

EMERGENCY APPEAL



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 CRISIS

Appeal no: 08/2002

10 April 2002

***THIS APPEAL SEEKS CHF 1,824,000 (USD 1.1m / EUR 1.2m)
IN CASH, KIND AND SERVICES
TO ASSIST 52,000 BENEFICIARIES FOR 4 MONTHS***

The Situation

The social situation in Argentina has deteriorated dramatically over recent years. Over the last four years health and education services have eroded and there has been a significant increase in the number of people living below the poverty line. The level of vulnerability is set to rise as the country heads into the southern hemisphere winter.

In the greater Buenos Aires area, as well as in northern Argentina and along the River Plate basin, the highest concentrations of vulnerable populations are found. The current situation has left communities, that for years have suffered from high levels of poverty, with no access to minimum food and hygiene requirements.

The rhythm of economic and social collapse has paralysed all systems of production resulting in a lack of many basic goods. This has led to the mobilisation of popular sectors of society (unemployed, pensioners, etc.) that culminated in large scale protests during the week of December 20. As a result, two national governments fell.

Two large social sectors have been profoundly affected by the crisis: 1) people in poverty or extreme poverty who have traditionally had limited or no access to food and health services and now find their situation deteriorating due to the breakdown of public systems; and 2) a significant majority of the middle class who now have no access to public health services, services to senior citizens and education. Recent data places these numbers at 43.8% of the country population.

Difficulties faced by the middle class have been exacerbated by a sharp increase in unemployment and, due to new government banking regulations set up to avoid a large scale exodus of US dollars, limited access to bank savings that have been reduced by over 50% due to the constant devaluation of the Argentine peso. Business are closing on mass and employees working in both the private and public sectors are not being paid. This political instability and ongoing social unrest has resulted in large protests known as “cacerolazo”.

The health sector in Argentina is now incapable of addressing the increasing demand due to a lack of infrastructure and financial as well as human resources and thus unable to maintain levels of equitable access to the population nor ensure meeting minimum quality control. The scenario in rural and poorer areas of the country is even more complicated. In the north of the country diseases associated with malnutrition, homelessness and the inadequate treatment of water and waste have risen sharply. There is a lack of infrastructure and basic medicines.

The current situation represents the largest social, economic and political crisis that Argentina has had to confront since the return of democracy thirteen years ago. Present data places the number of people living in poverty at more than 15 million people and increasing by an average of 8,260 daily. Experts now claim that these levels of poverty have taken on a structural, chronic and permanent characteristic.

Given the seriousness of the situation and the daily increase of those affected, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies responded to the request of the Argentine Red Cross and is launching an international appeal with the principal objective to support the Argentine Red Cross operation in favour of the most vulnerable sectors of the society - infants and senior citizens specifically in the areas of the provision of food and health services.

The Needs

Immediate Needs w

Over the last couple of years the large number of comedores populares (soup kitchens) have been functioning in the most depressed areas of the country; some with the support of various humanitarian organisations, but principally through locally based community groups. The majority of these services function without minimal nutritional planning and as they were dependent of community economic support, many have disappeared as a result of the serious economic crisis faced by local businesses and the public system. The Argentine Red Cross (ARC) has run or supported a large number of these initiatives that have provided supplementary food to senior citizens and children. There are now huge needs in these community kitchen as the people cannot get the basic food stuff.

Prior to the start of the academic school year the ARC proposes to support or initiate school food programmes in high vulnerability areas as well as set up or provide continued support to food programmes in seniors residences and daytime drop in centers. In addition plans were developed, in conjunction with other local NGOs, for the provision of medical items and basic drugs for public hospitals, health centers and ARC branch run community pharmacies and drug banks. Prices of medicines have risen and there is also a lack of medicines in pharmacies and in health centres and hospitals as there are no resources. Also specialised programmes organised by the ARC in conjunction with other humanitarian organisations, aimed at ensuring access to health have been planned to respond to the immediate needs of the most vulnerable.

