# Information bulletin

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

# South America: Dengue Outbreak

**Information bulletin n° 1**
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**EP-2009-000013-BOL**
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**Since the beginning of 2009, several South American countries including Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Paraguay and Peru, are experiencing dengue outbreaks. The dengue outbreaks have emerged after the heavy rains during the first two months of the year, increasing the breeding grounds for the Aedes aegypti mosquito.**

Children in a hospital in the Santa Cruz department in Bolivia with dengue symptoms. Source: Los Tiempos (Online newspaper).

**This bulletin is being issued for information only, and reflects the current situation and details available at this time. The Argentine Red Cross, Brazilian Red Cross, and Paraguayan Red Cross Societies, with the support of the Federation, have determined that currently external assistance is not required, and are therefore not seeking funding or other assistance from donors at this time. The Bolivian Red Cross has received DREF funding totalling CHF 140,437 and that the Peruvian Red Cross is assessing the need for an application for DREF funding. Should the situation continue to deteriorate, further actions will be considered in order to support the National Societies in the affected countries.**

***<Click here to view the map of the affected area, or here for detailed contact information>***

## The Situation

In the Americas, over 30 countries have notified a total of 4,332,731 cases of dengue within the period of 2001-2007. Within the same period, 106,037 cases of hemorrhagic dengue fever (HDF) have been reported, and 1,299 people have died because of the disease.

Between January and February 2009, different dengue outbreaks have been reported in the Southern Cone region and Andean region of South America. The following tables details the number of cases, national incidence rate and deaths recorded in Bolivia, Brazil and Paraguay:

| | Bolivia | Brazil | Paraguay |
|---|---|---|---|
| N° of clinic cases of dengue | 33,735 | 30,008 | 679 |
| National indecency rate* | 346 | 17 | 12 |
| N° of cases of HDF | 90 | 71 | 0 |
| N° of deaths | 19 | 3 | 0 |
| Mortality rate | 21.1 % | 4.2% | 0% |
| Identified types | DEN 1,2 and 3 | DEN 1,2 and 3 | DEN 1 and 3 |

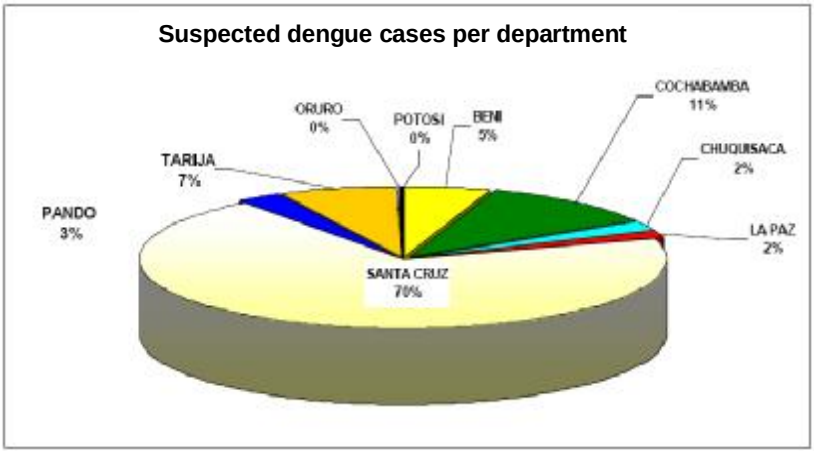
* Rate per 100,000 inhabitants. Source: Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) — World Health Organization (WHO)

The Andean region has experienced severe rainfall during the first months of the year, increasing the breeding grounds for the Aedes aegypti mosquito. Due to stagnant water from the rains, an increase in dengue cases and outbreaks has been recorded throughout the region.

**Bolivia** is suffering one of the worst dengue epidemics in decades. According to the incidence rate of clinical cases of dengue per 100,000 inhabitants, the most affected departments are Pando (1,090), Santa Cruz de la Sierra (1,059), Tarija (548), Beni (391) and Cochabamba (214). In Bolivia, the outbreak continues to increase, especially in the Santa Cruz de la Sierra department. The region has an approximate population of two million people that are at risk, in particular should the outbreak continue to extend and no appropriate measures are taken. Due to the gravity of the situation, the Ministry of Health declared a national alert on 12 January 2009.

