

# 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 - SANTA FE PROVINCE : 30 April 2003*** ***FLOODS***

*Information Bulletin N° 01/03*

This Information Bulletin is being issued based on the needs described below. An application for DREF funding is currently being processed. Depending on results of assessments, the launch of an international appeal may be considered.

### ***The Situation***

Heavy rains which started in mid-April caused the overflow of the Salado river on 28 April, resulting in severe flooding and a state of emergency has been declared in 35 zones (localidades) in Santa Fé province. A third of the province of Santa Fé, with a population of 3 million inhabitants, has been submerged by water. The capital city, Santa Fé, is particularly badly hit. Access to the province, including via bridges, has been cut off and due to the bad weather conditions, helicopters are not able to fly. Electricity has been cut off in the capital and the northern and southern areas of the city are totally flooded.

Around 150,000 inhabitants of towns close to the river are in danger and it is estimated that 50,000 people have been evacuated; the number is expected to increase to at least 80,000 (16% of Santa Fe's population) by the end of the day, 30 April, according to the Civil Defence. Some 40 shelters have been set up for those whose homes are flooded and the main children's hospital "Orlando Alassia" has been affected and patients evacuated. To date, three casualties (two children, one adult) have been reported.

Many people are suffering from the flooding but are unwilling to leave houses and possessions because of the fear of looting. The Salado river is rising at a rate of two centimetres per hour, according to the Civil Defence, and yesterday it had reached a depth of 6.25 metres. It is expected that the Salado river will continue to rise and flood waters may spill over to other provinces. A similar situation is occurring in the province of Entre Rios where river waters have also overflowed.

The worst hit areas are the capital city and the departments of Las Colonias, San Cristobal, San Justo and San Javier where almost all inhabitants have been evacuated. The main cities struck by the flooding, in addition to Santa Fé, are

as follows: Recreo, Montevera, San Cristóbal, Candiotti, Nelson, Llambi, Campbell, Iriondo, Manuchi, Esperanza, Progreso, Santo Domingo and Emilia.

## ***Red Cross/Red Crescent Action***

The Argentine Red Cross (ARC) sent 10 tonnes of food yesterday, 29 April from Buenos Aires to Santa Fé province. In a second relief delivery today, 30 April, two boats, clothes and first aid kits from the Red Cross branches of Villa Dominico and Vicente Lopez, were forwarded.

A regional intervention team (RIT) member from the ARC is managing the ARC operation and an initial damage and needs assessment has been carried out in Santa Fé province. According to the assessment, there are urgent needs for relief goods including food and warm clothing for children and adults.

In response to the emergency, six teams composed of specialized Red Cross personnel (life-savers and first-aid experts) and 70 volunteers have been mobilized. They have rescued some 1,000 people many of whom were stranded on roofs of houses in flooded areas, and who have been assisted for cases of hypothermia, dehydration and exhaustion. Rescue and evacuation efforts are being coordinated with the Civil Defence and local authorities. The ARC has also taken part in the evacuation of the children's hospital, has carried out family tracing and dissemination of basic evacuation measures through the local media and has provided psychological support. Nurses and personnel from the Argentine Red Cross are currently working in fifteen shelters in Santa Fé province. The Red Cross branch of Santa Fé has also been obliged to evacuate its premises. During the night of 29 April, the branch had to suspend its rescue activities given adverse weather conditions.

The ARC and the Federation Secretariat are ensuring coordination with organizations such as the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO) in Argentina and with PNS including the German Red Cross and the Spanish Red Cross. The NGO Solidarity Net has made a national appeal encouraging the Argentine population to provide support with clothing and food. These contributions will be sent to the ARC for distribution.

The Federation's regional delegation in Lima and the sub regional office in Buenos Aires are monitoring the situation and are in constant communication with the ARC. The regional delegation is liaising with the Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU). A disaster management delegate from PADRU will travel today, 30 April, to Argentina, to carry out a more detailed assessment of damage and needs in collaboration with the Argentine Red Cross, in particular, trained RITs members. An application for DREF funding has been drawn up and submitted to the Federation Secretariat. Depending on the results of the assessment and the needs arising from the flooding, the launch of an international appeal will be considered.

For a full description of the National Society profile, see [www.ifrc.org](http://www.ifrc.org)

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*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.*

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