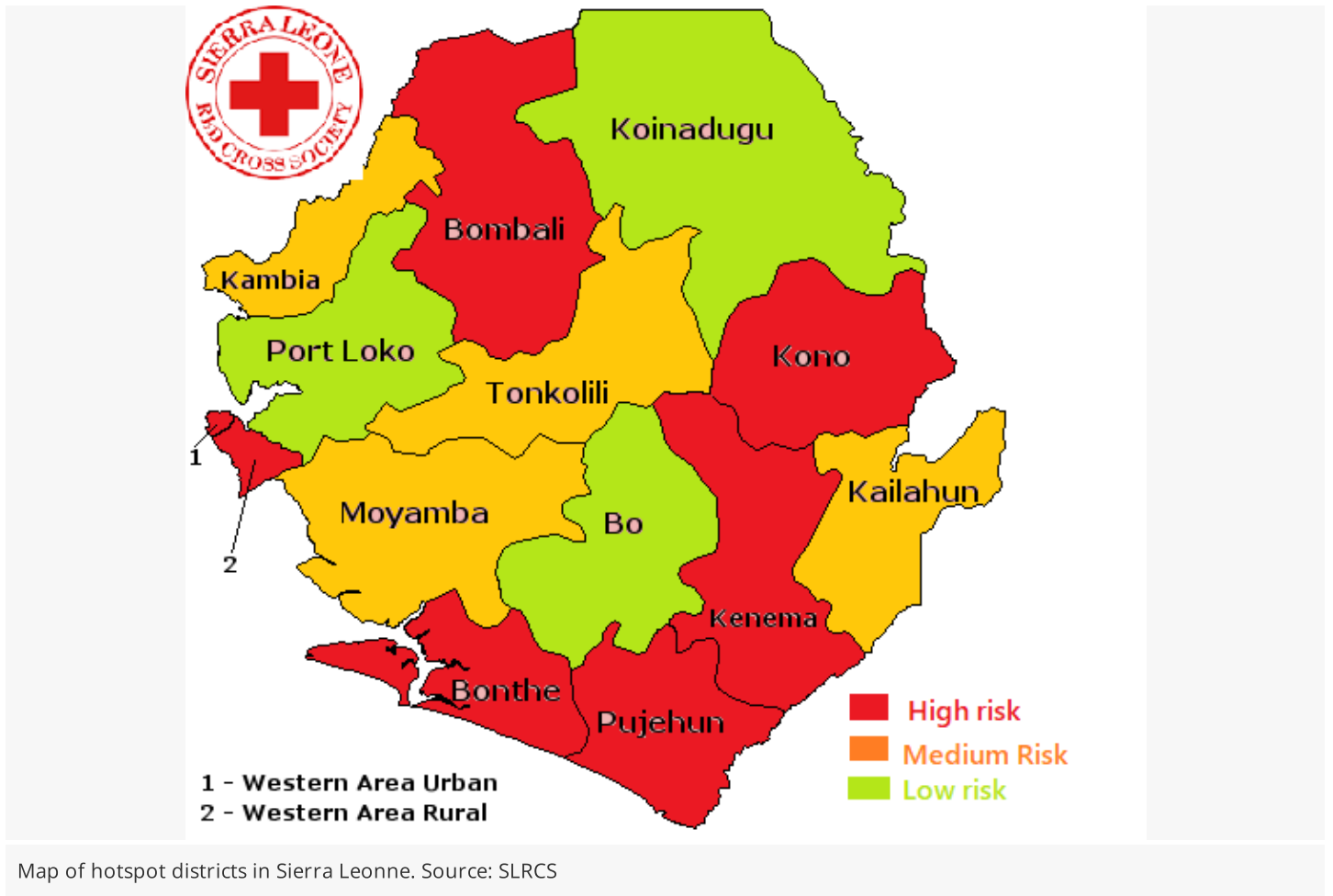




Training of Sierra Leone Police officers on the Emblem, Red Cross Fundamental Principles, and International Humanitarian Law

Appeal: MDRSL015	Total DREF Allocation: CHF 172,004	Crisis Category: Yellow	Hazard: Other
Glide Number: N/A	People Affected: 1,100,000 people	People Targeted: 75,000 people	
Event Onset: Sudden	Operation Start Date: 08-06-2023	Operational End Date: 31-08-2023	Total Operating Timeframe: 2 months
Targeted Areas: Western			

Description of the Event



Approximate date of impact

General elections (presidential and parliamentary) were held in Sierra Leone in June 2023 as follows:

- 24 June: Presidential election voting
- 24 June up to the second week of July 2023: Proclamation of parliamentary representatives, following the Proportional Representation system. Following the National Society (NS) contingency planning, a period of up to two weeks was estimated for planning purposes. The Election calendar can be found here: <https://ec.gov.sl/electoral-calendar/#>

Provide any updates in the situation since the field report and explain what is expected to happen.

General elections were scheduled to take place in Sierra Leone from June to July 2023, as per the calendar issued by the Electoral Commission for Sierra Leone (ECSL). The election included a Presidential election and a Parliamentary process across the country. In 2022, the Election campaign began and ended in May 2023. There were indications of potential social or civil unrest during the election period, which meant that the National Society needed to be prepared to support communities that may have been affected. The elections were held according to schedule.

- 24 June 2023 Presidential voting took place in 16 districts of the country.
- 25 - 28 June 2023, were the proclamation of the results of the presidential election. These were estimated dates based on historical process, which usually takes up to 4 days.
- In early 2023, the Proportional Representative system was established following the proclamation of Parliamentary representatives. The dates for the start and end of the system were not specified, but all election processes were to be completed between June and July. A two-week period was estimated for planning purposes as a part of the NS contingency planning.

