

# DREF operation update



## Argentina: Dengue Outbreak

DREF operation n° MDRAR005  
Glide No. EP-2009-000059-ARG  
Update n° 1  
22 June 2009

The International Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) is a source of un-earmarked money created by the Federation in 1985 to ensure that immediate financial support is available for Red Cross and Red Crescent response to emergencies. The DREF is a vital part of the International Federation's disaster response system and increases the ability of national societies to respond to disasters.

**Period covered by this update:** 24 April to 8 June 2009.

**Summary:** CHF 184,012 (USD 157,707 or EUR 121,732) was allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) on 25 April 2009 to support the Argentine Red Cross (ARC) in delivering assistance to some 483,360 beneficiaries.

Since the beginning of 2009, several South American countries including Argentina have been experiencing dengue outbreaks. This update n°1 reflects the relief activities accomplished to date by the Argentine Red Cross. The focus of the operation has been on the distribution of key messages on dengue prevention in two communities per province in the provinces of Buenos Aires, Catamarca, Chaco, Córdoba, Corrientes, Entre Ríos, Formosa, Jujuy, Misiones, Salta, Santa Fé, Santiago del Estero, Tucumán and the city of Buenos Aires.

The Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Bilateral Emergency Fund contributed CHF 90,470 to the DREF in replenishment of the allocation made for this operation. The major donors to the DREF are the Irish, Italian, Netherlands and Norwegian governments and ECHO. Details of all donors can be found on <http://www.ifrc.org/what/disasters/responding/drs/tools/dref/donors.asp>

This operation is expected to be implemented over 3 months, and will therefore be completed by 23 July 2009; a Final Report will be made available three months after the end of the operation (by 23 October 2009).

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Argentine Red Cross volunteers placing posters in schools on dengue prevention measures. Source: Argentine Red Cross

