



*A maize field affected by drought, Mjanyane Moreneng, Quthing 2, @ LRCS*

Appeal No: <b>MDRLS008</b>	IFRC Secretariat Funding requirements: <b>CHF 5 million</b> Federation-wide Funding requirements: <b>CHF 7 million<sup>1</sup></b>	
Glide No: <b>DR-2024-000071-LSO</b>	People [affected/at risk]: <b>699,049 people</b>	People to be assisted: <b>87,381 people</b>
DREF allocation: <b>CHF 750,000</b>	Appeal launched: <b>06/09/2024</b>	Appeal ends: <b>31/08/2025</b>

<sup>1</sup> The Federation-wide funding requirement encompasses all financial support to be directed to the Lesotho Red Cross Society in response to the emergency. It includes the Lesotho Red Cross Society's domestic fundraising requests and the fundraising appeals of supporting Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies (CHF 2 million), as well as the funding requirements of the IFRC secretariat (CHF 5 million). This comprehensive approach ensures that all available resources are mobilized to address the urgent humanitarian needs of the affected communities.

## Situation Overview

Lesotho is grappling with a severe food security crisis, made worse by El Niño weather pattern, which is disrupting the critical 2024/25 summer planting and rainy season. Persistent crop failures, dwindling food production, water shortages, and skyrocketing food prices have severely hit the country's agricultural production with 41% of rural households now forced to spend more than half of their income just to put food on the table.

In 2022 and 2023, back-to-back La Niña events brought heavy rains that badly damaged crops and reduced harvests in Lesotho. The food insecurity crisis was further exacerbated during the 2023/2024 rainfall season, as the El Niño phenomenon further disrupted people's lives, livelihoods, and investments. This weather pattern shift had ripple effects across many areas, intensifying challenges across various sectors and deepening the socio-economic impact for communities.

Although Lesotho planted more crops during the 2023/24 season compared to previous years, the country still saw below-average harvests, leading to an increased reliance on markets and a subsequent rise in maize prices (a staple food). Dry spells from January to March severely affected a range of crops, especially maize, resulting in substantial losses for poor and very poor households. Driving home the severity of the crisis, the IPC (Integrated Food Security Phase Classification) projected that a staggering 325,000 people (22% of the rural population) would be in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis). As a result, families began purchasing food from local markets earlier than usual, leading to rising food prices and making it even harder for poorer households to make ends meet.

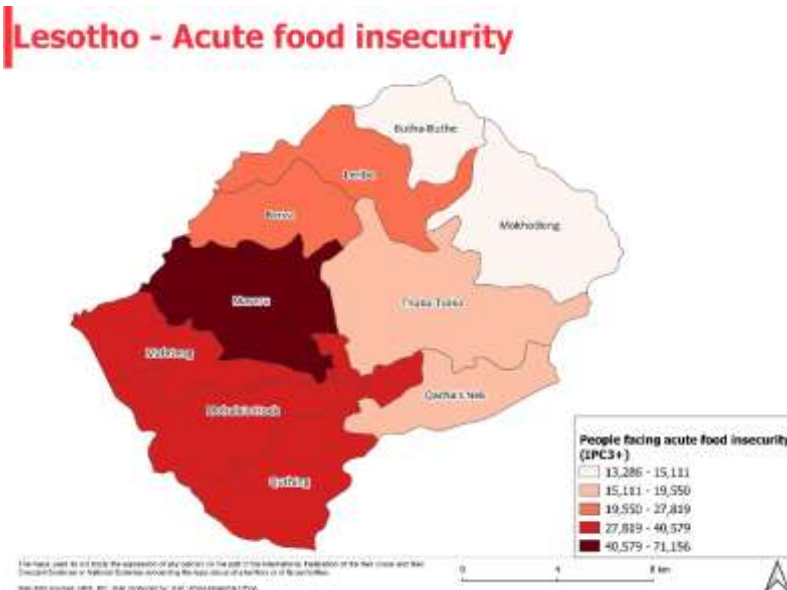
In response, the Government of Lesotho, through the Lesotho Vulnerability Assessment Committee (LVAC), carried out an early assessment to get a clearer picture of the current food situation. The findings revealed that Lesotho is facing severe food shortages, with the crisis expected to worsen as El Niño impacts the critical October 2024 to March 2025 period. This extreme weather event hit during the crucial 2024/25 summer planting and rainy season, severely impacting farming. The country experienced widespread crop failures, reduced production, rising concerns over safety and protection, water shortages, and soaring food prices. The impact was particularly severe in several regions, including the Southern Lowlands, Foothills, Mountains, and the Senqu River Valley.