Regarding the 2023 General Elections period, incidences of inter-communal conflict were observed in many parts of the country. Indeed, those elections were held against the backdrop of a severe complex economic crisis and periods of civil unrest surrounding governance issues. In the period leading to the election, the country witnessed civil unrest, economic instability, currency devaluation, and multiple disasters, especially in the country's capital city, Freetown. The widespread protest of August 2022 was a violent example of turmoil in

Freetown and other cities in Sierra Leone. Thousands of protesters mobilized around the country, blocking roads and main supply routes, demonstrating against unemployment, economic hardship, and injustices, demanding reductions in fuel prices, economic relief for indebted families, fair prices for agricultural products, employment and labour rights, security, and protection. Over 34 people were injured, 30 deaths (including three police officers), and many detained in different parts of the country. These events were analyzed to reflect what could happen during the general elections.

Furthermore, some analyses reported that ahead of the June 24 poll, a rematch of the 2018 vote, identity issues, and economic stagnation were also on the ballot.

After the change of the Parliamentary voting system in early 2023 from a complete election system to a Proportional representative system, proportional representation became a type of electoral system under which subgroups of an electorate were reflected proportionately in the elected body. This added more expectations from the population on the Presidential elections, as the level of changes in the presidential votes could have led to parallel changes of the National and local possible representatives across the country. The hope for politico-economical changes was highly expected based on some allegations and past analysis reporting a high corruption level across the country with some economic challenges not resolved.<https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2023/6/1/familiar-faces-concerns-linger-ahead-of-sierra-leones-june-vote>.

The period preceding the elections (until late March) saw episodic protests and reports of intimidation against opposition parties. This and the intimidation actions reported against the opposition indicated that the relative calm reported in other sources could also deteriorate. Between the most recent events, there were members of the opposition wounded or shot, and some violence occurred in the past weeks since the campaign. <https://sierraloade.sl/news/police-officer-shot-dead-makeni/> / https://web.facebook.com/watch/?v=201648819459006&extid=CL-UNK-UNK-UNK-IO5_GK0T-GK1C&mibextid=irwG9G&ref=sharing&_rdc=1&_rdr

<https://sierraloade.sl/politics/slpp-apc-campaign-chairman/>

<https://apanews.net/2023/02/10/sleone-first-ladys-female-bodyguard-dies-in-accident/>

Whilst the priority was to support peacebuilding and prevention of violence efforts, previous outbreaks of violence demonstrated the importance of planning for potential humanitarian response activities.

Potential hotspots in regions/districts				
No	District	Towns at risk	Level of Risks	Reasons / Justifications
1	Western Area Urban and Rural	East End of Freetown, Waterloo, Tombo	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High population density and incidences of pre and post-election tension
2	Bombali	Makeni	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existence of Inter-party-political differences including Incidences of pre and post electoral violence. History of tension, Inter political party indifference
3	Kono	Koidu, niyiyama, nimikoro, Sandor, soa, gbaneh	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cross carpeting from party to the other.
4	Kailahun	Luawa, Njaluahun the 3 kissi	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Political intolerance
5	Kambia	Magbema, Brimaia, Tonko Liamba	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perceived registration of non-Sierra Leoneans
6	Port Loko	Lungi, Port Loko town, Lunsar	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post-election violence Interparty political difference Tribal political differences
7	Tonkolili	Mile 91, Magburaka, Masingbi	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post-election tension
8	Karene	Kamakwe, Kamalo	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hotspots communities
9	BO	Bo city	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Political indifference
10	Moyamba	Rotifunk, Moyamba Jnx	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High rate of political contestants despite its relatively small population size.
11	Bonthe	Imperi	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Political intolerance
12	Koinadugu	Kabala	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Political intolerance

Mapping of Hotspot areas from SLRCS contingency plan

Scope and Scale

In the past, all elections held in Sierra Leone have been characterized by violent demonstrations and riots before, during, and after the elections across the country. Sometimes, violent riots continued to increase several months after the elections because of disappointment with the election results and frequently because of hardship, lack of basic needs, and attainable life opportunities and rights. In real-time consideration, upon which this plan was rooted, the election of 24 June 2023 indicated the likelihood of facing a similar situation. This



notion was based on the occurrences of deadly civil unrest in the last three years in Tombo, Makeni, Port Loko, Kenema, Bo, Kamakwei, Waterloo, and Freetown (the capital city of Sierra Leone). The recent killing of an OSD Police Officer in Makeni (the stronghold of the opposition party APC), with other social media voice messages by unknown Sierra Leoneans, were signals and recipes for conflict. Also, several reports of unresolved allegations and protests against the economic and social context were a clear indication that the situation could deteriorate.

The recent developments in Sierra Leone’s political landscape with shifting political alliances indicated the potential for tensions and required to be prepared to provide humanitarian assistance to potentially affected communities. Learning from the bye-elections over the past years associated with violence, especially in Western Area and Northern Koinadugu, the situation could have directly impacted the population in areas that had been identified as hotspot areas, thus would have needed adequate humanitarian support. Based also on learnings, it was clear that even when elections started in a relatively calm context, the violence was usually sudden and could have gone beyond the election date.

Based on historical analysis and the then-current stability and socio-economic context, SLRCS identified the following main hotspots for the 2023 election with the support of ICRC. At that time, high risk was identified in 6 out of the 16 districts:

- Western Area Urban and Rural districts, including East End of Freetown, Waterloo, and Tombo cities, were historically and currently known as hotspots with the heaviest history of violence. These areas were also the most populated and had the highest registered voters and the highest representation of different political parties.
- Bombali: Makeni
- Kono: Koidu, nimiyama, nimikoro, Sandor, soa, gbaneh
- Karene: Kamakwe, Kamalo
- Bonthe: Imperi

Over 3.4 million people registered as voters across the country, with approximately 50% living in the main hotspot areas. In the contingency plan scenario, at least 250 households (1,250 people) were directly exposed to the violence or at risk in the current scenario. In the worst-case scenario, it was anticipated that at least 500 households would be at risk.

