

IDRL & Auxiliary Role Advocacy Fact Sheet, Cape Verde

27 August 2025 Tropical Storm Erin Response

This document is intended to provide: (i) key information to humanitarian actors (including the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement network and Operations) relating to the regulatory and policy environment applying to the entry of incoming disaster relief (IDRL) in Cape Verde to respond to Tropical Storm Erin that has impacted various islands (most specifically Sao Vicente and Santo Antao) in Cape Verde, between 11 – 22 August 2025; (ii) advocacy messages around the special facilities to be requested to the Cape Verde authorities to enable humanitarian access; and (iii) advocacy messages around the auxiliary role of the Cape Verde Red Cross.

I. IDRL:

Institutional and Policy Framework

- The governmental authority responsible for Disaster Risk management (DRM) in Cape Verde is the **National Civil Protection Council (CNPC)**. Whose composition and powers are determined by [Law No.12/VII/2012](#) of 7 March (the DRM Law).
 - The CNPC is the national coordination body for civil protection in Cape Verde. The CNPC leads preparedness and response operations, coordinates resources, evacuations, and logistical support, and works closely with municipal committees and the **Cape Verde Red Cross (CVCV)** in disaster situations.
 - Importantly, the CNPC is responsible for, amongst others;
 - Ensuring the implementation of the DRM Law in all administrative services (Article 36(2)(a) of the DRM Law);
 - **Assessing the agreements or conventions on international cooperation** in the field of civil protection (Article 36(2)(c) of the DRM Law);
 - Assess the scope of national and/or municipal emergency plans (Article 36(2)(d) of the DRM Law);
 - **Adopt mechanisms for institutional collaboration between all bodies** and services with responsibilities in the field of civil protection (Article 36(2)(e) of the DRM Law);
 - **Assess and approve the forms of external cooperation** that the bodies and structures of the civil protection system develop within the scope of their specific duties and competencies (Article 36(2)(j) of the DRM Law);
 - Enable the rapid and efficient mobilization of essential organizations and personnel and the available resources that allow the coordinated conduct of the actions to be carried out (Article 36(3)(b) of the DRM Law);
 - Submit **requests to the Government for assistance from other countries and international organisations**, through competent bodies (Article 36(3)(c) of the DRM Law);

- Lastly, the CNPC is empowered by Article 36(4) of the DRM Law to **declare a state of emergency in the event of a disaster**.
- The CNPC is made up of delegates of the ministries responsible for the sectors of defence, justice, environment, economy, agriculture and forests, public works, transport, communication, social security, health and scientific research, as well as the **Cape Verde Red Cross (CVCV)**. (Article 37(1)(a) and (c) of the DRM Law).
- The CVCV was established by [Law No. 2/75](#), contained in Official Gazette No.3 in 1975. The statutes of the CVCV were formally approved in 1984 through [Law No. 108/84](#). Since then, the CVCV has been recognized as an **auxiliary entity of public authorities**, in the humanitarian field, in particular, military and health services. Importantly, the CVCV carries out, in cooperation with other agents and in accordance with its own statute, civil protection functions in the areas of intervention, support, relief and health and social assistance (Article 41(2) of the DRM law). Apart from the information above and from the research conducted, **there are no specific legal facilities granted to the CVCV**.
- [Law No. 51/2020](#) also regulates the declaration of the State of Emergency, not directly for the declaration of a public disaster, though it was used in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic and is relevant to disaster response. For public disasters specifically, the relevant law remains the DRM Law mentioned above.
- The [National Emergency Fund](#) (NEF) of Cape Verde, established under Decree-[Law No. 59/2018](#), is an autonomous fund, with administrative and financial autonomy, operating under the government department responsible for Finance. The NEF is designed to provide support and resources for preparedness, response and recovery efforts during national emergencies and disasters.
- The website for the Ministry of Health for Cape Verde may be accessed [here](#).
- In terms of regional cooperation, Cape Verde is a member State of the [Economic Community of West African States](#) (ECOWAS), which facilitates regional trade and economic cooperation. Importantly, Cape Verde is included in the ECOWAS [Cross-Border Cooperation Support Programme 2023-2027](#), which aims to enhance collaboration among member states and focuses on identifying and executing development projects that address emerging needs.
- **As a focal point**, Article 36(3)(c) of the DRM Law provides that the CNPC is responsible for, among others, **submitting requests to the Government for assistance from other countries and international organisations, through competent bodies**.
- Importantly, Article 49 of the DRM Law addresses **external assistance**, and specifically provides that:
 - Unless otherwise provided by an international treaty or convention, the request for and granting of external assistance is the responsibility of the Government;
 - Products and equipment that constitute external assistance, requested or granted, are exempt from any duties or taxes, upon their import or export, and priority must be given to their customs clearance; and
 - Formalities for crossing borders by persons engaged in civil protection missions shall be reduced to the bare minimum.

