

OPERATIONS UPDATE



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 IN SANTA FE PROVINCE

23 May 2003

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 178 countries. For more information: www.ifrc.org

Appeal No. 10/03

Launched on 6 May 2003 for CHF 607,000 for three months for 8,000 beneficiaries.

Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) Allocated: CHF 50,000

Beneficiaries: 8,000

Operations Update No. 2; Period covered: 12 May - 20 May 2003; Last Update (no. 1) published on 13 May 2003; Next Update expected June 2003.

IN BRIEF

Appeal coverage: 83.2%

Related Appeals: 01.51/2003 South America

Outstanding needs: CHF 102,227

Summary: In Santa Fé province, although flood waters are gradually receding, the situation remains critical with river water levels more than 10 times the average for the time of year and more rainfall forecast. 277 evacuation centres set up for flood victims are currently assisting some 50,000 people. At present, around 1,000 people per day are returning home; however, continued momentum will depend on weather conditions. There is an increasing threat of health hazards given large amounts of detritus and stagnant water, and that 20 per cent of the city of Santa Fé remains under water. It is estimated that 15,000 people are homeless as their houses were washed away by the floods. The Argentine Red Cross (ARC) has, to date, distributed public donations to a total of 33,932 beneficiaries in more than 100 centres. An ARC/Federation team is continuing a survey of the shelters and returnees to identify the most vulnerable flood victims in need of assistance. A revision of the food items to be distributed has taken place in order to respond to needs, and components of kits to be provided have been identified. Although immediate response to the appeal has been prompt, there is a need for further donations to cover the health component of the appeal which is essential in view of the major challenges posed in relation to sanitation and hygiene. Since there are major needs and conditions in Santa Fé are likely to worsen, the ARC/Federation are considering extending the operational time-frame of this appeal.

Operational Developments w

Despite a lowering of the level of water, recent heavy rains and stormy weather are hampering relief work and the return to normality in flood affected areas of Santa Fé province. Disaster zones were declared in the following 10 areas: La Capital (Santa Fé city), Garay, Vera, San Cristóbal, San Justo, San Javier, 9 de Julio, Las Colonias, Castellanos and San Jeronimo. Several other localities, among which are Crespo, La Penca, Agurará Grande, Palmeras, Elisa and La Larrechea, continue to be flooded and around 20% of the city of Santa Fé is still under water and without electricity. The security situation has now improved; nevertheless, some cases of looting and tension are continue to be reported in areas in which electricity has not yet been restored.

The province of Santa Fé is historically rich in cattle, arable land and natural resources; however, following the floods, milk production has fallen between 20% and 40 %, and crops have been devastated. Of a total of 12 million hectares of agricultural land, two million are under water and the Argentine Secretariat of Agriculture reports that in an area of 200,000 hectares of crops, 400,000 tonnes of soybeans and 200,000 tonnes of corn and sorghum have been lost. In addition, the energy and communications infrastructure, as well as the sewage systems are among the main affected services.



After several days without rain, weather conditions worsened in all the affected areas as of 14 May. For this reason, the meteorological service declared a state of alert until Monday, 19 May, although rains are expected to continue until 22 May. Heavy rains on 15 and 16 May hampered relief work and the Argentine Red Cross was obliged to halt activities on these days. Nonetheless, ARC and Federation teams continue to monitor the disaster zone, and special teams of ARC volunteers and lifeguards have been alerted in case further evacuations are needed. Despite the fact that the level of the Salado river has fallen over the last two weeks, it remains 11 times higher than average for the month of May,

and further rain may maintain or increase this level for a longer period of time.

More dead animals are appearing among the debris, which is estimated at 60,000 tonnes. Around 1,000 tonnes of garbage accumulates daily on the streets, but as a result of restricted means to collect it, together with continued rainfall, health problems among the population are on the increase and a number of cases of hygiene related diseases have already been reported. Local residents also indicate a particular concern for the sanitation of their homes given that water has now been standing for almost three weeks.

According to the local government, on Monday, 19 May, there were 277 evacuation centres which had been officially registered, assisting some 50,012 persons. Argentine Red Cross figures confirm that numbers of those sheltered in evacuation centres are falling at an average rate of 1,000 persons per day, although fresh rains could slow down this process and also cause other damage.