The Proposed Operation

Objectives and Activities planned w

The operation will focus on the delivery of food distributions and health and support services over a four month period (with a possible extension) to the following beneficiary populations located in some of the most vulnerable areas of Argentina:

- Senior citizens in day centers, old people's homes or living on their own without any resources;
- Children and youth in orphanages, community centers and school centers. In some cases this will include support to families as well;
- Families living in extreme poverty in vulnerable communities (identified by branches of the Argentine Red Cross).

The types of intervention and the geographic zones for implementation were determined based on the needs and the capacity of the ARC branches to effectively deliver the programmes and vary depending where the activities are to take place. To ensure the successful implementation of the operation the following conditions are taken into account:

- Realistic capacities of the ARC;
- Activities that the ARC has previously carried out with the above populations;
- Open dialogue with provincial governments, national and provincial Ministries of Health and Education, NGOs and professionals in each of the technical areas;

The branches of Argentine Red Cross have been responding to the crisis since the start and have experience in working with many of the communities in the past years. This appeal is intended to cover the outstanding needs in their efforts to respond to the social crisis.

The following is a list of beneficiaries in each province.

PROVINCE	BENEFICIARIES (persons)
Entre Rios	885
Cordoba	8,850
Corrientes	7,800
Mendoza	520
Chaco	4,985
Salta	5,850
Santa Fe	635
San Luis	625
La Pampa	200
Tucuman	3,350
Buenos Aires	18,300
TOTAL	52,000

The specific objectives of the operation are as follow:

Food assistance w

Objective: To provide food assistance to senior citizens, children and families living in extreme poverty

Supplementary food assistance will be provided to senior citizen residences and day drop-in centres either run by or supported by the ARC. This will consist of monthly food packages. In addition, individual food packages will also be provided to a specified number of seniors living on their own with no means of support and who are not using the above centres. Beneficiaries will be identified through home visits carried out by volunteers and through data provided by local social service and community organizations.

Food assistance will be distributed to schools, community centres and orphanages who currently have meal programmes. As in the case of seniors, ARC volunteers will carry out home visits in order to provide supplementary food to identified children in need.

Food packages will also be distributed to families who have no means of support in high vulnerability areas, affected by the crisis, where the ARC has established programmes.

The following table indicates items and quantities to be included in the basic *supplementary* food packages which will be adapted according to the various activities (e.g. food distributions to centers offering meal services to seniors and children). The supplementary food packages are composed according to the Sphere standards with local customs taken into account.

Supplementary Family Food Package (one month for a family of 5 persons)

Food Item (per family package)	Quantity
Rice	4.00 Kg
Sugar	2.00 Kg
Soup base	.24 Kg
Pasta for soups	3.00 Kg
Long Pasta	3.00 Kg
Lentils	3.00 Kg
Beans	1.00 Kg

Chocolate (beverage)	1.00 Kg
Flour	3.00 Kg
Polenta	3.00 Kg
Powered milk	2.40 Kg
Salt	.50 Kg
Canned Tomatoes	3.00 Kg
Cooking oil	3.00 L
Yerba Mate (beverage)	3.00 Kg
Total	34.14 Kg

In those communities where winter poses an increased threat to the well being of the targeted beneficiary population relief distributions of blankets and plastic sheeting might take place.

Health and support servicesw

This programme will be directed to the same beneficiary population who will receive food assistance. Main activities will focus on health promotion, prevention and attention. It should be noted that activities will be carried out in coordination wit the public health system. Volunteers will be involved depending on the type of activity being implemented. Details on the required equipment and materials can be found below. The programme will also consist of first aid services by ARC volunteers to the identified population. In addition, community leaders and those running seniors and child centers and residences will be trained in first aid and provided with the necessary materials (e.g. community first aid kits).

Objective 1: To support primary health care services and health promotion programmes

The programme consists of primary health care activities to support the public health system and to carry out ARC health promotion programmes. Health care services will be provided in community centres, old people’s home and schools and are aimed at senior citizens and children with their mothers.