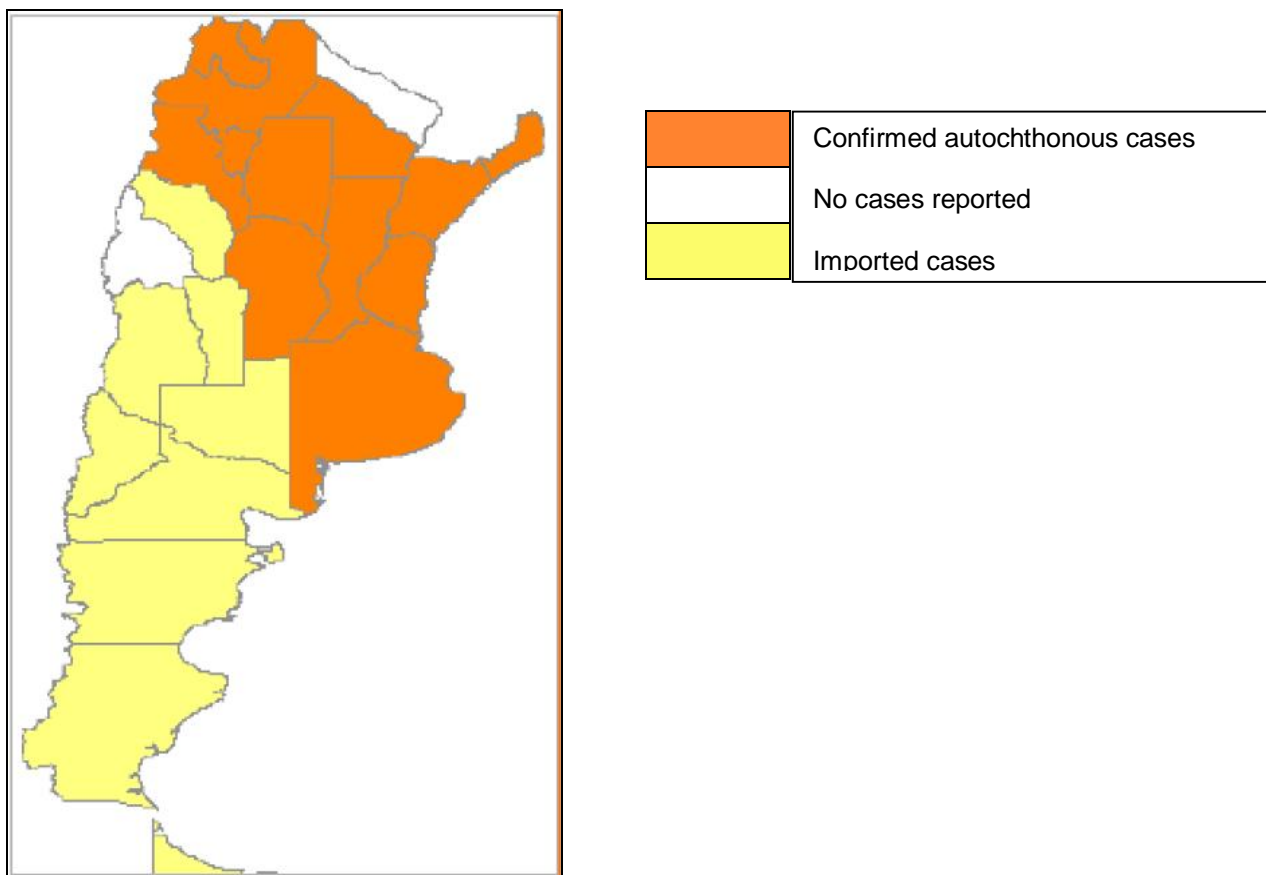
## The situation

Dengue outbreaks in South America have been an increasing trend during the past years. Contributing factors include climatic changes due to deforestation, increase in population, poverty, overcrowded cities and increase in migration among neighbouring countries.

On March 2009, the first cases were identified in the northern region of the country which have increased gradually. The national health authorities issued an epidemiological alert. and continue to monitor the situation. The number of autochthonous cases confirmed by laboratory tests has reached 25,798 . Imported cases have reached a total of 1,942: 877 confirmed and 1,065 suspected. All of the reported cases are serotype DEN-1 and, to date, five people have died. Two of the reported deaths in the province of Salta were due to hemorrhagic dengue and the remaining three deaths were as a result of complications (dengue shock) one death occurring in Catamarca and the other two in Chaco.

The low temperatures as a result of the proximity of the winter season have made the control of the vector easier. Nevertheless, the warm northern regions are still in a state of alert.. During the past month of May, there was an increase of 7.2 per cent in the numbers of people infected with dengue. According to reports from national authorities, the provinces with the highest number of people affected are: Chaco, Catamarca, Salta and Tucuman. So far this year there are six congenital cases of dengue in Argentina. Therefore, the Children's Foundation is carrying out an investigation in the cities of Tartagal and Embarcación (both located in the province of Salta) to analyse the causes of these cases. The focus of the study will be on dengue cases in children up to two years of age. The particularity of this outbreak is that these regions had never been exposed to the virus before. Consequently, pregnant women are at high risk of spreading the virus to their unborn babies.

The following map shows the regions affected by dengue:



Source: Ministry of Health

The national government has been providing the affected provinces with equipment and resources to implement fumigation campaigns. The Tropical Disease Institute has been created at a national level in order to carry out studies on dengue, yellow fever and malaria amongst other illnesses that currently have a social impact. The institution will create scientific research plans to produce, centralize and exchange information and also to implement mass prevention campaigns and act as a reference centre.

The activities designed to control the spread of the vector are clean-up of communities and households for possible breeding grounds, prevention campaigns, dissemination of information and fumigation activities. The activities have started and are ongoing around the country.

### Coordination and partnerships

The coordination and sharing of information between the Argentine Red Cross and other governmental and non-governmental organizations is fundamental to improve the impact in the relief response and guarantee the security and efficiency of the operation.

The objectives of coordination are to: avoid duplication of efforts; ensure the accurate identification of the communities that have received little or no assistance or are most vulnerable; involve all actors in the operation; and guarantee the personal safety of the personnel and resources mobilized in the operation.

Since the beginning of the emergency, after the initial needs assessments, the ARC has been carrying out its plan of action in coordination with the Ministries of Health, Social Development and Environment and municipalities. The ARC through its local branches has been communicating with municipal authorities, the Ministry of Health including national, provincial and municipal health authorities and primary health care centres, community leaders and organizations involved in the response.

The ARC has been sharing information and assessments with non-governmental organizations including Caritas Argentina, UNICEF, Acción Sur, Comisión Cascos Blancos, Save the Children and Scouts of Argentina to avoid the duplication of efforts.

The International Federation through its Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) and the Regional Representation for the Southern Cone continue to be in close communication with the ARC to monitor the situation. In addition, two locally hired technical health coordinators have been supporting the operation since the beginning of the emergency.

## Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Since the beginning of the emergency the Argentine Red Cross, through its Community Health Programme, has been carrying out dengue prevention activities including prevention of water borne diseases and the promotion of good health practices, especially in the most affected areas, as a response to the current outbreak. This community health project is being implemented by the ARC through its local branches to improve health conditions for the most vulnerable families in six communities in the northern provinces of Corrientes, Chaco, and Salta. These communities have a high level of vulnerability as they were affected by the economic crisis.