It was anticipated that additional emergency medical services might have been needed in various parts of the country, including first aid, emergency medical transport, and/or blood services for the possible affected populations. In the event of protests, unrest, roadblocks, or heightened traffic, additional support may have been required to maintain continuity of routine ambulance and blood services. Due to the socio-economic crisis in the country, price hikes and fluctuations for critical commodities such as fuel and disruption to supply chains required forward planning to maintain adequate readiness.

The DREF operation aimed to ensure that SLRCS was well-positioned to respond to the needs of all the population across the country and maintained the safety and security of volunteers and staff throughout the election period.

National Society Actions

Have the National Society conducted any intervention additionally to those part of this DREF Operation?	No
Please provide a brief description of those additional activities	-

IFRC Network Actions Related To The Current Event

Secretariat	The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) has a country office in Freetown, where it provides technical assistance to the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society (SLRCS) in its humanitarian efforts. This assistance includes responding to disasters and crises caused by natural hazards, delivering health services in remote areas, implementing long-term resilience-building programmes, coordinating support from IFRC members, enhancing organizational development, and representing the NS internationally. The IFRC Country Delegation played a crucial role in previous disasters and crises, including Election preparedness, by engaging in leadership, supporting the identification of intervention areas, and coordinating with partners from the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, UN agencies, national and international NGOs, and donors through networking and collaboration.
Participating National Societies	In addition to IFRC, the British and Finish Red Cross Societies are Movement partners with a presence in Sierra Leone. The Red Cross / Red Crescent (RCRC) Movement’s coordination in Sierra Leone is anchored in the Movement Cooperation Agreement



which outlined the functional coordination mechanisms in the country with regular meetings at the leadership, operational, and technical levels. The functional Movement's coordination mechanisms and practical application in the Strengthening Movement Coordination and Cooperation (SMCC) process in Sierra Leone continued to reinforce a coordinated and complementary Movement response.

ICRC Actions Related To The Current Event

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) does not possess any offices in Sierra Leone. However, it extends its support to the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society (SLRCS) through its Abidjan Office. The support primarily focuses on safety and security, along with training programmes related to communication and security. The input for the contingency plan was initiated early and has been ongoing to allow for potential revisions. Furthermore, ICRC was involved in facilitating safer access training, security briefing, and the Restoring Family Link (RFL) under the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF).

Other Actors Actions Related To The Current Event

Government has requested international assistance	No
National authorities	Sierra Leone's National Electoral Commission oversaw the elections in collaboration with other relevant organizations. The International community participated through the International Support Group for Sierra Leone and deployed election monitors within the country. SLRCS actively engaged with the National Disaster Risk Management Agency and maintained consistent coordination with relevant entities regarding needs and interventions. The leadership team attended and contributed to certain planning meetings organized by the Office of the National Security (ONS), Electoral Commission Sierra Leone (ECSL), and Political Parties Registration Commission (PPRC), which were the primary Government bodies overseeing national security issues. The national society leveraged its existing partnership with the Ministry of Health and Sanitation for emergency medical services before, during, and after the elections. SLRCS shared and disseminated the contingency plan with EC-SL and all branches at risk of election-related violence to ensure awareness of the key interventions outlined in the plan.

Are there major coordination mechanism in place?

Sierra Leone's National Electoral Commission was responsible for administering elections in coordination with other relevant bodies. The International community engaged through the International Support Group for Sierra Leone and deployed election monitors in the country. SLRCS was an active member of the National Disaster Risk Management Agency and maintained regular coordination with relevant bodies in terms of needs and interventions. The leadership team followed up and participated in some of the planning meetings convened by the Office of the National Security (ONS), Electoral Commission Sierra Leone (ECSL), and Political Parties Registration Commission (PPRC), which were the leading Government oversight bodies for all national security matters. The NS used its existing partnership with the Ministry of Health and Sanitation on emergency medical services before, during, and after the elections. The contingency plan was shared and circulated with EC-SL and all the branches at risk of election violence to be informed on the key interventions that would take place for the various scenarios outlined in the contingency plan.

Needs (Gaps) Identified



Election campaign rallies in hotspot districts may have led to violence, resulting in fatalities, injuries, separation of family members, and significant psychological effects. As a result, the population in these high-risk areas needed support regarding first-aid care, medical evacuation, and referral to hospitals in the event of severe cases. Volunteers and staff involved in activities were exposed to potential tensions/fights, leading to injuries and deaths when health and safety recommendations were not respected. This caused public psychological trauma in both the affected communities and the volunteers/staff responding, requiring psychosocial support. The high cost of tariffs and the introduction of floor prices by mobile companies limited the timely sharing of information by branches to



support operational planning. Thus, there was a need to operationalize the hotline and activate CUG systems to improve communication throughout the period. This proved successful during the response to the EVD outbreak in Sierra Leone. The hotline was operationalized, and the CUG systems were activated to improve communication with hotspot branches.

Inadequate equipment to support response operations, including ambulance services and first-aid kits, and insufficient fuel threatened SLRCS response capacity. Sourcing for these items during the election period was risky as movements were limited. Therefore, it was important to ensure the prepositioning of these items to ensure the total capacity of SLRCS in the event of tensions. This was even more relevant as the country was experiencing supply chain disruptions and fuel shortages. First aid kits and fuel were prepositioned to ensure the full capacity of SLRCS in the event of tensions.