As of 19 May, 26 deaths have been officially reported. Figures on missing people have fallen and now stand at some 30 cases. It is estimated that around 15,000 persons are in need of a new house and a fifth of the 25,000 damaged homes will have to be rebuilt; 2,500 of these houses were totally destroyed given their vicinity to the river and will be rebuilt in safer areas. The provincial government announced that the Ministry for Reconstruction will take on the role of organizing and leading the rebuilding phase. Schools are expected to re-open at the beginning of June. For this reason, the 111 schools which are currently being used as shelters are expected to be evacuated by 26 May, and alternative shelter accommodation is being defined. For the same reason, the ARC is now looking for other warehousing facilities.

National media, which during the first two weeks played an important role in disseminating news and raising the awareness of the population, encouraging donations, has reduced coverage of the floods. As a result, humanitarian actors are concerned that the focus of attention is no longer on the floods.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action w

ARC branches from all over the country continue to receive contributions from the public; items donated include non perishable food, mattresses, medicines and cleaning and hygiene sets. In order to facilitate the coordination and the delivery of donations, goods from the branches are now first sent to the ARC central warehouse in Buenos Aires, from which they are forwarded to Santa Fé. Identification and cataloguing of received items continue both in Buenos Aires and Santa Fé according to the Pan American Health Organization's (PAHO) SUMA system. The ARC is now seeking new facilities to stock relief items as current warehouses will have to be returned to their owners in Santa Fé.



After an ARC assessment mission to evacuation centres, a change has been made to the food basket and hygiene items required to respond to the needs of the flood victims. The precise composition of cleaning sets, medical equipment and other kits was identified. Spontaneous donations of items not included in the appeal have been distributed in accordance to specific needs. On 12 May the ARC announced that collection of clothes and shoes had been stopped. Quantities received are estimated to be sufficient to meet beneficiaries' needs, and priority is now given to other items.

To date, 70 trucks provided to the ARC by businesses, the Army and Navy and private individuals, together with three military planes, have delivered more than 500 tonnes of public donations to four ARC warehouses in Santa Fé, from which goods are distributed to evacuation centres. Despite the fact that more trucks are operating in the field, numbers are still not sufficient, and the delivery of relief goods is slow. Contacts have been made both at headquarters and local level to improve the fleet of vehicles.

Given adverse weather conditions in recent days, the delivery of relief items, as well as other scheduled activities had to be stopped on 15 and 16 May. Emergency teams made up of a total of 15 ARC lifeguards and 15 volunteers were on alert, ready to be mobilized in case of need.

Red Cross and Red Crescent Society w

Since the beginning of the operation, almost 1,000 ARC volunteers, lifeguards and nurses gathered in Santa Fé from more than 20 branches around the country. Some 50 volunteers are working on a daily basis, carrying out such activities as cataloguing, stocking and delivery of relief items, damage assessment, providing assistance in hospitals and evacuation centres and offering psycho-social support. More than 7,000 volunteers were mobilized in 64 branches in order to collect, classify and send donated items, almost 1,200 of whom worked in the ARC central warehouse in Buenos Aires. The two branches of the Argentine Red Cross which were partially or totally flooded, Santa Fé and San Cristóbal, are now operating normally.

Objectives, activities and results w

The Argentine Red Cross will provide assistance to 8,000 persons (1,600 families) who are accommodated in evacuation centres in Santa Fé. Assistance comprises three months of food assistance, hygiene kits, cooking sets, and water storage containers. In accordance with SPHERE guidelines, the delivery of food items will be provided once per month.

In addition, further food assistance will be provided to some 4,000 people obliged to remain in shelters for a longer period. On their return home, 800 families will be provided with kits to help them clean their homes. The operation also seeks to enhance community disaster preparedness in the event of future disasters and to provide beneficiaries with psycho-social support.

Relief distribution of food and basic non-food items w

Objective 1: To provide humanitarian assistance in the form of food for three months, together with a kitchen set and hygiene kit for 8,000 persons affected by the floods.

From the beginning of the operation and as of 19 May, ARC volunteers had distributed public donations to a total of 33,932 beneficiaries in more than 100 centres. Public aid not linked to this appeal includes: clothes, shoes, mattresses, toys for children, candles, as well as food, medicines, water and hygiene products.

Among these items are:

- Food items: 55,800 kg (this figure comprises stocks delivered from Buenos Aires only);
- Mineral water: 28,470 litres;
- Clothes: 3,654 sacks (for 10 persons each);
- Shoes: 18,950 pairs;
- Mattresses: 850;
- Bed sheets/blankets: 1,935 units;
- Matches: 1,172 boxes;
- Candles: 5,221;
- Camp lamps: 840;
- Nappies: 77,676 units;
- Soap: 1,996 units.