After the landslide which occurred in Tartagal on 9 February 2009, the ARC has reinforced different preventive actions such as the dissemination of dengue prevention material in the areas affected by the disaster. These activities are part of the plan of action implemented with the DREF funding allocated on 16 February for response to the landslide which took place in Tartagal.

In response to this operation, the ARC formed a Technical Crisis Committee at national level, in order to implement the following activities:

- Monitoring of the situation in the affected areas
- Meetings and communication via telephone with key actors in the national health system.
- Survey of actions and support needs of the local branches.
- Strategy intervention design (based on surveys and local assessments).
- Design, production and printing of dissemination material with dengue prevention measures.
- Distribution of material to the ARC local branches.

The ARC local branches are implementing dissemination campaigns in public areas:

- Distribution of communications material with information on dengue prevention. The printed material has been made available by the national government and is being used as part of the campaign.
- Placing of posters in strategic places including health centres, hospitals, schools, public areas, community centers, etc.
- Airing of radio spots on local radio stations
- Awareness and prevention campaigns through house visits.
- Each local ARC branch is also conducting face to face or telephone meetings with key actors in the provincial and municipal regions.

## Progress towards objectives

The operation proposed by the ARC after assessments were completed in March 2009 focused on raising awareness in dengue prevention and prevention measures related in particular to vector-borne diseases such as dengue and yellow fever. Other activities include trainings for the ARC local branches to strengthen volunteers' capacities for fumigation and clean-up activities. The National Society aims to accomplish risk reduction activities to reach approximately 483,360 people in 13 provinces and the city of Buenos Aires.

The ARC plans to work with two groups of provinces, according to the numbers of dengue cases:

**Group Nº 1:** Provinces with a high rate of autochthonous and imported dengue cases:

Northwestern region	Northeastern region
Salta	Chaco
Jujuy	Corrientes

Catamarca	
Tucumán	
Salta	

**Note:** The provinces of Salta, Tucumán, Chaco, Corrientes will receive vector control kits.

**Group Nº 2:** Provinces that have a medium rate of imported dengue cases and several autochthonous dengue cases:

Northwestern region	Northeastern region	Central region
Santiago del Estero	Formosa	Córdoba
	Misiones	Buenos Aires
		Santa Fé
		City of Buenos Aires
		Entre Ríos

### Emergency health (dengue prevention)

**Objective: 3,000 families will benefit from the distribution of vector control kits; additionally, 40 communities (500 families) will benefit from community vector control kits to assist them against the dengue outbreak.**

#### Activities planned:

- Procurement of items for the kits
- Identification and selection of beneficiaries and communities
- Preparation of the kits
- Distribution of kits

#### Progress:

The ARC has held several planning meetings with the epidemiology team from the Ministry of Health. During these meetings, the health experts advised the ARC to include larvacides in the vector control kits, which are insecticides that are specifically targeted against the larval life stage of an insect. Their most common use is against mosquitoes. These will replace the insecticides that were originally planned to be distributed. The advantages of using the larvacide are:

- Greater coverage among the communities.
- Eliminates the mosquito larva in cold weather
- Minimal residue.
- High performance.
- Larvacides can be used with the same insecticide equipment.

Each family vector control kit will contain the following items:

Family Vector control kit	
1 family x 6 people per 1 month	
6	Adult aerosol repellent
2	Children cream repellent

**Note:** 750 kits will be distributed in each province: Chaco, Corrientes, Salta y Tucumán, for a total of 3,000 kits.

#### Activities completed:

- **Procurement of items:** the procurement committee completed the purchase of all items with assistance from the Ministry of Health in order to avoid using different items from those distributed as a result of the national campaigns led by the Ministry.
- **Identification and beneficiary census:** the census of beneficiaries is being adjusted to the communities identified.

The community vector control kits (40) contain the following items:

Community Vector control kit	
500 families x 1 month	
1	Fumigator x 30 lts.
2	Chemical insecticide x 20 lts

1	Overall
5	Larvacides
1 (pair)	Work boots
1 (pair)	Work gloves
1	Fumigation cap
1	Respiratory masks
1	Safety glasses

**Note:** 10 community vector control kits will be distributed distributed in each province: Chaco, Corrientes, Salta y Tucumán, with a total of 40 kits.

#### Activities completed:

- **Procurement of items:** the procurement committee completed the purchase of all items with assistance from the Ministry of Health in order to avoid using different items from those distributed during the national campaigns led by the Ministry.
- **Identification and beneficiary census:** Beneficiaries have been selected taking into account the communities where health authorities advise the kits will be best utilized.

#### Health promotion

**Objective:** Increased awareness and prevention of dengue through an awareness raising campaign for approximately 96,600 families in 13 provinces in Argentina.