Protective and visibility materials were prepositioned: The materials were distributed to hotspot branches before the elections. This assisted departments in providing first aid services during campaign rallies and voting. Protective equipment (e.g., gloves, nose masks, stretchers, safety goggles, and safety helmets) and visibility materials (ID cards, bibs, stickers, and flags) were made available to the branches for security and visibility purposes, playing an essential role in this type of intervention.



Protection, Gender And Inclusion

A humanitarian response was required to protect people's health, fundamental rights, and lives amidst a context of social unrest. It was necessary to provide guidance and support to affected people so they could obtain the essential information on the range of protection services offered by the appropriate entities responsible for guaranteeing and restoring their civil rights, and direct referrals. As a result, SLRCS strengthened the volunteer's capacity in topics that allowed them to provide better services to the community in need. Also, civil unrest and violent demonstrations brought together different groups of people, such as women, children, adolescents, indigenous people, or minority groups, to significant security risks, especially if they did not receive timely medical attention. Considering the importance of protection issues, the SLRCS found it essential that the volunteers knew the minimum standards of PGI to provide priority and specialized attention to these groups in the different lines of response. It was considered necessary to map actors and referral routes for victims of gender-based violence and children and adolescents.



Community Engagement And Accountability

- Public information was disseminated to people on respect and protection of the Red Cross emblem, humanitarian action, and the medical mission.
- Humanitarian role messages were diffused within the community.
- Volunteers and humanitarian staff had institutional visibility.

During the event, there were several information flows, misinformation, and rumours circulating, and the behaviour of some community members did not contribute to calming the situation or promoting access to communities in different scenarios. The lack of understanding of humanitarian work by the actors involved could have generated risks to the safety of the humanitarian personnel of the SLRCS, such as attacks on institutional engagement. Therefore, engaging community leaders in advance and local security representatives was a priority to ensure risk communication and promote the right messages on RCRC that would enhance access and safety.

Operational Strategy

Overall objective of the operation

The overall objective of the operation was to strengthen the capacities of SLRCS branches and volunteers to respond to humanitarian needs in the event of election-related violence until August, a month after the end of the election agenda.

Operation strategy rationale

The proposed strategy aimed to achieve the following specific objectives:

1. Reduced risk of loss of lives and injuries: The strategy aimed to provide pre-hospital care, protection, and information to individuals, reducing the risk of people losing their lives or getting injured during the election period.
2. Addressed mental health issues: The strategy aimed to provide psychosocial support to vulnerable groups, mitigating the risk of mental health issues arising from social unrest during the election period.



3. Protected the National Society: The strategy aimed to mitigate the risk of attacks on the National Society by disseminating information to the public on the Red Cross emblem, humanitarian action, and medical missions.

4. Technical assistance to provincial branches: The strategy aimed to provide technical assistance to the provincial branches, ensuring the implementation of minimum standards related to protection, gender, and inclusion for emergencies.

The DREF Plan of Action was implemented in two stages:

i. Readiness and prepositioning stage: This stage was completed one week before the election to anticipate disruptions in the distribution system. Activities conducted included briefings, refresher trainings, training for police and security personnel, activation and engagement with security representative groups, and equipping trained volunteers with first-aid kits.

ii. Deployment and early warning stage: This stage began one week before the election and continued until the end of the parliamentary election. It involved deploying first-aid teams and ambulances, monitoring the situation through a surveillance team, and coordinating with RCRC partners, local authorities, and official election agencies.

Transversal sectors and support services: During both stages, trained volunteers went through communication skills and complaints handling training. Communication on the NS mission and principles was carried out through various channels such as radio discussions, community meetings, and distribution of flyers. Community dissemination sessions were held in each district, and specific messages on the NS mission, vision, neutrality, and independence were developed and disseminated through media and community meetings. Information, education, and communication materials on the Red Cross's Fundamental Principles and the role of the SLRCS during the elections were distributed to the population.

Overall, the strategy aimed to effectively respond to potential risks and ensure the safety and well-being of the population during the election period.

Targeting Strategy

Who was targeted by this operation?

It was likely that the most exposed population would have been those who attended rallies during the campaign period and those who participated in the voting process on the polling days. After the elections, if there was dissatisfaction among people with the outcome of the election results, violence could have affected many people (including women, children, residents, security officers, and electoral officers) and the affected would have been provided with assistance by the SLRCS volunteers and staff. The SLRCS would have targeted the most vulnerable populations, such as women, children, the disabled, and the elderly (amongst others).

NS had planned for the worst-case scenario with consideration of at least 250 to 500HH at risk per higher at-risk cities in the red district hotspots. This means approximately 15,000HH in the hotspot districts (75,000 people). The main hotspots being the districts of Bombali, Western Area rural and urban, Bo, Kenema, Port Loko, Kambia, and Pujehun identified as hotspots for the 2023 General Elections in the National Society contingency plan. The DREF operation was expected to support up to 75,000 people in these hotspots with 20% at least to be reached with first aid and other early actions.

Explain the selection criteria for the targeted population

Targeting followed the Election Contingency Plan, which specified that in total, approximately 3.4 million people were estimated to live in the at-risk areas and the majority of voters registered were in those districts.



Total Targeted Population

Women	30,000	Rural	30%
Girls (under 18)	12,000	Urban	70%
Men	23,000	People with disabilities (estimated)	-
Boys (under 18)	10,000		
Total targeted population	75,000		

Risk and Security Considerations

Please indicate about potential operation risk for this operations and mitigation actions

Risk	Mitigation action
The organization faced an increased workload for staff and volunteers who were already assigned to other interventions.	A clear distribution of tasks ensured that the coordination of the various interventions ran smoothly. The NS refocused its strategy, prioritizing hot spots to ensure it operated within its capacities.
Inflation and prices of items were increased.	The planning took into consideration the price inflation that had been implemented months ago, but the market remained volatile with a risk of increase again. In that case, a revision of the allocation could have been made to avoid any deficit.
Possible violence during the election also exposed personnel to safety and security risks.	The use of emblem and other visibility items was strictly adhered to, and coordination with relevant authorities regarding the security environment was maintained in the past.
Political and security tensions were high during the recent election season. There were many heated debates and disagreements between the candidates and their supporters. However, after the election was over, tensions began to subside and people focused on moving forward and working together for the greater good.	Modules on Safer Access were delivered to volunteers, with the application of Safer Access Framework (SAF) being emphasized.

