

IDRL Emergency Fact Sheet, Equatorial Guinea



February 2023 Marburg Virus Response

Version 2, 22 February 2023

This document is intended to provide key information to the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement network and Operations relating to the regulatory and policy environment applying to Equatorial Guinea in response to the Marburg Virus Outbreak.

Institutional and policy framework

- The governmental authority responsible for the main disaster risk management law in Equatorial Guinea is [Law No 4/2010 – Law on Prevention and Civil Protection of Equatorial Guinea](#) (the “DRM Law”). The DRM Law is the only legal instrument currently in place and establishes a general framework for disaster management in Equatorial Guinea. The DRM Law states that the Government is the superior body for the direction and coordination of civil protection and may delegate/administer the functions related to Civil Protection.

The public authorities which the Government may delegate/administer its functions related to Civil Protection include:

The National Committee of Emergencies:

- This Committee is led by the Ministry of Interior and Local Government and is comprised of members of various Ministries, including the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare; and

The Technical Committee of Emergencies, which is comprised of technical representatives of the Ministries and Members of the National Committee of Emergencies, led by the General Director of Civil protection.

- In terms of Article 9.9 and 9.10 of the DRM Law, **reference is made to the activities of the Red Cross and other humanitarian agencies in respect to facilities for international response agencies** but provides that such activities are to be regulated separately by the Ministry of Interior through other arrangements or agreements.
- [The National Health development Plan 2021-2025](#) (NHDP) provides for strategies to combat health emergencies and manage disasters. Importantly, it establishes subprograms for the (1) Management of epidemics, according to the provisions of the International Health regulations (IHR) and (2) Disaster management, in accordance with the provisions of the IHR. Notably, the strategic actions identified to carry out these subprograms include:
 - (i) development of epidemiological multi-risk and health disaster mapping,
 - (ii) development and implementation of response simulation plans, and
 - (iii) advocacy for resource mobilization for the funding of the Emergency and Disaster Plan.
- **As a suggested focal point**, according to the [latest updates on the Marburg Virus Disease response in Equatorial Guinea](#), the most applicable focal point for coordinating international assistance is the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare.

State of Emergency & Request of Humanitarian Aid and Assistance

- **From the research conducted, there has not been a State of Emergency** declared yet. Importantly, on the [13th of February 2023, WHO reported that the Government of Equatorial Guinea confirmed its first-ever outbreak of the Marburg Virus Disease](#). WHO stated that further investigations are ongoing, Advance Teams have been deployed in the affected districts to trace contacts, isolate and provide medical care to people showing symptoms of the disease. In addition, efforts are underway to rapidly mount emergency response, with WHO deploying health emergency experts in epidemiology, case management, infection prevention, laboratory and risk communication to support the national response efforts and secure community collaboration in the outbreak control.
- **In addition, on the 14th of February 2023, the [Africa CDC uploaded a Press Release on the Marburg Virus Disease in Equatorial Guinea](#)**. According to the report, Africa CDC has deployed a team of experts in Equatorial Guinea to support response efforts in the country. The Africa CDC has also engaged the ministry of health and social welfare of Equatorial Guinea and neighbouring countries (Gabon and Cameroon) to support the cross-border context of the outbreak, and guide regional surveillance strategies in containing the outbreak
- **As at 8th February, the [Ministry of Health and Social Welfare has implemented the protocol established at the national level for the management health emergencies](#)**
 - **A multidisciplinary crisis committee chaired by the Minister of Health and Social Welfare has been established**
 - **The crisis committee is composed of executive and technical staff of the Ministry and WHO experts in country**
 - **An emergency and immediate response plan has been developed**
 - **Movement between affected districts has been limited and local epidemiological surveillance services activated**
- **On 21 February the [Equatorial Guinea Red Cross \(EGRC\) met with the Minister of Health and Social Welfare to extend support to the government and the Minister noted that there would be increased coordination with the NS.](#)**

Potential issues & recommendations:

No official list of needs seems to have been issued by the Government yet. Therefore, it is unclear how the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare is coordinating with the National Committee on Emergencies, nor how these bodies are coordinating offers from international donors. Importantly, uncoordinated efforts may lead to the receipt of unsolicited goods (unsolicited bilateral donations or UBD).

We recommend IFRC to offer technical support to the Government to prepare the List of Needs, based on IDRL best practices.

Special IDRL Facilities for eligible international humanitarian actors:

By virtue of the International Conventions that Equatorial Guinea is party too, the following **legal facilities may be invoked:**

- **Expedited management of customs, immigration services and clearance of aircrafts containing humanitarian assistance in response to disasters** (Chicago Convention)

In any case, provided that these facilities do exist (under the law or special announcements), THE INFORMATION IS NOT READILY AVAILABLE.

We recommend IFRC to reach out to the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare to offer technical assistance to prepare an IDRL Decree of Emergency to clearly plan for the granting of IDRL facilities.

<p>Entry of humanitarian personnel</p>	<p>From the research conducted, foreigners intending to enter Equatorial Guinea will require a VISA. Normal Visa requirements would apply, which includes, a valid passport, passport photos, travel itinerary, proof of accommodation etc. in addition, normal visa processing times is between 2-15 days.</p> <p>Importantly, there are no specific provisions included in the relevant law regarding visa types that might apply to international assisting actors, such as a humanitarian visa or diplomatic visa.</p>
<p>Registration of International Assisting Actors</p>	<p>The law does not appear to provide expedited procedures for international actors to register in Equatorial Guinea and therefore it appears that the normal rules and procedures would apply.</p> <p>We recommend IFRC to request the Ministry of Health to liaise with the National Committee for Emergencies with respect to granting special facilities to support entry of assistance should it be requested. (e.g. through the adoption of an IDRL Emergency Decree).</p>
<p>Customs arrangements for specialized goods and equipment</p>	<p>With respect to the 2021 Budget Law of Equatorial Guinea, provision is made for tax deductions for charitable contributions. In this respect, Charitable contributions are deductible, given they are for philanthropic, sport, educative, scientific, social, or family purposes and do not exceed 0.5% of the turnover for the fiscal year of the company.</p> <p>Although not directly related to international disaster assistance, this provision may be of relevance to international assisting actors who enjoy privileges and immunities under Equatorial Guinea law.</p>
<p>No clear provisions and exemptions explicitly provided for:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Recognition of professional qualifications ○ Freedom of movement of international assisting actors during a disaster response ○ Use of Cash in response operations ○ Importation of telecommunication equipment ○ Flights

For further information on the IDRL Emergency Fact Sheet, please contact:

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