

Information bulletin



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Chile: Volcanic Eruption

Information Bulletin
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This bulletin is being issued for information only. On 2 May, 2008 at 02:00 hours the Chaitén volcano started to erupt after being inactive for many years. A red alert was issued in the community of Chaitén in the southern region of Chile, due to the extreme volcanic activity of the Chaitén volcano. Local authorities from Chaitén and Futaleufú have evacuated approximately 8,000 people to other regions. The city of Chaitén has been reported isolated since the main road is blocked by a layer of 15 cm of ash. The communities of El Amarillo and Chana are also performing evacuation activities. The Chilean Red Cross in coordination with government authorities is constantly monitoring the situation.



The Chilean Red Cross has developed a Plan of Action and requested money from the Federation's Disaster Response Emergency Funds to help implement this Plan of Action. More information will follow within the next few days.

The Chaitén volcano erupting hot gas, molten rock and ash. Source: Reuters

[<click here to view the map of the affected area, or here for detailed contact information>](#)

The Situation

On 2 May 2008, the Chaitén volcano, located 760 miles south of the Chilean capital Santiago, started to erupt molten rock and ash after being dormant for 173 years, according to the National Service of Geology and Mining, forcing people within a 30 mile radius to be evacuated from their houses. According to the National Emergency Office (Oficina Nacional de Emergencia – ONEMI), some 8,000 people from the affected areas have been evacuated to Puerto Montt and Castro, but there are some people in the areas of Palena and Futaleufú that cannot be evacuated by air due to the ash clouds. The ash clouds are reaching 14 km of altitude.

The most affected communities are the city of Chaitén, Futaleufú, El Amarillo and Chana. Local authorities have interrupted water service in Chaitén as a preventive measure. The rest of utility services are still operating. The Armed Forces have sent a water tank to Chaitén holding 70,000 liters of water to be distributed. Ashes have reached communities in the Andean mountains of Chile and Argentina forcing schools to close. Some 90

percent of the evacuees is currently staying with friends or family; the other 10 percent is housed in temporary shelters. These have been opened in Castro and Puerto Montt.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Since the beginning of the emergency the Chilean Red Cross (CRC) has been constantly monitoring the situation and is coordinating actions with local authorities and the ONEMI. It has activated several local branches and has mobilized 50 volunteers from the local branches of Los Rios, Los Lagos and Aysen to provide psychosocial support to 1,000 people in the shelters in Puerto Montt and Castro. The psychosocial effect of traumatic events, such as the eruption itself and the subsequent displacement of people who are forced to leave their houses, is widely acknowledged and require immediate action. These actions have been undertaken in coordination with the National System for Civil Protection. The following communities were reached:

Locality	Shelters
Puerto Montt	313
Quellón	14
Castro	94
Chonchi	42
Osorno	50
Total	513

The Plan of Action has as its main objective to provide humanitarian aid to 1,000 families in the disaster area, by providing hygiene kits and psychosocial support activities. More detailed information on this plan will become available in the next few days.

The CRC is coordinating all of its activities with the Government, state institutions and Non Governmental Organisations (NGO) that are currently operating in the area. The CRC is a member of the National Civil Protection Commission. In operational terms, the coordination of activities with the Provincial Committee of Civil Protection directed by the Governor in the disaster zone is being developed.

The International Federation, through the Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) and the Regional Representation Office for South America in Lima are in contact and are coordinating with the CRC. Monitoring and follow-up activities will be undertaken by PADRU during the evolution of the event.

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

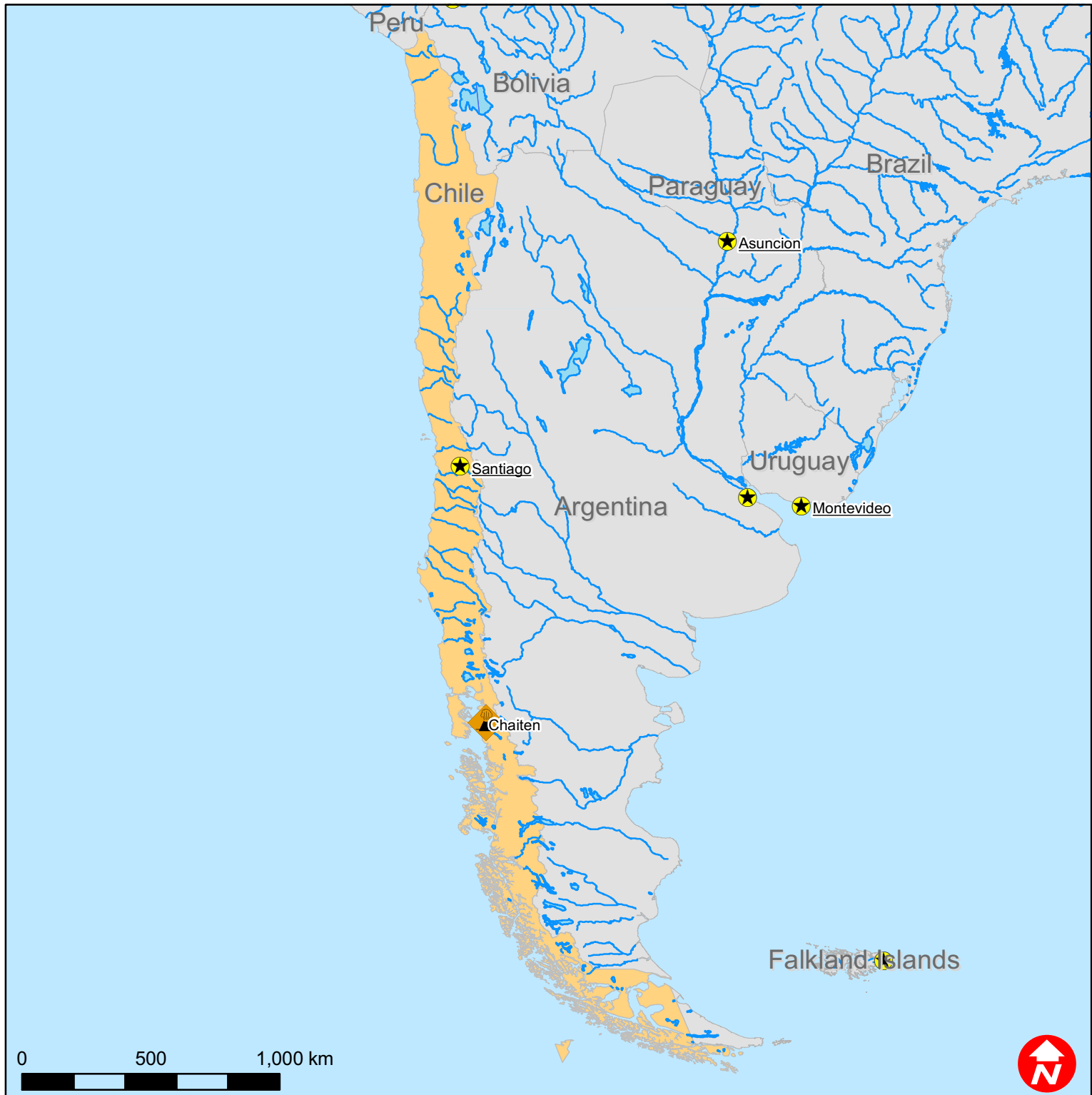
For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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[<map below; click here to return to the title page](#)



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