Please indicate any security and safety concerns for this operation

Sierra Leone has been lauded as one of Africa's success stories in post-conflict recovery. However, despite such acclaim, the country continues to grapple with political violence and civil unrest, as per international analysis. Every election since gaining independence has been marred by violence, with political party support often divided along ethnic and regional lines, fueled by patronage. Persistent issues such as youth unemployment and poverty have served as fertile ground for demonstrations.

From its independence in 1961 to the present day, elections in Sierra Leone have consistently witnessed violent protests before, during, and after the polling, often escalating in the months following due to dissatisfaction with the results and prevailing economic hardships. Recent events, including deadly civil unrest in various regions and the killing of a police officer in Makeni, heightened concerns about potential conflicts. Moreover, shifts in political alliances add to the existing tensions, necessitating preparedness for potential humanitarian crises.

Drawing lessons from past bye-elections, particularly in volatile areas like the Western Area and Northern Koinadugu, there was a pressing need for effective humanitarian support in identified hotspot regions. Concerns regarding voter identification cards, criticized for unclear photos and fake security features, added to the electoral apprehension. The main opposition party demanded the resolution of these issues and threatened peaceful protests if not addressed promptly.

To ensure the safety of Red Cross / Red Crescent (RCRC) personnel amidst rising risks of crime, violence, and road hazards, robust risk mitigation measures were implemented. Security orientation and briefings preceded all deployments, along with adherence to standard security protocols and minimum-security requirements. An election Contingency Plan was in place, and personnel underwent IFRC security training.

Additionally, operational risks were mitigated through proper equipment, identification, visibility measures, and staff training on



operational security. Personnel involved in providing first aid, pre-hospital care, psychosocial support, and re-establishing family contacts were equipped with protective gear to enhance their safety.

Has the child safeguarding risk analysis assessment been completed?

No

Implementation



Budget: CHF 52,393

Targeted Persons: 15,000

Assisted Persons: 15,000

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
Number of staff deployed	33	33
Number of first aid response volunteers deployed per county	180	180
Number of first aid response teams deployed in 6 districts	10	10
Number of days of ambulance and first aid responder deployed	21	21

Narrative description of achievements

- Procurement and prepositioning of first-aid Kits: A total of 100 first-aid kits were procured and strategically prepositioned across 10 targeted branches, ensuring readiness to respond to medical emergencies during the election period.
- Briefing Sessions on PSS and First Aid: Comprehensive briefing sessions on Psychological Support Services and First Aid were conducted in four districts during the fourth quarter of 2022. Additionally, refresher training was organized to cover the remaining districts, aligning with the joint training initiatives budgeted in Disaster Risk Reduction plans.
- Prepositioning of ambulances: Ambulance services were bolstered through the prepositioning of ambulances in each of the four regional headquarters, enhancing the capacity for rapid medical response and transportation during critical moments.
- Maintenance of emergency response ambulance services: Ten emergency response ambulance services were maintained, ensuring continuous availability and readiness to promptly attend to medical emergencies across the country.
- Fuel Supply Management: To preempt any potential disruptions, fuel supply for 15 vehicles and 10 ambulances was procured and securely stored, guaranteeing uninterrupted mobility and operational readiness throughout the election period.
- Deployment of Volunteer Care Providers: A total of 30 volunteers were deployed in each district to provide essential care and support to individuals affected or injured before, during, and after the 2023 General Elections, contributing to the alleviation of medical needs within local communities.
- Provision of Psychological Support Services: PSS was provided to individuals affected by election-related violence, offering crucial emotional and psychological support to help mitigate trauma and promote well-being.
- Establishment of Referral Pathways: Robust referral pathways for complex cases were established, ensuring seamless coordination and timely access to specialized care and support services for individuals with more complex medical needs.
- First-aid support provision: First-aid support was rendered to victims of violence throughout the election period, with trained personnel offering immediate medical assistance to those in need, contributing to the mitigation of injuries and complications.
- Ambulance Services and Pre-Hospital Care: Ambulance services and pre-hospital care were provided to individuals affected by election violence during the critical week encompassing both Presidential and Parliamentary elections. This comprehensive support spanned 14 to 20 days, covering the duration of election results announcement, and ensuring swift medical assistance during heightened periods of tension and uncertainty.
- Organized voluntary blood donation drives across six districts throughout the election period. Mobilized dedicated volunteers to assist



in various health facilities for a minimum of two weeks, providing vital support and nourishment to blood donors to aid in their recovery process.

Lessons Learnt

- Lessons Learned are essential in such an implementation. It is crucial to anticipate the potential humanitarian impact of a crisis and develop response plans early to ensure a timely and effective response. Given the opposition's ongoing boycott and refusal to acknowledge the election results, which have created persisting tensions and hindered peace and stability, it is essential to have proactive measures in place.
- Selection of volunteers to be part of election management or action teams requires a careful selection process to ensure that the selection criteria have cautious consideration, like knowledge and practice of the fundamental humanitarian principles and background checks on engagement in political activities.
- Divining that election is dynamic; there should be a contingency plan for response in case of emerging hotspot areas.
- There are still political tensions owing to the refusal of the main opposition party, APC, to accept the result and decision to boycott all governance activities. This has spurred a series of threats and hurt the economy. It is therefore recommended that livelihood response be provided for more vulnerable households nationwide.