- Cape Verde is a party to the [Revised Kyoto Convention](#) on customs procedures. It requires parties to **simplify and expedite the processing of relief consignments**. Cape Verde is also party to the [Chicago Convention](#) which lays out standards and recommended best practices for the simplification and harmonization of border clearance formalities, particularly for air cargo.
- Cape Verde is a party to the [African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child](#) (ACRWC), which provides that states take all appropriate measures to ensure that children who have been internally displaced, including by disasters, receive appropriate humanitarian assistance.
- Importantly, Cape Verde is **not** a party to the [African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa](#) (Kampala Convention), which provides in article 5(7) that state parties are obligated to facilitate the coordination of international relief and allow rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian relief to internally displaced persons.
- From the research conducted, IFRC **does not** have a **Legal Status Agreement (LSA)** in Cape Verde.

State of Emergency & Request of Humanitarian Aid and Assistance

- From the research conducted, **on 14th August 2025, the Government of Cape Verde declared a [State of Emergency on the islands of São Vicente and Santo Antão](#)**, and 2 days of national mourning. The CNPC is coordinating evacuations, shelter, and relief operations. Importantly, on 13 August 2025, the CVCV launched the national campaign [#ReconstruirComEsperança](#) to support the affected population. The CVCV has also been involved in response activities, including the distribution of emergency kits, drinking water, and clothing, as well as providing psychosocial support.
- From the research conducted, it is unclear whether the NEF has dedicated funding directly for response and recovery activities. Moreover, it is also not documented how and in what manner the CNPC is coordinating its response activities with the CVCV.

➤ **Potential issues & recommendations:**

- *From the research conducted, NO OFFICIAL LIST OF NEEDS* has been issued by the Government. Therefore, it is unclear how the CNPC is 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 Cape Verde is a party to, the following **legal facilities may be invoked**:
 - **Expedited customs clearance or exemption** for the importation of goods for relief assistance ([Kyoto Convention](#)); and
 - **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 that IFRC reach out to the CNPC to offer technical assistance to prepare an IDRL Decree of Emergency to clearly plan for the granting of IDRL facilities.**

Entry of humanitarian personnel

- Cape Verde's main legal document regulating immigration is [Law No. 66/VIII/2014](#), as amended by [Decree-Law No. 2/2015](#) and [Law No. 19/IX/2017](#), collectively referred to as the [Regime of Entry, Residence, and Exit of Foreigners \(REJ\)](#). This law (REJ) establishes the legal requirements for entry, residence and exit of non-nationals in Cape Verde. While this law includes provisions related to irregular migration and protections for trafficking victims, it does **not specify any special entry regime exclusively for humanitarian personnel**.
- Therefore, under the REJ and the procedures applicable to all foreign nationals, foreigners may enter using **short-stay, temporary, or residence visas**, submitted via embassies or consulates with the required documents. Processing generally takes **5–15 working days**, and all visitors must comply with local laws and register with authorities as required.
- Importantly, Article 49(3) of the DRM Law does provide that Formalities for crossing borders by persons engaged in civil protection missions shall be reduced to the bare minimum. Therefore, according to Article 49(3), it is reasonable to assume that coordinating with the CNPC before deployment may support the entry of humanitarian personnel and simplify visa processing.

Registration of International Assisting Actors

- The law does not appear to provide expedited procedures for international actors to register in Cape Verde, and therefore, it appears that the normal rules and procedures would apply. Recalling that Article 49(3) of the DRM Law does provide that, formalities for crossing borders by persons engaged in civil protection missions shall be reduced to the bare minimum. Therefore, according to Article 49(3), it is reasonable to assume that coordinating with the CNPC before deployment may support the registration of international assisting actors.