According to the 2024/25 LVAC report, as of June 2024, half of Lesotho's ten districts were in crisis (IPC Phase 3) for food security, while the other five were classified as stressed (IPC Phase 2). The entire country is expected to reach crisis level (IPC Phase 3) by October 2024, highlighting the urgent need for action to save lives and protect livelihoods. According to the latest reports, an estimated 699,049 individuals in both urban and rural areas are facing food insecurity, highlighting the widespread food needs across Lesotho.

The Government of Lesotho took action by declaring a state of emergency and appealed to local and international development partners for immediate assistance. In response, a National Drought Response Plan was issued in July 2024, which identified both short-term and long-term humanitarian requirements to alleviate the effects of the drought. The Lesotho Red Cross Society (LRCS) has been on the front lines, working to ensure effective aid distribution and strengthen community resilience.

## TARGETING

The LRCS will prioritise all affected districts with a particular focus on foothill and hard-to-reach mountainous community councils, where humanitarian interventions have been limited or non-existent during previous



response efforts. This targeted approach aims to address the urgent needs of populations currently experiencing severe food insecurity. The selected districts have been identified as among the hardest hit by the ongoing drought, which has exacerbated food shortages and threatened the livelihoods of residents.

Through this Emergency Appeal, as a scale-up of the DREF, the LRCS will support 87,381<sup>2</sup> individuals (17,473 households) in the districts of Mafeteng, Mohale's Hoek, Quthing, Qacha's Nek, and Thaba Tseka, with plans to expand to five additional districts projected to be in IPC Phase 3 by the end of September 2024 (Berea, Leribe, Thaba Tseka, Mokhotlong, and Botha-Bothe). The LRCS is committed to delivering vital support to communities to help them sustain their livelihoods and build resilience during this challenging time, with a particular focus on populations facing the most severe levels of food insecurity, prioritising the most vulnerable groups to alleviate their immediate needs and help them withstand and recover from the ongoing food crises.


## PLANNED OPERATIONS

Following an assessment conducted by the LRCS in March 2024, with support from relevant stakeholders such as the Disaster Management Authority (DMA) and the Ministry of Agriculture, and the triangulation of the IPC analysis projection for January to March 2024, the districts of Quthing, Maseru, Mafeteng, Qacha's Nek, and Mohale's Hoek were identified as being in a crisis situation. The assessment revealed a critical need for humanitarian assistance in the areas of water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH), food security, and health and nutrition. In response to these findings, the LRCS launched the DREF Response in May 2024 to support 2,500 households (approximately 10,000 individuals) in the affected areas, with a focus on addressing immediate relief efforts in these key sectors.





The latest LVAC findings underscored the urgent need to scale-up humanitarian assistance in the five crisis-affected districts (Mafeteng, Mohale's Hoek, Quthing, Maseru and Qacha's Nek), as well as in those projected to reach a similar crisis phase by the end of September 2024. In response, and following the launch of the DREF operation, the LRCS is now aiming to expand its response through this Emergency Appeal, focusing on the districts expected to reach the crisis phase by September 2024.

This intervention is part of a broader sub-regional scale-up initiative planned by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) in response to the deteriorating humanitarian conditions caused by the El Niño-induced drought in southern Africa. This comprehensive effort aims to tackle the escalating challenges by integrating sustainable practices and building community resilience. In doing so, it will significantly contribute to the IFRC's Pan-African Zero Hunger Initiative, which is dedicated to eradicating hunger and ensuring food security across the continent through innovative and sustainable solutions.

Through this Emergency Appeal, the IFRC aims to support the LRCS in mitigating the effects of the ongoing drought linked to El Niño. The appeal will focus on the following pillars, in line with the Regional African Hunger Crisis EA:


	<p><b>Pillar 1: Food Security and Livelihoods</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Multipurpose cash transfers will be provided to households classified as very poor to poor, aiming to address their food and basic needs. This support is crucial for ensuring these households effectively meet their immediate necessities.</li><li>• Households will receive vegetable seeds to support gardening activities aimed at enhancing household nutrition. This approach will not only improve access to high-quality, nutritious, and fresh produce but also promotes dietary diversity among the targeted population. In addition, by combining cash assistance with sustainable gardening practices, the initiative seeks to promote long-term food security and resilience within vulnerable communities.</li></ul>
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<sup>2</sup> Increase from 12,500 people originally being targeted by the [DREF](#).