#### Activities planned

- Procurement of visibility material
- Printing of brochures and posters
- Distribution of brochures and posters in schools, community centres, health centres
- Airing of radio spots (already designed )
- Prevention campaigns through house visits and distribution of printed material on dengue prevention
- Conduct workshops on how to prevent vector diseases (in at least two schools in the provinces of Chaco, Corrientes, Salta and Tucuman) for volunteers and communities.

**Progress:** The operation was broken down in four lines of action to facilitate the operation.

- a) Awareness-raising and prevention campaigns on vector-borne diseases.
- b) Community campaigns on prevention measures and elimination of mosquito breeding grounds.
- c) Holding of dengue prevention workshops in schools.
- d) Distribution of vector control kits (for families and communities).

#### Beneficiaries:

- § 480,000 people will benefit through awareness activities of which 18,000 will receive vector control kits.
- § 3,360 students and teachers will receive support through awareness activities in schools.

The following table below details how many people will benefit through the aforementioned actions:

Province	Group	Approximate number of beneficiaries	Activities
Catamarca	1	20,000	a) Prevention campaigns.
Chaco	1	50,840	a) Prevention campaigns. b) Community campaigns on preventive measures and elimination of mosquito breeding grounds. c) Holding of dengue prevention workshops in schools. d) Distribution of vector control kits
Corrientes	1	50,840	a) Prevention campaigns. b) Community campaigns on preventive measures and

			elimination of mosquito breeding grounds. c) Holding of dengue prevention workshops in schools. d) Distribution of vector control kits
<b>Jujuy</b>	1	20,000	a) Prevention campaigns.
<b>Salta</b>	1	50,840	a) Prevention campaigns. b) Community campaigns on preventive measures and elimination of mosquito breeding grounds... c) Holding of dengue prevention workshops in schools. d) Distribution of vector control kits.
<b>Tucuman</b>	1	50,840	a) ) Prevention campaigns. b) Community campaigns on preventive measures and elimination of mosquito breeding sources.. c) Holding of dengue prevention workshops in schools. d) Distribution of vector control kits.
<b>Buenos Aires</b>	2	90,000	a) Prevention campaigns.
<b>Ciudad de Buenos Aires</b>	2	20,000	a) Prevention campaigns.
<b>Córdoba</b>	2	30,000	a) Prevention campaigns.
<b>Entre Ríos</b>	2	30,000	a) Prevention campaigns.
<b>Formosa</b>	2	10,000	a) Prevention campaigns.
<b>Misiones</b>	2	10,000	a) Prevention campaigns.
<b>Santa Fe</b>	2	40,000	a) Prevention campaigns.
<b>Santiago del Estero</b>	2	10,000	a) Prevention campaigns.
<b>Total</b>		<b>Approx. 483,360</b>	

**Activities completed:**

- **Printing of posters and brochures:** These have been designed.
- **Distribution and publishing of brochures and posters in schools, health centres and hospitals:** These have been distributed and posted in several locations, as described in the table below:

Province	Group	Distributed material
Catamarca	1	1,000 brochures 200 posters
Chaco	1	12,000 brochures 500 posters
Corrientes	1	22,500 brochures 60 posters
Jujuy	1	1,000 brochures 200 posters
Salta	1	41,000 brochures 2,000 posters
Tucumán	1	23,000 brochures 500 posters
Ciudad de Buenos Aires	2	26,700 brochures 1,550 posters
Córdoba	2	8,200 brochures 420 posters
Entre Ríos	2	13,300 brochures 560 posters
Formosa	2	3,000 brochures 150 posters
Misiones	2	5,000 brochures 100 posters
Santa Fe	2	7,500 brochures

		330 posters
Santiago del Estero	2	6,500 brochures 200 posters

- **Radio spot distribution:** radio spots have been aired in all regions of groups 1 and 2 through the local radios.
- **House visits and distribution of brochures:** contact has been made with the communities and local actors for the prevention campaigns and clean-up activities.
- **Workshops on dengue awareness and preventive measures are ongoing in schools in Chaco, Corrientes, Salta and Tucuman.**
  - **Identification of schools:** The schools have been identified and selected. The local branches are currently working in the schools (next report will indicate number of students, teachers, activities, etc.).
  - **Printing and preparing of material:** The material has been designed for schools and is being printed.
  - **Organization and programming with school authorities:** The workshops will be held on the second week of June.

The operation is progressing well and distribution activities as well as work related to dissemination and clean-up campaigns in communities and schools is continuing in order to reach the target population and raise awareness on the prevention of dengue and other vector-borne diseases.

## How we work

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 \(NGO's\) in Disaster Relief](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response](#) (Sphere) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

The International Federation's activities 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 disasters.
- 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.

## Contact information

### For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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