Challenges

Engaging in humanitarian efforts during an election period presents significant challenges due to the unique circumstances and dynamics involved. The preparedness for the elections of 24 June was no exception to this.

Some of the critical challenges encountered during such periods include:

- Initially, the late approval of the DREF resulted in delayed preparedness concerning capacity building, resource allocation, and coordination. To mitigate this issue, proactive measures were taken by pre-funding most of the activities, ensuring timely execution despite the delays.
- Moreover, the geographical proximity of certain Red Cross offices to political party meeting points, such as Bo and Kono, posed a threat to the safety of staff and volunteers. Instances of roadblocks and attacks restricted access to these areas. Nonetheless, planning and thorough risk assessments were conducted to uphold the safety of personnel and volunteers, reaffirming their commitment to delivering effective responses despite the challenges faced.



Protection, Gender And Inclusion

Budget: CHF 9,665

Targeted Persons: 75,000

Assisted Persons: 75,000

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
# of volunteers trained on Minimum Protection Approach, Safe Referral, prevention and mitigation of violence, code of ethics, security policy Framework for Safer Access	330	330
# of volunteers briefed on PGI guideline based on the specific needs	330	330

Narrative description of achievements

• Volunteer and Staff Training on PGI: In response to the pressing need for humanitarian aid amidst social unrest, comprehensive training sessions were conducted by SLRCS to equip 330 volunteers and 33 supervisors with essential skills. These sessions focused on the Minimum Protection Approach, Safe Referral procedures, violence prevention and mitigation, adherence to a code of ethics, and understanding the Security Policy Framework for Safer Access. The goal was to empower participants to effectively guide affected individuals toward accessing vital protection services and direct referrals, thereby enhancing community support in times of crisis. Recognizing the heightened security risks faced by vulnerable groups during civil unrest, particularly women, children, adolescents, indigenous populations, and minority communities, special emphasis was placed on familiarizing volunteers with the minimum standards of PGI. This initiative aimed to ensure prioritized and specialized assistance for these groups across various response channels.



- **Stakeholder Mapping:** Given the imperative to provide swift assistance to victims of gender-based violence and children and adolescents, SLRCS undertook a thorough mapping exercise of relevant stakeholders and referral pathways. Both SLRCS headquarters and its branches meticulously identified key actors and established referral routes to streamline support mechanisms for potential cases within these hotspot districts. Additionally, volunteers and staff involved in election preparedness operations received comprehensive briefings on and committed to adhering to the Code of Conduct, Child Protection Policy/guidelines, and the Principle of Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA).
- **Dissemination of Peace Messages:** Anticipating the heightened tensions that were surrounding the elections, SLRCS proactively developed and disseminated peace messages through radio discussion programmes. These initiatives were strategically designed to reach nationwide audiences, fostering community dialogue and promoting peacebuilding efforts to foster harmony and coexistence amidst a challenging socio-political climate.

Lessons Learnt

- Building strong relationships with relevant organizations and authorities prior to mapping exercises can facilitate smoother collaboration and information-sharing, enhancing the effectiveness of the process.
- Employing a multi-channel approach to disseminate peace messages, including social media, community events, and printed materials, can help reach a broader audience and overcome barriers to information dissemination. Additionally, establishing partnerships with local media outlets and community leaders can enhance the reach and credibility of the messages.

Challenges

- Ensuring the widespread dissemination of peace messages through radio programmes may face obstacles such as limited access to remote or conflict-affected areas and potential censorship.
- Ensuring comprehensive training for a large number of volunteers and supervisors within a limited timeframe can be logistically challenging.



Community Engagement And Accountability

Budget: CHF 2,237

Targeted Persons: 75,000

Assisted Persons: 75,000

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
% of community feedback responded to	100	100
# of community feedback reports generated (Target: at least 2 reports)	2	3

Narrative description of achievements

- **Volunteer Orientation on Situation Monitoring Room Management:** Following the completion of the orientation sessions, volunteers successfully gained insights into the management of the situation monitoring room, encompassing feedback and rumor management. Through comprehensive training, volunteers acquired the necessary skills to effectively monitor and manage situational updates, feedback channels, and rumor control mechanisms.
- **Media engagement on the role of the Red Cross during and after elections:** Engaging with the media proved instrumental in disseminating information about the pivotal role of the Red Cross during and post-election periods. Through various media channels, including press releases, interviews, and public service announcements, SLRCS effectively communicated its commitment to supporting communities during times of uncertainty, crisis, and recovery.
- **Establishment of community feedback systems:** Community feedback systems, inclusive of rumor and perception tracking mechanisms, were established. These systems facilitated direct engagement with communities, enabling the organization to promptly address concerns, dispel rumors, and incorporate community insights into operational improvements. Feedback received was actively utilized to enhance the overall effectiveness and responsiveness of the operation.
- **Establishment of volunteer feedback systems:** Volunteer feedback systems, incorporating rumor and perception tracking components were implemented with success. Volunteers were encouraged to provide regular feedback on their experiences, challenges encountered,



and suggestions for improvement. This feedback loop enabled SLRCS to address volunteers' concerns promptly, foster a supportive environment, and optimize volunteer engagement throughout the operation.

- Online Monitoring of social media: SLRCS conducted comprehensive online monitoring of social media comments and publications related to the election period. By monitoring social media platforms, SLRCS remained attuned to public sentiments, emerging trends, and potential misinformation campaigns. This proactive approach enabled timely interventions, accurate information dissemination, and enhanced community outreach efforts.