	<p><b>Pillar 2: Health and Nutrition</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The LRCS plans to intensify its efforts in promoting food handling, hygiene, and nutrition education. Working closely with safeguarding initiatives, the LRCS will provide psychosocial support to affected families and offer referrals for those requiring further assistance.</li> <li>• Additionally, the LRCS will launch extensive nutrition campaigns targeting parents of children under five years old. These campaigns will be developed in collaboration with the Food and Nutrition Coordinating Office (FNCO) and the Ministry of Health’s Public Health Department.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Pillar 3: Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Increased access to safe water:</i> Rehabilitation and construction of water sources in five districts, designed for both domestic and agricultural purposes, with the primary goal of ensuring access to clean water. This effort aims to improve water availability and quality, supporting households and farming communities in meeting their daily needs and enhancing agricultural productivity.</li> <li>• <i>Improving water, sanitation, and hygiene practices:</i> As a preventive measure against drought-related waterborne diseases, the LRCS will conduct WASH campaigns to raise awareness within communities about the risks associated with waterborne illnesses and the importance of maintaining household hygiene.</li> </ul>
<p><b>CROSS-CUTTING SECTORS</b></p>	
	<p><b>Risk Reduction, Climate Adaptation, Resilience, and Recovery</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The LRCS plans to distribute crop seeds in preparation for the 2024/25 summer planting season, aiming to expand both homestead gardening and agricultural fields. Furthermore, selected targets will receive training on climate-smart agriculture techniques and food preservation methods.</li> <li>• Communities will also collaborate to identify suitable locations for tree planting initiatives as part of efforts to address climate change. This integrated approach not only supports sustainable agriculture and food security but also promotes environmental conservation through community-driven reforestation efforts.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The LRCS will establish a help desk consisting of volunteers, the targeted population, and local leaders to facilitate active participation and enable two-way feedback. Additionally, the LRCS will employ other feedback mechanisms, such as a toll-free hotline and suggestion boxes, to ensure that community voices are heard and considered in programme planning and implementation.</li> <li>• During the targeting and verification processes, communities will engage in selecting eligible households using a community-based targeting approach. This method empowers community members in identifying households that meet the criteria for assistance.</li> </ul>

## Enabling approaches

The sectors outlined above will be supported and enhanced by the following enabling approaches:

	<p><b>Coordination and Partnerships</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborating closely with the DMA, the primary stakeholders mandated to coordinate all Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) initiatives, the LRCS will take the lead in implementing and reporting on the project through its dedicated staff and volunteers. At the district level, the LRCS will utilise District Disaster</li> </ul>
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	<p>Management Teams (DDMTs) to support the targeting and verification exercises.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional technical support will be provided by other government ministries, including the Department of Forestry, which will oversee tree planting initiatives. The Ministry of Agriculture, Nutrition, and Food Security, through district-based extension officers, will facilitate training on climate-smart agriculture and food preservation, while also providing guidance on the selection of climate-resilient seeds suited to each specific location. The LRCS will closely collaborate through the newly established El Niño Response Coordination Group to map out existing interventions, ensuring that efforts are not duplicated.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>IFRC Secretariat Services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Resource mobilisation and communication:</i> The IFRC, through its communications teams, will support the LRCS in promoting response efforts through social media, infographics, and diverse communication materials. These initiatives are geared to enhancing visibility, increasing donor engagement, and facilitating resource mobilisation.</li> <li>• <i>Technical expertise:</i> The IFRC will provide technical oversight to ensure comprehensive coordination, implementation, and monitoring of the operation.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>National Society Strengthening</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The planned response reflects the current situation and is based on the information available at the time of this Emergency Appeal launch. Details of the operation will be updated through the Operational Strategy to be released in the upcoming days. The Operational Strategy will also provide further details on the Federation-wide approach which includes the response activities of all contributing Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies, and the Federation-wide funding requirement.</li> </ul>

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After 30 August 2025, response activities to this disaster will continue under the [IFRC Network Lesotho Country Plan](#) for 2025. The IFRC Network Country Plans show an integrated view of ongoing emergency responses and longer-term programming tailored to the needs in the country, as well as a Federation-wide view of the country's action. This aims to streamline activities under one plan, while still ensuring that the needs of those affected by the disaster are met in an accountable and transparent way. Information will be shared in time, should there be a need for an extension of the crisis-specific response beyond the above-mentioned time.

