	1
One communications strategy consolidated, in coordination with IFRC and ICRC	1	1

## Narrative description of the achievements

### *Initial situation assessment. Monitoring of the crisis' evolution*

The GRC continuously monitored the situation through its emergency operations centre (EOC) and coordination meetings.

### *Development of a Contingency Plan and Security Plan*

With a RIT's support, the GRC developed a contingency plan to address the social unrest in Guatemala; GRC should continuously evaluate this plan to ensure that it reflects the current situation in the country. Finally, the security plan allows the National Society to engage in a broader range of actions that are closely aligned with its branches' and volunteers' experiences and capacities.

### *One monitoring visit by IFRC*

This visit by the Regional Office for the Americas did not occur; however, the IFRC continually monitored the situation through its country coordinator in Guatemala.

### *Deployment of a RIT*

A RIT was mobilized during the month to provide support to this DREF operation.

### *Staff tracking and monitoring*

The GRC monitored its staff and volunteers in the field through its EOC; moreover, it used its own communication protocol to inform on the situation and the actions in the field.

### *Inter-agency coordination (Regional and National)*

The GRC held coordination meetings with strategic partners and other Movement actors.

### *Development of a communication strategy and dissemination of actions carried out by the GRC.*

The Guatemalan Red Cross jointly designed a communication strategy with the ICRC and the IFRC to establish actions as a response to the social unrest in the country; this strategy will be implemented by the National Society for a prolonged period of time as part of its institutional strategic plan; in addition, it held a meeting with a group of journalists to help improve the Guatemalan Red Cross' image and ensure its compliance with the Movement's Fundamental Principles; the assistance humanitarian posts reinforced these messages through the display of banners during the protests.

## Challenges

Providing training and operational tools to volunteers and decision-makers at the GRC's national and local levels was a difficult task because this type of operation is not common for the National Society, and there is a need to ensure that it is considered a priority.

The continuous development of the institutional culture of security and capacity to respond to the social events, is a challenge for the National Society, as is increasing the capacity of the volunteers to respond with a safe access.

## Lessons Learned

*The permanent analysis of the social situation facilitates planning for consequences and promotes internal adaptations to help manage risks; furthermore, taking this dynamic into account, obtaining different sources of information and exchanging this with key actors provides improved data that can be used to make consensus-based decisions within the National Society.*

*Volunteers should be informed and alerted of the risks against their physical safety; jointly proposing and working on strategies to improve the security of volunteers are fundamental actions.*

## D. Budget

Please see the attached Final Financial Report.

## Contact Information

To obtain more information related to this operation, please contact:

### National Society

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## How We Work

The International Federation's activities are focused on providing assistance to the most vulnerable people and follow the Code of Conduct in disaster situations for the International Movement of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and other non-government organizations established in the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Responses (Sphere Project).

The International Federation's vision is to support its National Societies to carry out humanitarian activities that inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote the goal of preventing and alleviating human suffering and contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.

The work carried out by the International Federation is guided by Strategy 2020, which is based on three strategic objectives:

1. Save lives, protect livelihoods and strengthen recovery following disaster and crisis situations.
2. Guarantee healthy and safe livelihoods.
3. Promote social integration, a culture of peace and the fight against violence.

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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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## Disaster Response Financial Report

## MDRGT010 - Guatemala - Civil Unrest

Timeframe: 08 Sep 17 to 08 Nov 17

Appeal Launch Date: 08 Sep 17

Final Report

## Selected Parameters

Reporting Timeframe	2017/9-2018/3	Programme	MDRGT010
Budget Timeframe	2017/9-11	Budget	APPROVED
Split by funding source	Y	Project	*
Subsector:	*		

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

## I. Funding

	Raise humanitarian standards	Grow RC/RC services for vulnerable people	Strengthen RC/RC contribution to development	Heighten influence and support for RC/RC work	Joint working and accountability	TOTAL	Deferred Income
A. Budget		59,757				59,757	
B. Opening Balance							
Income							
Other Income							
DREF Allocations		59,757				59,757	
C4. Other Income		59,757				59,757	
C. Total Income = SUM(C1..C4)		59,757				59,757	
D. Total Funding = B +C		59,757				59,757	