According to a needs assessment carried out by ARC and Federation staff, it has been decided to extend the duration of the provision of food from one to three months and to revise the composition of family food packages, kitchen sets and personal hygiene kits to be distributed, as follows:

Family food package (8 persons/1month)	Kitchen Set (1 family/5 persons)	Personal hygiene kits (1 family/5 persons)
Rice (4 kg)	5 plastic glasses	5 pieces of unscented soap
Sugar (2 kg)	5 inox plates	1 sponge
Maize Flour (3 kg)	5 sets of knives, forks and spoons	5 tooth brushes
Wheat Flour (3 kg)	2 pans	2 tubes of tooth paste
Noodles (3 kg)	1 20 litre water tank	12 sanitary towels
Noodles for soup (3 kg)	1 3-5 litre bucket	8 rolls of toilet paper
Soya Beans (2 kg)	1 5-10 litre bucket	2 bottles of shampoo
Cocoa (1 kg)		1 comb
Powdered milk (5.6 kg)		3 family towels
Cocoa (1 kg)		
Salt (0,5 kg)		
Tinned tomatoes (3 kg)		
Oil (3 l)		
Yerba mate (tea) (3 kg)		
Total 36.1 kg		

The process of beneficiary identification is ongoing in evacuation centres. To date, 170 centres have been surveyed despite two days during which the assessment was halted because of bad weather conditions.

Seven hundred and fifty-five families (around 3,750 persons) from the city of Santa Fé, who are currently hosted in evacuation centres are being identified and will benefit from a Spanish Red Cross/Spanish government bilateral donation of food and hygiene kits in the framework of the international appeal. Beneficiary families will also receive 1,500 blankets and 1,500 mattresses.

A further 500 families (around 2,500 persons) from Recreo and Monte Vera, south of Santa Fé, were identified in recent days. They will benefit from a German Red Cross/German government bilateral donation within the framework of the appeal, aiming at providing flood victims with hygiene kits and non food items. The community of Monte Vera is a well organized rural neighbourhood which lost almost its entire crop and whose residents are already returning to their houses.

ARC activities within the appeal will also be focused on beneficiaries who will need to stay in evacuation centres for longer periods due to the fact that their houses have been destroyed. Seven hundred-twenty families in this situation have been identified in 12 evacuees centres.

Objective 2: To facilitate the return of evacuees to their homes and promote sanitary conditions .

Exact figures of beneficiaries who will leave evacuation centres in the near future remain unclear. In cooperation with the local government, the ARC is visiting local communities in order to identify beneficiaries who have recently returned home.

The ARC has identified the components of cleaning and tool kits, which are as follows:

Cleaning kits (1 house/150 Square Mt)	Tool kits (10 houses)
Broom: 1 unit	Shovel: 2 units
Brush: 1 unit	Metal brush: 1 unit
Cleaning products: 5 litres	12 litre bucket: 1 unit
Soap: 3 units	Plastic bag: 50 units
Plastic bags: 50 units	Trolley: 1 unit
Gloves: 1 pair	
Liquid disinfectant: 1 litre	
Cleaning cloth: 2 units	
Wringer: 2 units	
5 litre bucket: 1 unit	
Cleaning sponge: 1 unit	
Kitchen cloth: 1 unit	

The ARC carried out an initial purchase of 400 basic kits, the delivery of which started on 19 May. These kits include:

- 1 broom
- 1 brush
- 5 litres of cleaning products
- 1 litre of disinfectant
- 1 5 litre bucket.

Health and Care w

Vaccination campaigns and delivery of cleaning kits are ongoing. However, the high level of stagnant water, the presence of dead animals among the debris and the lack of sanitation facilities are seriously threatening health conditions in the affected areas.

In the common effort to improve hygiene conditions, the Ministry of Health will provide an average of 1,500 hygiene kits per day to returnee families, while provincial authorities are delivering similar goods to evacuation centres.

To date, the local health authorities have confirmed 45 cases of hepatitis (14 in evacuation centres), 14 of chickenpox, 34 of diarrhoea and 61 of leptospirosis (among which 28 in Santa Fé, 20 in Recreo, 8 in Monte Vero), with some cases of scabies and 8 of lice. Among other assistance provided, the government has administered some 45,000 doses of vaccine to the population.

Objective 1: To improve the health situation of those affected by the floods through health and hygiene promotion and disease prevention.

An agreement was reached with UNICEF for the donation to the ARC of 20,000 personal hygiene kits for women. Thirty thousand brochures on health and care, drawn up by the same agency, will soon be ready for distribution.