Recognition of professional qualifications

- The law does not appear to establish specific procedures for the recognition of foreign professional qualifications of international disaster assistance personnel, and no other relevant laws could be located for this review. Recalling that Article 49(3) of the DRM Law does provide that Formalities for crossing borders by persons engaged in civil protection missions shall be reduced to the bare minimum. Therefore, according to Article 49(3), it is reasonable to assume that coordinating with the CNPC before deployment may support and/or simplify the procedures required for the recognition of professional qualifications.

Freedom of movement of international assisting actors during a disaster response

- There do not appear to be any provisions that explicitly facilitate the free movement and access of international assisting actors in Cape Verde. Recalling that Article 49(3) of the DRM Law does provide that Formalities for crossing borders by persons engaged in civil protection missions shall be reduced to the bare minimum. Therefore, according to Article 49(3), it is reasonable to assume that coordinating with the CNPC before deployment may support and/or guarantee the freedom of movement of international assisting actors.

Customs arrangements for specialized goods and equipment

- The DRM Law provides in Article 49(2) that *products and equipment that constitute external assistance, requested or granted, are exempt from any duties or taxes, upon their import or export, and priority must be given to their customs clearance*. Therefore, **Customs exemptions are possible for humanitarian goods**; however, there is no codified fast-track procedure or specifications as to the necessary documentation ([Bill of landing/airway bill, commercial invoice, packing list, and deed of donation](#)) required to identify products and equipment. Consequently, pre-clearance and prior coordination with the CNPC is recommended.
- The general law applicable to customs and tax in Cape Verde is [the Draft Customs Code](#), which outlines the general framework for the importation and taxation of goods. The Draft Customs Code establishes the customs territory, customs duties, and applicable taxes on goods entering or leaving the country. It also provides for various customs regimes, including preferential duties and maximum duties, depending on the origin and nature of the goods. Importantly, the **Draft Customs Code does not provide for any arrangements for specialised goods and equipment concerning disasters**.

Cash Donations

- There does not appear to be any information available on cash donations.

Importation of telecommunication equipment

- The relevant authority for the importation of telecommunication equipment in **Cape Verde** is the [Agência Nacional das Comunicações](#) (National Communications Agency). The National Communication Agency is an [independent national regulator overseeing the communications sector](#), including telecommunications, postal services, and electronic communications. From the research conducted, **no simplified procedures** (specifically) for the importation of telecommunications exist. However, Article 49(2) of the DRM Law does provide that *equipment that constitutes external assistance, requested or granted, is exempt from any duties or taxes, upon their import or export, and priority must be given to their customs clearance*. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that coordinating with the CNPC or the National Communications Agency may expedite the importation/exportation of telecommunication equipment.

Flights

- The applicable law to civil aviation in Cape Verde is [Law No. 31/ 2009](#), which establishes the [Agência de Aviação Civil](#) (AAC), also known as the Civil Aviation Agency. From the research conducted, there are no provisions within the law or AAC website that provide simplified customs and landing procedures for aeroplanes carrying humanitarian assistance.
- Recalling that Cape Verde is a party to the [Chicago Convention](#), which provides procedural guidance for the clearance of aircrafts containing humanitarian assistance in response to a disaster. Importantly, both Article 49(2) and (3) of the DRM Law make provision for exemptions from formalities for external assistance in the event of a disaster. Therefore, it may be assumed that coordinating with the CNPC or the AAC may expedite the clearance of aeroplanes carrying humanitarian assistance.



Support available from IFRC

IFRC has a dedicated Disaster Law Team with recognized expertise to advocate for the granting of special legal facilities that need to be quickly adopted. These special legal facilities may include, but are not limited to;

- Exemptions of visas requirements;
- Exemption from restrictions on transferring cash;
- Speedy registration of vehicles;
- Priority access for vehicles to cross borders;
- Simplified and expedited customs clearance;
- Exemption from customs duty, tariffs or fees;
- Authorisation to import and use specialised goods and equipment; and
- Priority landing of airplanes carrying humanitarian cargo.

To request assistance, please contact Stella Ngugi: stella.ngugi@ifrc.org