\* Funding source data based on information provided by the donor

## II. Movement of Funds

	Raise humanitarian standards	Grow RC/RC services for vulnerable people	Strengthen RC/RC contribution to development	Heighten influence and support for RC/RC work	Joint working and accountability	TOTAL	Deferred Income
B. Opening Balance							
C. Income		59,757				59,757	
E. Expenditure		-41,896				-41,896	
F. Closing Balance = (B + C + E)		17,861				17,861	

## Disaster Response Financial Report

## MDRGT010 - Guatemala - Civil Unrest

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## Selected Parameters

Reporting Timeframe	2017/9-2018/3	Programme	MDRGT010
Budget Timeframe	2017/9-11	Budget	APPROVED
Split by funding source	Y	Project	*
Subsector:	*		

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

## III. Expenditure

Account Groups	Budget	Expenditure					TOTAL	Variance
		Raise humanitarian standards	Grow RC/RC services for vulnerable people	Strengthen RC/RC contribution to development	Heighten influence and support for RC/RC work	Joint working and accountability		
	A					B	A - B	
<b>BUDGET (C)</b>			<b>59,757</b>			<b>59,757</b>		
<b>Relief items, Construction, Supplies</b>								
Medical & First Aid	13,873		12,208			12,208	1,665	
Teaching Materials	4,784		6,129			6,129	-1,345	
<b>Total Relief items, Construction, Sup</b>	<b>18,657</b>		<b>18,337</b>			<b>18,337</b>	<b>320</b>	
<b>Logistics, Transport &amp; Storage</b>								
Transport & Vehicles Costs	2,105		1,890			1,890	215	
<b>Total Logistics, Transport &amp; Storage</b>	<b>2,105</b>		<b>1,890</b>			<b>1,890</b>	<b>215</b>	
<b>Personnel</b>								
International Staff	7,080		5,121			5,121	1,959	
Volunteers	8,415		1,194			1,194	7,221	
Other Staff Benefits	10,524		10,252			10,252	272	
<b>Total Personnel</b>	<b>26,019</b>		<b>16,567</b>			<b>16,567</b>	<b>9,452</b>	
<b>Workshops &amp; Training</b>								
Workshops & Training			154			154	-154	
<b>Total Workshops &amp; Training</b>			<b>154</b>			<b>154</b>	<b>-154</b>	
<b>General Expenditure</b>								
Travel	3,827		2,200			2,200	1,627	
Information & Public Relations	3,588		316			316	3,272	
Office Costs	1,148		47			47	1,101	
Communications	574		159			159	415	
Financial Charges	191		-332			-332	523	
<b>Total General Expenditure</b>	<b>9,329</b>		<b>2,390</b>			<b>2,390</b>	<b>6,938</b>	
<b>Indirect Costs</b>								
Programme & Services Support Recove	3,647		2,557			2,557	1,090	
<b>Total Indirect Costs</b>	<b>3,647</b>		<b>2,557</b>			<b>2,557</b>	<b>1,090</b>	
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE (D)</b>	<b>59,757</b>		<b>41,896</b>			<b>41,896</b>	<b>17,861</b>	
<b>VARIANCE (C - D)</b>			<b>17,861</b>			<b>17,861</b>		

**Disaster Response Financial Report****MDRGT010 - Guatemala - Civil Unrest**

Timeframe: 08 Sep 17 to 08 Nov 17

Appeal Launch Date: 08 Sep 17

Final Report

**Selected Parameters**

Reporting Timeframe	2017/9-2018/3	Programme	MDRGT010
Budget Timeframe	2017/9-11	Budget	APPROVED
Split by funding source	Y	Project	*
Subsector:	*		

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

**IV. Breakdown by subsector**

Business Line / Sub-sector	Budget	Opening Balance	Income	Funding	Expenditure	Closing Balance	Deferred Income
<b>BL2 - Grow RC/RC services for vulnerable people</b>							
Disaster management	59,757		59,757	59,757	41,896	17,861	
Subtotal BL2	59,757		59,757	59,757	41,896	17,861	
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>59,757</b>		<b>59,757</b>	<b>59,757</b>	<b>41,896</b>	<b>17,861</b>	