The following table details the contents of the medical kits required for the implementation of the health component of the operation

1. Medical Services Kits

ITEM	Quantity (per kit)
Gloves (100)	10
Alcohol (500 ml)	10
Distilled water	10
Pervinox (5 L)	1
Tongue depressors (100)	2
Gauze	200
Dressing	10
Adhesive tape	10
Disposable syringes	250
Cotton swabs	10
Stethoscope and Blood pressure kit	31
Weight scale with height measurement	1
Infant scale	1
Thermometer	10
Eye droppers	4

44 Medical Service Kits will be purchased. In addition, 69 replacement packages per month (4 months) will be purchased to ensure all kits contain the necessity items at all times.

Objective 2: To provide service to senior citizens, infants and children aimed at improving their overall wellbeing.

The following activities will be undertaken by ARC volunteers in order to support seniors, infants and children:

- Psychological support

- Periodic home or residence visits by volunteers
- Recreational and physical activities
- Provision of basic school materials

National Society Capacity Building w

The proposed emergency operation will serve to strengthen the capacity of the national society both at branch and central level. Capacity building is integrated in all planning, management, implementation and evaluation activities of the operation including financial controls and reporting. Specific training will occur in the areas of human resource development, communication, coordination and technical specific areas relating to the activities of the operation. Active participation will be encouraged in all areas at both headquarters and branch levels. Management training will be emphasised with a focus on transparency.

In order to improve the capacity of the ARC to appropriately respond in cases of social unrest an Initial Intervention Unit within the ARC will be put into place in conjunction with the ICRC to address health, first aid and the initial diagnosis during cases of social unrest such as protests and marches. This unit will be set up to react to these events as they occur in the city of Buenos Aires and the greater Buenos Aires area. The unit will be backed up by the branches' relief teams. This initiative is co-financed with the ICRC.

Human resources will be strengthened through the incorporation of personnel in accordance with the response to the appeal. Infrastructure improvements will also be made as they relate to needs associated with the implementation of the operation.

In addition, improving the management capacity of branches will be a priority of the operation as well as strengthening governance and volunteer strategies. Branches will receive training in technical areas in relation to the operation as well as in the identification, management and formulation of projects. In addition, relevant improvements in infrastructure will be provided such as internet connections and use.

It is important to note that the ARC is carrying out a capacity building programme supported by the Federation Capacity Building Fund which include activities designed to reinforce the coordinating role of the headquarters and programme development. The operation and this programme will mutually reinforce each other resulting in a stronger institution.

Co-ordination w

The ARC, with the support from the regional delegation, is coordinating activities with national, regional and municipal governments, government departments, international agencies and other NGOs. In the early stages of the crisis coordination was mainly taking place with UNDP and Caritas. Recently the ARC and the regional delegation took the initiative to convene a coordination meeting which was attended by the Pan American Health Organization, UNICEF, the Latin-American branch of the Global network of People living with HIV/AIDS, REDLAT, Medicos en Catastrofes and other NGOs. A mapping of activities is now taking place. The ICRC regional delegation in Buenos Aires will participate in the coordination, training and establishment of the Initial Intervention Unit.

Coordination efforts will also be initiated with appropriate businesses who are able to enhance the operation either through the provision of personnel, funds or in-kind support. Support provided by the PNS will also be coordinated and integrated into the operation.

Monitoring and Evaluation w

Ongoing assessment of the impact of the relief effort on both the beneficiary communities as well as the capacity of the ARC will be an integral part of the response plan. In keeping with the Federation's commitment to the principles and standards of the SPHERE humanitarian charter, the impact of the operation will be evaluated with the input of beneficiaries through the use of appropriate participatory methodologies.

Capacity of the National Society w

The Argentine Red Cross has 84 branches all over the vast country. Based on a comprehensive capacity analysis process, 32 branches with the support of 180 volunteers per month, will be implementing the operation, many of

whom have been active since the onset of the crisis. The headquarters and all participating branches have been involved in the elaboration of this appeal including the identification of key objectives and the activities which will help to meet the stated results. As mentioned above, the regional delegation will play an active role in facilitating training and support the monitoring of the operation.

