

INFORMATION BULLETIN



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Fédération internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

ARGENTINA: SOCIAL UNREST

4 January 2002

Information Bulletin N° 2

This bulletin is for information only. The International Federation is not making a public funding proposal or requesting other assistance from donors at this time. The Argentinean Red Cross, with Federation support, is privately contacting some donors about the first steps of an emergency plan of action.

The Situation

Severe social unrest persists in Argentina as the economic crisis continues into the new year. New President Eduardo Duhalde - the fifth in a matter of weeks - was sworn in on Wednesday 2 January 2002. His term is due to last until December 2003. His first task was to try to form a cross-party cabinet to deliver a "programme of national salvation". Meanwhile, Argentines continued to hold protests and government buildings remain under heavy guard. The demonstrations, however, are not as big. The prospect of a devaluation of the peso has added to the general unease.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action

Argentinean Red Cross

The Argentinean Red Cross (ARC) is in permanent contact with its branches and is receiving information on all actions initiated. During the biggest protests in Buenos Aires the ARC has had teams of volunteers from three branches of the Federal Capital of Buenos Aires giving first aid to those injured. In the headquarters volunteers are on 24-hour alert. The ARC has prepared a plan of action with two main objectives in case of new outbreaks of violence: to improve local response capacity and to protect elderly people.

These objectives will be achieved through the following activities:

- Training in first aid and relief in conflicts;
- Organization of rapid response units at local and regional level;
- Relief equipment for the headquarters and branches;
- Reinforcing activities and projects already in place for elderly people at the local level;
- Distributing hygiene kits for the basic care of elderly people in old people's homes and centres;
- Implementing a programme in 20 branches to reinforce the activities of community organisations for elderly people.

The ARC will refine its response in line with emerging government policies and prevailing social and economic conditions. The plan of action includes a third medium to long term objective to be defined during this time. But the ARC, with International Federation support, is already contacting some donors for the funding of activities linked to the short term objectives.

The ARC is currently in touch with CARITAS, UNDP and other organisations to analyse the situation and coordinate response efforts. The branches in the communities of Corrientes, (Chaco region) Resistencia, Santa Fé, Concordia and Concepción are preparing for service delivery. The same is happening in the communities of Morón, Lomas de Zamora, Santos Lugares, San Fernando, Vicente López and Don Torcuato in the Federal Capital of Buenos Aires.

Buenos Aires Regional Delegation

The Regional Delegation for South America, based in Buenos Aires, is in contact with the ARC providing technical support, with stress in the planning area. The delegation has also played an inter-institutional role by co-ordinating communication between the ARC, the ICRC, CARITAS and UNDP. Delegation staff are available on a 24-hour basis should the situation deteriorate.

For a full description of the National Society profile, see www.ifrc.org

For further details please contact :

- *The Argentinean Red Cross in Buenos Aires ; Phone 5411 4952-7200; Fax 5411 4952-7715 ext. 222; email; info@cuzroja.org.ar or cuzrojaf@infovia.com.ar*
- *Luis Luna, Phone 41 22 730 4274; Fax 41 22 733 0395; email luna@ifrc.org*

All International Federation Operations seek to adhere to the Code of Conduct and are committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (SPHERE Project) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

For support to or for further information concerning Federation operations in this or other countries, please access the Federation website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

For longer-term programmes, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal.

Peter Rees-Gildea
Head, a.i.
Relationship Management Department

Santiago Gil
Head
Americas Department