As of 19 May, 11 centres are benefiting from the health and hygiene campaign. Five thousand leaflets on hygiene and sanitation, issued by the ARC, are being distributed to these centres which are organizing themselves into groups with cleaning duties. Information provided includes:

- Personal hygiene.
- Clean water.
- Refuse disposal.
- Prevention of vector related diseases.
- Prevention of diarrhoea and other intestinal diseases.
- Prevention of domestic accidents.
- Prevention of HIV and sexual related disease.
- Promotion of breast feeding.
- Use of rehydration salts.

An initiative to fight anti intestinal disease is also under implementation in these centres, where ARC nurses are registering patients according to WHO standards. Further activities are being coordinated together with NGOs, local authorities and international organizations.

Objective 2: To reinforce the capacity of individuals to prevent and mitigate the effects of post traumatic stress experienced when affected by a disaster, thus facilitating the readjustment of disaster victims to their usual social, personal and work routines.

Visits continue to be carried out according to assessment of needs undertaken in the centres, while workshops on psycho-social support are being held for both medical and paramedical staff and volunteers. Three ARC volunteers who are professional psychologists joined the staff to provide psychological assistance to beneficiaries and volunteers. A team of experts is providing psychological support by telephone from the ARC headquarters in Buenos Aires.

An ARC guide containing supporting material and psychological advice in disasters both for adults and children has been published by a local newspaper (El Litoral), while other information and articles are published by the local media.

Objective 3: To improve access to medicines and basic supplies by providing these to 16 evacuation centres and 10 primary health centres in the affected area.

Surveys and delivery of medicines to evacuees are carried out together with Médicos Sin Fronteras (MSF). As of 19 May, medicines and basic supplies had been delivered to four health centres. This delivery, as the other

activities, had to be suspended on 15 and 16 May due to bad weather conditions. Among the drugs provided are antibiotics, anti hypertension pills, analgesics, anti diabetic and anti parasitic medicines.

Disaster Preparedness w

Objective 1: To strengthen the preparedness and response capacity of the population for future emergencies and disasters through the promotion of community education in risk management.

Medical and volunteer units involved in the psycho-social assistance campaign are also working to strengthen preparedness capacities as information and advice provided to beneficiaries and the media include elements of disaster preparedness and reaction. Further activities will be implemented in the future.

Advocacy w

Objective 1: To promote the reduction of potential tensions between social groups through appropriate design and implementation of humanitarian activities.

As for disaster preparedness, activities currently carried out in terms of reduction of tension among the population are linked with psycho-social support.

Coordination w

The ARC, supported by the Federation, is participating in a coordinating body with provincial and local institutions, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Social Development, PAHO and other humanitarian organizations. Directors of schools and evacuation centres are also consulted to optimize the delivery of relief items.

In order to improve the coordination of the relief operation, the local government requested humanitarian organizations to use the SUMA system for cataloguing and delivery of stock. This system is already in use by the ARC, whose volunteers are now being trained in Santa Fé. The Argentine Army is working with the ARC with four trucks to transport relief goods from the warehouse at the headquarters in Buenos Aires to Santa Fé. A meeting with UNICEF was held to coordinate the distribution of games for children, 20,000 hygiene kits for women in shelters and 30,000 flyers on hygiene and health care. Coordination has been set up with OXFAM with regard to water and sanitation, with Médicos sin Fronteras in relation to health surveys and with Greenpeace in relation to the distribution of cleaning sets.

A meeting with the Ministry of Health and Environment was a first step to analyze water and sanitation issues. The Mental Health Directorate and the National School of Psychologists are training 40 teachers from the Dante Alighieri school and also publish press articles concerning emotional support for both children and adults who are victims of disasters.

Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement -- Principles and Initiatives w

- The planned operation, as well as search and rescue and emergency assistance activities carried out to date are based on the principle of humanity; beneficiary selection criteria focus on the level of vulnerability of those affected, respect of the culture of the beneficiaries, ensuring gender sensitivity and prioritizing assistance to children and elderly people.
- Activities are based on the SPHERE project humanitarian charter and the code of conduct for emergency response.
- The operation is guided by principles and rules relating to transparency in the drawing up and dissemination of narrative and financial reports.
- All objectives put forward in the appeal are in line with Strategy 2010, as well as the Strategy for the Movement and the Principles and Rules of the Movement.

National Society Capacity Building w

This disaster has been an important test for the National Society which is undergoing restructuring; improved organizational and decision-making processes were adopted at both the headquarters and branch levels.