# RED CROSS RED CRESCENT FOOTPRINT IN COUNTRY

## Lesotho Red Cross Society



Core areas of operation	
Number of staff:	62
Number of volunteers:	2,000
Number of branches/divisions	10

The LRCS was established on 9 November 1967 as a voluntary aid auxiliary to the public health authorities. The organisation's vision is to be recognised locally, nationally, and regionally as a leading volunteer organisation rendering best practices in humanitarian services.

### IFRC Membership coordination

The IFRC and the LRCS will work closely together to coordinate the response, aiming for efficient implementation. This collaboration is designed to streamline operations, optimise resource allocation, and amplify the initiative's overall effectiveness. For technical guidance, the Disaster Management (DM) coordinator from the IFRC cluster office will provide crucial support to ensure the success of the response. This includes offering expertise and guidance across all phases of the response, from initial planning and execution to monitoring and evaluation.

Currently, two Participating National Societies (PNS), the British Red Cross and the Netherlands Red Cross (*through their 510 initiative*) are assisting the LRCS in the development and implementation of safeguarding approaches and ensuring alignment with early warning systems as part of the Anticipatory Action Plan for Drought. The Netherlands 510 is also assisting in the finalisation of the Anticipatory Action Plan for cold waves, enhancing the LRCS's preparedness and response strategies for climate-related events.

### Red Cross Red Crescent Movement coordination

The ICRC provides remote support to the LRCS in the areas of restoring family links (RFL) and resource mobilisation. This support encompasses training staff and volunteers on various aspects of resource mobilisation and RFL programming, as well as offering peer learning opportunities. Given the current emergency, which has the potential to trigger forced migration, the LRCS will work closely with the ICRC to ensure these cases are handled with the utmost care and dignity. This collaboration aims to address the needs of those affected by forced migration, ensuring they receive the appropriate assistance and protection.

### External coordination

The LRCS actively engages as a member of the National Emergency Operation Centre, which is overseen by the DMA. This collaborative platform serves as a crucial forum for discussing and planning interventions to mitigate crises. During these meetings, the government has appealed to all humanitarian actors for support in addressing food security concerns. The LRCS is also a member of the newly activated El Niño Coordination Response technical working group.

Throughout the implementation phase of the response, the LRCS will maintain close collaboration with key stakeholders, including the DMA, Department of Local Government and Chieftainship, Department of Social Development, and UN agencies. The LRCS is dedicated to nurturing strong partnerships with local authorities, community-based organisations (CBOs), and existing mobile service providers to ensure a coordinated and effective response that addresses the urgent needs of affected communities. Lastly in scaling-up nutrition, the LRCS will team up with the Ministry of Agriculture (*Food and Nutrition Coordinating Office*) and Ministry of Health in conducting nutrition and hygiene campaigns.

## Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation, please contact:

### At the X National Society(ies):

- **Secretary General (or equivalent):** Sechaba Mokhameleli; email: [smokhameleli@redcross.org.ls](mailto:smokhameleli@redcross.org.ls)
- **Operational coordination:** Sebongile Hlubi, Disaster Management Coordinator; email: [shlubi@redcross.org.ls](mailto:shlubi@redcross.org.ls)

### At the IFRC:

- **IFRC Country Cluster Delegation:** Mr Kopano Masilo, Head of the Delegation; email: [kopano.masilo@ifrc.org](mailto:kopano.masilo@ifrc.org), phone: +27 66 3203886
- **IFRC Regional Office for Africa:** Rui Alberto Oliveira, Regional Operations Lead; email: [rui.oliveira@ifrc.org](mailto:rui.oliveira@ifrc.org), phone: +254 780 422276
- **IFRC Geneva:** Santiago Luengo, Senior Officer, Operations Coordination; email: [santiago.luengo@ifrc.org](mailto:santiago.luengo@ifrc.org), phone: 41 (0) 79 124 4052

### For IFRC Resource Mobilisation and Pledges support:

- **IFRC Regional Office for Africa:** Louise Daintrey, Head of Strategic Engagement and Partnerships; email: [louise.daintrey@ifrc.org](mailto:louise.daintrey@ifrc.org), phone: +254 110 843 978

### For In-Kind donations and Mobilisation table support:

- **IFRC Africa Regional Office for Logistics Unit:** Allan Kilaka Masavah, Head, Global Humanitarian Services & Supply Chain Management, Africa; email: [allan.masavah@ifrc.org](mailto:allan.masavah@ifrc.org)
- **For Performance and Accountability support (planning, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting enquiries) Regional Head of PMER & QA** Beatrice Atieno OKEYO, [beatrice.okeyo@ifrc.org](mailto:beatrice.okeyo@ifrc.org), Phone: +254732 40402

### Reference



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