

DREF Bulletin 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

no. MDRAR001
Update no. 1
28 April 2006

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 183 countries.

In Brief

Period covered by this update: 22 April to 28 April 2006.

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

- CHF 100,000 (USD 78,417 or EUR 63,517) allocated from the Federations DREF to respond to the needs of this operation.

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 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.

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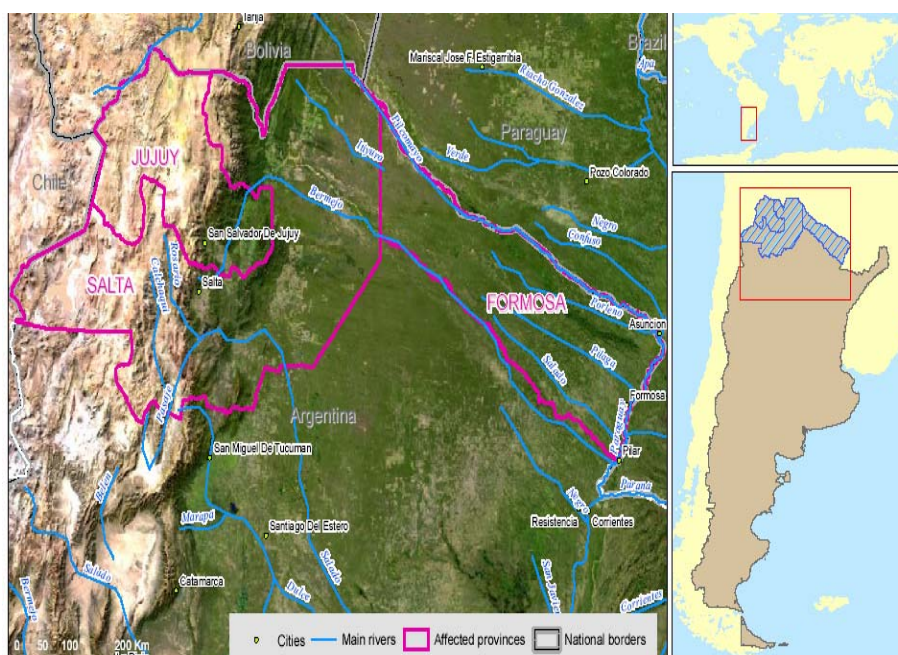
All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations \(NGO's\) in Disaster Relief](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

For longer-term programmes in this or other countries or regions, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for national society profiles, please also access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

Background and current situation

Heavier than normal rainfall has caused significant flooding in Argentina, affecting a total area of about 250,000 km² in the country. The most affected areas are the north of the province of Salta (the departments of San Martín, Rivadavia and Orán), the east of the province of Jujuy and west of the province of Formosa. The rainy season, which began at the end of 2005 and early 2006, has intensified significantly since the end of March. Due to the mountainous terrain in the area, the heavy rains have caused flooding and landslides near some of the region's main rivers, destroying at least 150 homes and several bridges. The most affected areas are near the banks of the Pilcomayo, Bermejo, Seco and Tartagal rivers. Some of the most affected populations are the aboriginal Guaraníes, Wichis and Matacos communities. In general, the affected population presents a high level of vulnerability due to long term social problems, such as unemployment, limited opportunities to create or access jobs, and low education, among others.

The flooding has isolated a large number of communities. Due to the large size of the affected area, much of which is difficult to access, it is difficult to determine the exact number of families who inhabit these areas and have been affected. It is estimated that some 1,500 people have been evacuated and more than 1,000 families have been



affected. The majority of those evacuated have been able to return home; however some 250 people in the area of Tartagal remain in shelters. In the departments of Rivadavia and Orán, it is estimated that 600 people have been evacuated with no possibility of returning to their homes due to the serious damages suffered. Although meteorologists are predicting increased rainfall over the next three months, the weather conditions have recently improved in the province of Salta, and the water levels in the Pilcomayo and Bermejo rivers have begun to go down. This has allowed several roads to be reopened and some evacuated families to return to their homes.

Provincial and national authorities, with the support of the Argentine Army and the National Police, continue coordinating actions, administering the evacuation centres and providing humanitarian assistance; however, there is still a high level of need, particularly in isolated communities. The Argentine government is working to improve infrastructure in the area through constructing and relocating homes, channelling river waters and increasing flood defence systems. To date, the Salta Province Institute of Housing has assisted 367 families, 139 of which lived near the banks of rivers; these same families may receive new houses through a government housing initiative. The Argentine Ministry of Health has sent 16 tonnes of medicines, and has also begun vaccination campaigns directed at the general public and the evacuation centres. In addition, organizations such as Red Solidaria, Caritas and Scouts of Argentina, have opened donation collection centres in various locations in Buenos Aires and, in the case of Caritas, throughout the country.

Red Cross action

Two members of the Argentine Red Cross (ARC) National Intervention Team (NIT) and technical staff were deployed to the area to conduct an assessment of the situation and draw up the plan of action in support of the relief operations. The plan of action is to support 1,800 people in the city of Tartagal, in the province of Salta, over a period of 30 days. The ARC has determined that there is a need for drinking water, personal hygiene kits, cleaning kits, kitchen kits and milk. To support the plan of action, CHF 100,000 have been provided from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF). The plan of action includes the following:

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 with 20,000 diapers to the evacuated families that have children less than two years of age.

As of the writing this report, activities towards the achievement of this objective had started with the purchase of the relief items.

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 activities to be carried out are as follows:

Three NIT members will be deployed this weekend to:

- Support and train volunteers in water and sanitation
- Support and train volunteers in disaster preparedness
- Support the branch in stockroom management

In the area of water and sanitation, community awareness-raising measures have begun with the training of volunteers in domestic hygiene and safe water issues.

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

Activities towards the achievement of this objective have started with the training to volunteers.

The Federation Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) continues to monitor the situation, coordinate actions and provide technical support to the ARC in its humanitarian relief activities. The ARC situation updates are available on the National Society's website at www.cruzroja.org.ar.

The needs

There is a scarcity of drinking water in some areas of Iruya (north western region of the province of Salta).

Coordination

The ARC has established communications with the "Cascos Blancos" Commission in order to immediately identify and prioritize the humanitarian assistance to be provided by the National Society. The ARC has also established logistics agreements for storage and transport with the Salta Food Bank and the Argentine Army. In addition, "Aerolíneas Argentinas" is providing free space on one of their flights to send urgently needed visibility items.

The ARC has contacted and is now working with the Crisis Committee, which is led by the Civil Defence in the province of Salta and is composed at the national level of various municipal, provincial and national authorities, the army, universities, aboriginal community representatives and non governmental organizations, in order to coordinate efforts and avoid a duplication of activities.

Finally, the ARC is maintaining close contact with the Ministry of Health to constantly monitor the possibility of outbreaks of epidemics in the area.

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