Disaster response preparedness is enhanced through work relating to planning, establishing of procedures and definition of standards. With the help of PAHO, 10 volunteers are being trained in Santa Fé in the use of the SUMA system for stock management and delivery. The branches located in the flood-affected zone are supported by personnel trained by members of the regional intervention team (RIT) and Field Assessment and Coordination Team (FACT), and a RITs-trained member of staff is coordinating the operation at headquarters level.

Volunteers and staff are also benefiting from training in health education, psycho-social assistance and hygiene promotion. A security plan to be used by ARC volunteers in case of emergency has been drafted and will be tested in the next few days. Volunteers have received a code of conduct and guidance listing duties and rights.

A priority of the flood response operation will be the improvement of the disaster management capacity of the branches, as well as the strengthening of volunteer management and of governing bodies. Red Cross branches will receive training in the technical areas linked with the operation: water and sanitation, community health, as well as in the identification, drawing up and management of projects. These courses are already in place in Santa Fé.

Federation Delegation w

The Federation's sub regional office is based in Buenos Aires in the premises of the Argentine Red Cross. The office is staffed by a sub regional coordinator, a finance officer, an information officer, a technical assistant and the regional focal point for the humanitarian values programme. The team also benefits from the support of a health consultant and a reporting delegate who are assigned to the social crisis operation.

Two delegates from the Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU), a disaster management delegate and a logistician from the regional logistics unit (RLU), supported the ARC operation in Santa Fé. The disaster management delegate has now been replaced by a regional intervention team member from the Ecuadorian Red Cross who whose responsibility will be to support the ARC in the coordination of the operation in Santa Fé over a four month period.

In order to improve support to the ARC which is currently implementing two significant relief operations, the staff of the Federation's sub regional office will be temporarily increased in the days to come, to include a logistician and a member of PADRU, who are assisting the ARC in the planning and implementation of the operation.

Media/Public Information w

Various activities are carried out on a daily basis to inform the media and the public both at the ARC and Federation level. A team of six volunteers studying communications joined the media office set up at the ARC branch in Santa Fé. Press releases are sent to the media and published on the ARC web site. News provided to the media include ARC stocks and delivery procedures, as well as other practical information.

Informative articles and materials on psycho-social support for adults and children are published in the local media. A CD Rom with informative videos shot in Santa Fé illustrating ARC activities has been made. It will soon be published on the ARC web site and provided to those interested. The ARC disaster information centre's web page (<http://www.cruzroja.org.ar/desastres/index.html>) is continuously updated with information from the field, as is the Federation's DMIS web page.

On 20 of May, a concert was held in a famous Buenos Aires theatre in front of almost 7,000 spectators. The entire proceeds were granted for ARC activities in Santa Fé, and the national television publicized the evening. ARC flyers and other informative pamphlets were distributed on this occasion.

Outstanding needs w

International response to this appeal has been prompt and effective. The American, Austrian, Finnish, German, Japanese, Norwegian, Spanish and Swedish Red Cross Societies have pledged support for the floods response operation. Contributions registered are in the form of both multilateral and bilateral funding channelled towards the objectives of the Federation appeal, and support is also being provided by UNICEF and other agencies.

Medicines and hygiene kits required for the health component of the appeal remain unfunded. As a result, the ARC invested some USD 10,000 to provide 400 emergency basic cleaning kits. Further funding is therefore needed to ensure that the objectives related to health and care are achieved.

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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.

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's website.

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

Argentina - floods

ANNEX 1

APPEAL No. 10/2003

PLEDGES RECEIVED

23.05.2003

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
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CASH

REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->					607'000	TOTAL COVERAGE 83.2%	
AMERICAN - RC		15'000	USD	20'393	12.05.03		
AUSTRIAN - RC		40'000	EUR	60'440	19.05.03		
FINNISH - RC		25'000	EUR	37'775	09.05.03		
GERMAN - GOVT/RC		62'000	EUR	93'682	16.05.03	BILATERAL	
JAPANESE - RC		15'000	USD	20'393	15.05.03		
NORWEGIAN - RC		300'000	NOK	56'100	16.05.03		
SPANISH - RC		90'000	EUR	135'990	22.05.03	BILATERAL	
SWEDISH - GOVT/RC		500'000	SEK	80'000	19.05.03		
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				504'773	CHF	83.2%	

KIND AND SERVICES (INCLUDING PERSONNEL)

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES				0	CHF	0.0%

ADDITIONAL TO APPEAL BUDGET

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED				0	CHF	