

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: FLOODS

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The Federation's mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity. It is the world's largest humanitarian organization and its millions of volunteers are active in over 181 countries.

In Brief

Period covered by this update: 29 April - 16 July 2006

History of this Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF)-funded operation:

- CHF 100,000 (USD 78,417 or EUR 63,517) was allocated from the Federation's DREF fund to respond to the needs of this operations.

The International Federation undertakes activities that are aligned with its Global Agenda, which sets out four broad goals to meet the Federation's mission to "improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity".

Global Agenda Goals:

- Reduce the numbers of deaths, injuries and impact from disaster.
- Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.
- Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.
- Reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promote respect for diversity and human dignity.

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All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct](#) for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and non-governmental Organizations (INGO's) in disaster relief and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for a full description of the national society profile, please access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

Background and Current Situation

Due to intense rainfall in the north-west of Argentina in March 2006, rivers burst their banks, landslides affected homes near these riverbanks and pedestrian overpasses and bridges collapsed in the north and east of the province of Salta (Departments of San Martín and Rivadavia). This situation made it impossible to travel on most roads and complicated access to a large number of communities. The most affected regions are on the banks of the Pilcomayo, Bermejo, Seco and Tartagal rivers and are in many cases isolated areas or aboriginal communities such as those of the Guaraníes, Wichis and Matacos. More than 1,500 persons were evacuated and around 1,000 families were affected.

The affected population in general presented a high level of vulnerability previous to the emergency due to numerous factors, such as high unemployment rates, a low level of education, and a lack of economic resources. According to information provided by the Argentine Red Cross (ARC), some cities had incidents of isolated looting.



View of the Tartagal River, homes partially destroyed in its banks.

In response to this disaster a provincial Crisis Committee was put together in Salta, which coordinated the distribution of humanitarian aid and the evacuation of families living in homes in danger of collapsing. Many of the relief items distributed were contributed by the nation's Social Development Ministry and organizations such as Caritas and Scouts of Argentina in addition to the Argentine Red Cross. In many instances it was necessary to utilize logistics resources of the Argentine Army and Police in order to gain aerial access to isolated communities to deploy personnel and provide health care.

Agreements were signed between the Provincial Housing Institute and the municipalities of Tartagal, General Mosconi and Salvador Mazza for the construction of 367 homes. For safety reasons, the banks of the Tartagal river must remain unoccupied at both sides some one hundred metres inland.

At the beginning of May, provincial and municipal authorities in Salta decided to relocate all evacuees to homes - private and rented - and to hotels. This measure resulted in the dismantling of temporary shelters in which people had previously been housed and it made the identification and survey of beneficiaries quite complex. In order to overcome this situation, the Argentine Red Cross decided to reinforce alliances with the Neighbourhood Centres to ensure appropriate identification of beneficiaries.



The railway bridge over Tartagal River was the only bridge left standing

The Provincial Government signed nine agreements with the National Government for the initiation of the following projects:

- Water studies
- Definitive provision of drinking water
- Construction of defence mechanisms/systems against water erosion
- Urban infrastructure
- Erosion control and stabilization of riverbeds
- Relocation of homes
- Rain drainage

Construction of a 200 metre-long bridge over the Río Seco has started, which is expected to be ready before the next rainy season begins in the north-west of Argentina, towards the end of the year.

Red Cross Action

The Argentine Red Cross actively participated in the Crisis Committee that was established for the emergency.

According to ARC reports, activities have been carried out according to the Plan of Action that was financed with Federation DREF funds, ensuring the coordination of all activities with the government and other institutions. To that end, the ARC reached agreements for the exchange of information with:

- The Rotary Club
- The Tourism Chamber
- Caritas Tartagal
- Union of Presidents of Community Centres
- La Purísima Parish (exchange of information and validation of beneficiaries)



ARC volunteers distributing hygiene and cleaning kits in the Arturo Illia neighbourhood.

Humanitarian Relief

Specific Objective 1: To provide humanitarian relief in the form of personal hygiene kits and cleaning kits to 300 families, as well as 20,000 diapers to the evacuated families that have children less than two years of age.

The dismantling of the shelters affected distribution of relief items; since the evacuated families were relocated, it was necessary to re-identify the beneficiaries. This was carried out during the training sessions carried out at the Centros Vecinales (see below) based on individual needs and vulnerability to future emergencies. Following this process, a total of 300 families from 17 affected communities in the Province of Salta, Department of San Martín, city of Tartagal received hygiene kits and cleaning kits, as below:

Community	Quantity
La Loma	24
Santa Rita	10
El Carmen	7
Eva Peron	9
Tomas Sanchez	10
Tapiete	25
Tomas Ryan	21
San Silvestre	21
Lugones	10
El Milagro	26
Arturo Illia	14
Norte Grande	14
San Roque	8
Belen	48
Saavedra	21
Prov. Unidas	13
Güemes	19
TOTAL	300

Hygiene kits contained the following:

Bath soap	5 units, 250 gams each
Personal hygiene sponge	1 unit
Tooth brush	1 unit
Tooth paste	2 units, 145 grams each
Sanitary napkins	48 units
Toilet paper	3 rolls
Shampoo	2 litres
Small towels	5 units
Large towels	2 units
Disposable razors	5 units

Cleaning kits contained the following items:

Broom	1 unit
Mop	1 unit
Scrubbing brush	1 unit
Concentrated detergent	5 litres
Garbage bags	50 units
Rubber Gloves	1 pair
Concentrated Chlorine	1 litre
Floor rags	2 units
10-12 litre bucket	1 unit
Sponge	1 unit
Kitchen towel	1 unit
White soap	5 units, 250 grams each

It was possible to purchase more relief items than originally planned with DREF funding due to negotiation of prices with providers. Based on outstanding needs identified by ARC, the decision was taken to purchase and distribute 1,966 bed sheet kits and 1,966 blankets, which were distributed as follows: 477 kits containing three single bed sheets, three double bed sheets, one single blanket and one double blanket and 55 kits containing one double bed sheet and one double blanket. Beneficiaries were located in the following communities within the City of Tartagal in the Department of San Martín, Province of Salta.

Community	Kit 1	Kit 2	Total
San Silvestre	11	2	13
Villa Güemes	12	2	14
Villa Belgrano	5	0	5
Santa Rita	35	4	39
Norte Grande	38	12	50
Varios 2	15	4	19
Villa Saavedra	16	2	18
La Loma	6	1	7
San Martin	5	0	5
Varios 1	12	0	12
Belen	38	9	47
Eva Peron	9	4	11

Tapiete	25	2	27
El Carmen	5	1	6
Tomas Ryan	18	4	22
Prov. Unidas	14	3	17
Güemes	14	3	17
Norte Grande	12	0	12
San Roque	10	0	10
Santa Rita	20	0	20
Cuña Muerta	15	0	15
Foster home and senior citizen's home	40	0	40
Comunidad La Loma	25	0	25
El Milagro	10	0	10
San Silvestre	23	0	23
Belen, San Francisco Villa Saavedra	14	0	14
San Silvestre San Juan	18	0	18
Arturo Illia	12	2	16
TOTAL	477	55	532

The 20,000 diapers were grouped into 60 packages of small diapers, 60 packages of medium diapers and 60 packages of large diapers, each containing 111 diapers. These packages also contained cleaning products donated by Clorox (see next paragraph) and they were distributed in Tartagal to families with children under two years of age, in line with the Plan of Action.

Clorox Argentina S.A., a local company, donated a significant quantity of cleaning products, which were put into kits and distributed by ARC personnel. Private in kind donations and donations from other companies were also received and distributed by ARC personnel, in coordination with Caritas, Tartagal chapter, in accordance with cooperation and coordination agreements signed earlier.

As a result of the different activities carried out in the city of Tartagal, 35 local volunteers were mobilized and inducted, 12 of which actively participated in distribution activities related to this operation.

Health and Psychosocial Support

Specific Objective 1: To improve the health conditions of 500 people staying in temporary shelters through the promotion of preventative measures related to water and sanitation, HIV/AIDS and dengue.

The ARC set out, as stated in the Plan of Action, to improve the health conditions of 500 persons staying in shelters. Since the shelters were dismantled and beneficiaries were located to homes and hotels, other methods had to be used in order to select them and deliver the training; the Union de Centros Vecinales provided the physical locations for the trainings and in collaboration with the ARC identified the individuals who would attend, based on their vulnerability to future emergencies. Aside from the selected beneficiaries, people learned of the trainings by word of mouth and a total of 1,204 persons were trained, including persons from the most affected neighbourhoods, government employees, and university and elementary school students, in the following subjects:

Water and Sanitation	318 persons
Psychosocial support	314 persons
Community Disaster Preparedness	96 persons
STD (Sexually Transmitted Diseases) and HIV/AIDS	476 persons

These training courses were delivered by ARC staff from the Salta Branch, who were trained by staff from the headquarters.

Specific Objective 2: To strengthen the resilience capacities of 500 people staying in shelters through community-based psychosocial support.

Activities under this objective were not implemented given that those staying in shelters were relocated; however, training sessions in psychosocial support were provided for 314 persons (see objective 1 above).

Coordination

The relief phase has almost concluded, but actions to rehabilitate the most affected infrastructures continue to be implemented.

The Argentine Red Cross is part of an Emergency Network that has among its members Save the Children, Caritas, White Helmets, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Scout Movement. As response operations wrap up, possible rehabilitation activities for the area are being designed.

The Argentine Red Cross in particular is evaluating the possibility of continuing with the different trainings proposed in the Plan of Action, including more beneficiaries in preparation for a possible repetition of a disaster event. Another possibility is to carry out a Vulnerability and Capacities Assessment (VCA) which would consist of training for Argentine Red Cross volunteers participating in the operation and a later phase to implement the assessment in the affected area.



Loading humanitarian assistance items onto Argentine Army trucks

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