Lessons Learnt

- Ensuring consistent understanding and application of monitoring room protocols among volunteers may be challenging due to varying levels of experience and comprehension. Offering refresher sessions periodically to reinforce key concepts and address any emerging questions or concerns is crucial. Provide practical simulations or role-playing exercises to enhance volunteers' proficiency in managing real-time situations effectively.
- Navigating diverse media landscapes and ensuring consistent messaging across various platforms and channels can be demanding. Develop a comprehensive media engagement strategy that includes clear guidelines for communication and messaging. Assign dedicated personnel to monitor media coverage and respond promptly to inquiries or misconceptions. Conduct regular training sessions for spokespersons to ensure they are well-prepared to represent SLRCS effectively in media interactions.
- Managing the volume and diversity of information on social media platforms can be overwhelming, leading to potential oversight or delayed responses to critical issues. Implementing inclusive outreach strategies that prioritize community participation and incorporate culturally sensitive communication approaches proved successful. Utilizing community leaders or trusted intermediaries to facilitate dialogue helps to build trust when working with local communities.
- Implementing advanced monitoring tools and analytics to streamline data collection and analysis processes is crucial for online monitoring and social media. It is important to establish clear protocols for responding to different types of social media interactions, including misinformation or negative sentiment. Assign dedicated staff members to monitor social media platforms in real-time and coordinate responses with relevant stakeholders to ensure timely interventions. Regularly review and update monitoring strategies to adapt to evolving online trends and challenges.

Challenges

- Ensuring consistent understanding and application of monitoring room protocols among volunteers may be challenging due to varying levels of experience and comprehension.
- Navigating diverse media landscapes and ensuring consistent messaging across various platforms and channels can be demanding.
- Managing the volume and diversity of information on social media platforms can be overwhelming, leading to potential oversight or delayed responses to critical issues.



Secretariat Services

Budget: CHF 7,402

Targeted Persons: 363

Assisted Persons: 363

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
# of coordination meetings attended	4	6
Monitoring mission	3	3

Narrative description of achievements

- During the implementation of the election preparedness DREF, the Secretariat role was predominantly managed by the Delegation, with a particular focus on security and situation monitoring. The delegation effectively coordinated efforts to gather and analyze relevant data, enabling informed decision-making and proactive response strategies.
- The delegation operation actively supported and monitored the preparedness of SLRCS, ensuring all necessary measures were completed on time ahead of the election. Through close collaboration with SLRCS senior leadership and stakeholders, potential gaps were identified and addressed, bolstering overall readiness for potential contingencies.



- Adequate support was provided during various coordination and engagement meetings with local actors. The delegation actively participated in discussions, facilitated dialogue, and provided technical assistance as needed to enhance coordination efforts and foster collaboration among stakeholders.
- During the election preparedness phase, the Freetown Country Cluster Delegation meticulously orchestrated Movement activities while continuously analyzing pertinent data and emerging developments. This encompassed vigilant monitoring of situational shifts, rigorous assessment of security threats, and the agile adjustment of response strategies as needed to uphold operational efficacy. Such dedication vividly demonstrates the Delegation's unwavering support to SLRCS and local stakeholders, as they jointly navigate the challenges inherent in the election period. Through proactive involvement, seamless coordination, and persistent analysis, the Delegation significantly bolstered overall readiness and response capabilities, thereby fortifying community resilience in the face of potential uncertainties.

Lessons Learnt

- Close collaboration between the Delegation and SLRCS leadership facilitated thorough preparedness monitoring, enabling timely identification and resolution of gaps.
- Active participation and technical support provided by the Delegation during coordination meetings with local actors fostered enhanced collaboration and alignment of efforts. Prioritize continued engagement with diverse stakeholders, leveraging technical expertise and resources to build trust, strengthen partnerships, and foster a collective approach to election preparedness and response.

Challenges

- Monitoring the preparedness of SLRCS amidst diverse operational contexts and logistical constraints presented logistical and coordination challenges.



National Society Strengthening

Budget: CHF 100,309

Targeted Persons: 363

Assisted Persons: 363

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
IEC printing on messages of peace, emblem, principles and actions of NS	1,500	1,500
Number of ERT team deployed	10	10
Number of volunteers trained in PFA	330	330
Number of volunteers trained and deployed to provide care to persons affected/injured before, during and after the 2023 General Elections	330	330
Number of ready to eat meal packs prepositioned	840	890
Number of joint field monitoring visits conducted by SLRCS/IFRC	1	1
Number of volunteers provided with food	330	330

Narrative description of achievements

- Volunteer briefing sessions: Briefing sessions were organized to inform volunteers about their roles, associated risks, and rights and responsibilities. Volunteers were provided with comprehensive guidance to ensure their understanding of the tasks ahead and their preparedness for potential challenges.
- Psychosocial support sessions: Throughout the preparedness operations, psychosocial support sessions were conducted for volunteers.



These sessions aimed to address the emotional well-being of volunteers, providing them with the necessary support to navigate the stress and uncertainties associated with their roles.