Since the beginning of the outbreak, the Departmental Health Services (Servicios Departamentales de Salud, SEDES) and the Ministry of Health have carried out preventive measures through the implementation of an awareness-raising campaign against dengue.

The following graph shows the dengue situation per department in Bolivia during the first two months of 2009:




Source: National Epidemiological Unit of the Ministry of Health and Sports (Ministerio de Salud y Deportes), Bolivia.

On 23 February 2009, the Minister of Health in **Paraguay** declared a national epidemiological alert for dengue. The government has started implementing the contingency plan envisaged in the Integrated Management Strategy for the Prevention and Control of Dengue (Estrategia de Gestión Integrada de Prevención y Control del Dengue) in Paraguay. To date, 506 cases of dengue have been confirmed in the entire country. The highest incidence rates (per 100,000 inhabitants) are found in the departments of Concepción (61), Amambay (24), Boquerón (3,6), Caaguazú (3,3), Central (1,6) and Asunción (1,5). Paraguay experienced a severe dengue outbreak in 2007, which led to increased preparedness based on lessons learnt in order to address future outbreaks. Thanks to the efforts made in 2007, national authorities have been able to detect the current outbreak on time. The Paraguayan government is responding to the emergency with significant actions to prevent further cases.

In **Brazil**, the national incidence rate is relatively low (17,3 per 100,000 inhabitants), however the analysis per state reflects a worrying reality. 71 per cent of dengue cases are registred in the states of Acre, Roraima, Espiritu Santo, Amapá, Bahía and Minas Gerais. The incidence rate per state can be seen in the following table:

| State | Incidence rate per 100,000 inhabitants |
|---|---|
| Acre | 514.4 |
| Roraima | 322.0 |
| Espiritu Santo | 129.0 |
| Amapá | 73.0 |
| Bahía | 47.7 |
| Minas Gerais | 22.9 |

Source: Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) — World Health Organization (WHO)

In **Argentina**, during the month of February the national authorities confirmed 50 cases of dengue in the north area of the country, bordering with Bolivia. The dengue cases that were identified in the country were recorded in the municipalities of Orán, Salvador, Mazza and Tartagal in the Salta province. The Salta province has been affected by floods due to the intense rains. Cases have also been reported in the Catamarca province, where ten cases have been confirmed. Authorities from the Ministry of Health started implementing vector control actions jointly with their provincial counterparts and disseminating prevention measures in the communities in order to control the situation and prevent new cases.

In **Peru**, 5,000 cases of dengue have been recorded in the first three months of the year. The Ministry has launched a campaign to address dengue, with the objective of raising awareness amongst the population about the disease and how to prevent it. The campaign focused on providing information on sanitary control and the elimination of mosquito breeding grounds.

The Ministers of Health of the Andean region from Bolivia, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela will meet in Lima from 26 to 27 March 2009 to develop a common agenda to find joint solutions to problems in the region. One of the key topics of the agenda will include addressing the dengue crisis.

# Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The International Federation through its Regional Representation Office for Andean Countries based in Lima, and the Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) based in Panama are closely monitoring the situation and supporting the implementation of prevention and control actions by the National Societies.

The **Bolivian Red Cross** (BRC) has been concentrating all its efforts on preventive and awareness raising activities amongst the population through health brigades in the departments of Santa Cruz and Beni. The BRC relief, disaster and health units have been monitoring the emergency through the nine local branches (one in each department). 60 volunteers, 20 from each of the departments of Beni, Cochabamba and Santa Cruz, will be mobilized and trained to provide support during the emergency response. In addition, the BRC is closely coordinating actions with local authorities in the affected departments.