Present Capacity of the Federation w

The Federation's regional delegation for South America, based in Buenos Aires since 1994, has been giving constant support to the Argentine Red Cross response to the crisis since December 2001 in spite of limited human resources. Since the crisis started there has been daily contact with Argentine Red Cross and a high number of working meetings involving the head of regional delegation, the two OD delegates, the DP/DR delegate, the programme assistant, the youth officer and the administrator. In addition, the Pan American Disaster Response Unit, has been involved in discussions on disaster response preparedness of the national society.

Other Key Issues w

The social crisis in Argentina continues and may do so for several more months. As such the emergency phase of the operation is also ongoing. There are several key issues or external factors which may significantly affect the evolution of the operation:

- Difficulties in the movement of funds given government banking regulations. The ARC has established an agreement with the company Western Union in order to be able to transfer funds within the country without any problems.
- The capacity to maintain the branches and volunteers as well as strategic alliances may be difficult given the impact the crisis has on the entire population and the Argentine society.
- Acts of violence may limit Red Cross actions and there is a need for support from the ICRC with regards to areas such as security of personnel and warehouses as well as the implementation of appropriate logistics procedures.
- Logistics considerations and distance between the various regions of the country may limit centralised purchasing and may require that items be procured regionally. This may also reduce cost and security concerns associated with transporting materials.
- Problems of transparency in the ARC relating to activities undertaken several years ago make it necessary that the operation be highly visible and transparent (financial monitoring and audit). This is especially true in the areas of procurement given the population's lack of credibility for public institutions due to corruption.

Budget summary

See Annex 1 for details.

For further details please contact: Luis Luna, Federation Desk Officer, Phone: 41 22 730 4274 ; Fax: 41 22 733 0395; email: luna@ifrc.org.

All International Federation Assistance 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.

In line with the Minimum Reporting Standards, the first operations update on this appeal will be issued within 30-days of the launch and the second will be issued over the course of the operation; a final narrative and financial report will be issued no later than 90 days after the end of the operation.

This operation seeks to administer to the immediate requirements of the victims of this disaster. Subsequent operations to promote sustainable development or longer-term capacity building will require additional support and these programmes are outlined on the Federation website.

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>

Jean Ayoub
Director
Disaster Management and Coordination

Didier J. Cherpitel
Secretary General

ANNEX 1

APPEAL No. 08/2002**BUDGET SUMMARY****Argentina social crisis**

<u>TYPE</u>	<u>VALUE</u>
<u>RELIEF NEEDS</u>	<u>IN CHF</u>
<u>Blankets: 17,500</u>	<u>49,000</u>
<u>Food packs: 12,300</u>	<u>1,094,000</u>
<u>Medical & first aid</u>	<u>122,000</u>
<u>TOTAL RELIEF NEEDS</u>	<u>1,265,000</u>
<u>CAPITAL EQUIPMENT</u>	
<u>1 pick up</u>	<u>24,000</u>
<u>Computers</u>	<u>4,000</u>
<u>Other equipment</u>	<u>8,000</u>
<u>PROGRAMME SUPPORT</u>	
<u>Programme management</u>	<u>123,000</u>
<u>Technical support</u>	<u>37,000</u>
<u>Professional services</u>	<u>41,000</u>
<u>TRANSPORT STORAGE & VEHICLE COSTS</u>	<u>86,000</u>
<u>PERSONNEL</u>	
<u>National staff</u>	<u>141,000</u>
<u>ADMINISTRATIVE & GENERAL SERVICES</u>	
<u>Information expenses</u>	<u>22,000</u>
<u>Administrative & general expenses</u>	<u>49,000</u>
<u>External workshops & seminars</u>	<u>24,000</u>
<u>TOTAL OPERATIONAL NEEDS</u>	<u>559,000</u>
<u>TOTAL APPEAL CASH, KIND, SERVICES</u>	<u>1,824,000</u>
<u>LESS AVAILABLE RESOURCES (-)</u>	
<u>NET REQUEST</u>	<u>1,824,000</u>