- Volunteer training sessions: Training sessions were held to equip volunteers with the skills and knowledge required to effectively support preparedness efforts. These sessions focused on enhancing volunteers' capabilities to respond to various scenarios and contribute meaningfully to the operation's objectives.
- Joint IFRC missions: Two joint missions with the IFRC were conducted before and after the elections. These missions aimed to monitor activities and assess the effectiveness of operations, with a particular focus on target locations identified for intervention.
- Communication User Group (CUG): A Communication User Group (CUG) was established for members of situation rooms, branch managers, and team leaders. This initiative facilitated seamless communication among Emergency Operations Center (EOC) members through a dedicated free phone line, enhancing coordination and information sharing.
- Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials: IEC materials outlining the role of SLRCS in elections were developed and utilized by volunteers to engage communities. These materials served as valuable resources for raising awareness and promoting understanding of the organization's role in electoral processes.
- Volunteer Deployment: A total of 330 volunteers across 10 branches were deployed to provide support to communities at risk during and after the 2023 General Elections. Volunteers were strategically deployed to ensure comprehensive coverage and timely assistance to vulnerable populations.
- Procurement and prepositioning of protective equipment: Protective equipment for volunteers and supervisors was procured and prepositioned to ensure their safety and preparedness during operations. This proactive measure aimed to mitigate risks and enhance the effectiveness of volunteer engagement.
- Prepositioning of essential supplies: Ready-to-eat food, blankets, and minimum surge material were prepositioned for the mobilized team during the elections and proclamation days. Additionally, monitoring centers were set up in each district to provide necessary provisions for the team during the election period.
- Training for emergency response team members: The SLRCS emergency response team, staff, and volunteers received training on the Fundamental Humanitarian Principles, the use and misuse of the Emblem, and emergency coordination and communication protocols. This training was instrumental in ensuring a coordinated and effective response to potential emergencies.
- Promotion of Peace and RCRC Principles: Efforts were made to promote peace, RCRC principles, and the emblem in communities through group discussions and meetings with local community leaders, authorities, and security personnel. These engagements aimed to foster understanding, cooperation, and support for humanitarian initiatives.
- Lessons Learned Workshop: A day-long workshop was conducted at the end of the operations to facilitate a comprehensive review of achievements, challenges, and key recommendations. Attendees included the Disaster Response and Early Recovery (DREF) implementing team, partners, and senior management, who collectively brainstormed valuable insights to inform future strategies and interventions.

Lessons Learnt

Conducting briefing sessions to inform volunteers of their roles and associated risks is essential for ensuring their safety and effectiveness. It would be beneficial to ensure that these sessions also include practical scenarios or simulations to better prepare volunteers for real-world situations they may encounter.

- Equipping volunteers with adequate training enhance their preparedness and ability to effectively support operations. Ensure that training materials are regularly updated to reflect evolving risks and best practices in emergency response.
- Ensuring all volunteers fully understand their roles, risks, and rights can be challenging, especially in large groups. Conduct smaller, more interactive sessions to allow for personalized attention and better engagement. Provide supplementary materials or resources for volunteers to reference afterward.
- Coordinating the deployment of volunteers to multiple locations may encounter logistical challenges such as transportation and accommodation. Develop detailed deployment plans with clear timelines and logistical arrangements. Establish contingency measures to address unexpected disruptions or delays in deployment.
- Extracting actionable insights from the lessons learned workshop may be hindered by limited participation or inadequate documentation. Encourage active participation from all stakeholders and allocate sufficient time for discussions. Designate a dedicated individual or team to document key findings and recommendations for future reference and implementation.

Challenges

- N/A



Contact Information

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[Click here for reference](#)



DREF Operation

Selected Parameters			
Reporting Timeframe	2023-2024/5	Operation	MDRSL015
Budget Timeframe	2023/6-9	Budget	APPROVED

FINAL FINANCIAL REPORT

Prepared on 03/Sep/2024

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

MDRSL015 - Sierra Leone - Election Preparedness

Operating Timeframe: 08 Jun 2023 to 30 Sep 2023

I. Summary

Opening Balance	0
Funds & Other Income	172,004
DREF Response Pillar	172,004
Expenditure	-165,646
Closing Balance	6,358

II. Expenditure by planned operations / enabling approaches

Description	Budget	Expenditure	Variance
PO01 - Shelter and Basic Household Items		-5,942	5,942
PO02 - Livelihoods			0
PO03 - Multi-purpose Cash			0
PO04 - Health	52,393	170,754	-118,362
PO05 - Water, Sanitation & Hygiene			0
PO06 - Protection, Gender and Inclusion	9,665		9,665
PO07 - Education			0
PO08 - Migration			0
PO09 - Risk Reduction, Climate Adaptation and Recovery	61,344		61,344
PO10 - Community Engagement and Accountability	2,237		2,237
PO11 - Environmental Sustainability			0
Planned Operations Total	125,638	164,812	-39,174
EA01 - Coordination and Partnerships		834	-834
EA02 - Secretariat Services	7,402		7,402
EA03 - National Society Strengthening	38,965		38,965
Enabling Approaches Total	46,366	834	45,533
Grand Total	172,004	165,646	6,358

DREF Operation

Selected Parameters			
Reporting Timeframe	2023-2024/5	Operation	MDRSL015
Budget Timeframe	2023/6-9	Budget	APPROVED

FINAL FINANCIAL REPORT

Prepared on 03/Sep/2024

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MDRSL015 - Sierra Leone - Election Preparedness

Operating Timeframe: 08 Jun 2023 to 30 Sep 2023

III. Expenditure by budget category & group

Description	Budget	Expenditure	Variance
Relief items, Construction, Supplies	49,650		49,650
Clothing & Textiles	20,150		20,150
Food	2,100		2,100
Medical & First Aid	22,100		22,100
Teaching Materials	5,300		5,300
Logistics, Transport & Storage	27,095		27,095
Transport & Vehicles Costs	27,095		27,095
Personnel	34,145		34,145
National Staff	1,200		1,200
National Society Staff	5,000		5,000
Volunteers	27,945		27,945
Consultants & Professional Fees	140		140
Consultants	140		140
Workshops & Training	40,100		40,100
Workshops & Training	40,100		40,100
General Expenditure	10,377	832	9,545
Information & Public Relations	3,750		3,750
Financial Charges	2,000	832	1,168
Other General Expenses	4,627		4,627
Contributions & Transfers		154,705	-154,705
Cash Transfers National Societies		154,705	-154,705
Indirect Costs	10,498	10,110	388
Programme & Services Support Recover	10,498	10,110	388
Grand Total	172,004	165,646	6,358