On 5 March 2009, CHF 140,437 (USD 119,658 or EUR 95,033) was allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to support the Bolivian Red Cross in delivering immediate assistance to 9,000 households (approximately 44,000 beneficiaries) in the department of Beni, Cochabamba and Santa Cruz. The plan of action was prepared by the BRC, with support from the Federation, and includes the fumigation of 9,000 houses, to benefit approximately 44,000 people over three months. In addition, the BRC plans to distribute 1,200 insecticide-treated mosquito nets to vulnerable families. An awareness raising campaign will also be implemented with key messages on how to prevent dengue amongst the affected families in the departments of Santa Cruz, Cochabamba, and Beni. For more information on the proposed operation, please see the DREF Bulletin available on the Federation website: http://www.ifrc.org/docs/appeals/rpts09/MDRBO004.pdf

In addition, the Swiss Red Cross has generously contributed bilaterally to the Bolivian Red Cross with USD 74,000. The BRC has been able to scale up its response and increase the geographic area of operation thanks to this support from the Swiss Red Cross.

The **Argentine Red Cross** (ARC) is currently involved in the response operation for the landslide in the citiy of Tartagal caused by severe rainfall in February and is receiving DREF funding totaling CHF 164,000. In this operation, an emergency health component was included as a dengue outbreak was expected after intense rains. For this reason, the current DREF operation has expanded its coverage without a budgetary increase to be able to carry out dengue prevention activities in Tartagal through a dengue prevention campaign. Actions

are focused on the distribution of material with information on dengue prevention and control in strategic areas, distribution of posters with key health messages to hospitals, community centres and businesses, awareness raising workshops at the community level and dissemination of messages through radio spots.

The **Peruvian Red Cross** is developing a plan of action focusing on a campaign for the prevention and control of the dengue outbreak in the region of Selva, to support the actions of the Ministry of Health.

The **Paraguayan Red Cross** is closely monitoring the evolution of the dengue outbreak through its branches in high risk areas. These branches were strengthened through the campaigns completed during the emergency response operations during 2007 for dengue, and in 2008 for yellow fever and dengue. For more information on this past DREF operations please visit the Federation website.

## 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:**


- In Argentina: Osvaldo Ferrero, President of the Argentine Red Cross; phone: (54) 11 4952 7200; fax: (54) 11 4952 7715.
- In Brazil: Luiz Fernando Hernández, President of the Brazilian Red Cross; phone: 5521-2221-0658; fax: 5521-2292-5458
- In Bolivia: Dr. Abel Peña y Lillo, President, Bolivian Red Cross, e-mail cruzrobo@entelnet.bo; phone: (5912) 220 2934/ 212 9225; fax: (5912) 235 9102.
- In Paraguay: Luis Díaz de Bedoya, President of the Paraguazan Red Cross; e-mail: crppcia@uninet.com.py; phone: 59521-222-797; fax: 59521-208-199
- In Peru: Mario Ríos, Executive Director of the Peruvian Red Cross; phone: (511) 265-8783; fax: (511) 470-0599.
- In Lima: Giorgio Ferrario, Regional Representative for Andean Countries, Lima; e-mail: giorgio.ferrario@ifrc.org; phone: (511) 221-8151; fax (511) 441-3607.
- In Buenos Aires: Gustavo Ramirez, Regional Representative for the Southern Cone; e-mail: gustavo.ramirez@ifrc.org
- In Panama: Ariel Kestens, Head of the Pan American Disaster Response Unit; e-mail: ariel.kestens@ifrc.org; phone: (507) 316 1001; fax: (507) 316-1082.
- In Panama: Ghotai Ghazialam, disaster management delegate for the Bolivian DREF dengue response operation and the Argentine DREF landslide operation, PADRU; e-mail: ghotai.ghazialam@ifrc.org; phone: (507) 316 1001; fax: (507) 316-1082.
- In Peru: In Panama: Maria Alcázar, Resource Mobilization Coordinator, Americas Zone; e-mail: maria.alcazar@ifrc.org; phone: (507) 380 0250; fax: (507) 317 1304.
- In Geneva: Pablo Medina, Operations Coordinator for the Americas, email pablo.medina@ifrc.org; phone: (41) 22 730 4381; fax: (41) 22 733 0395.


***<Map below; click here to return to the title page or contact information>***

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

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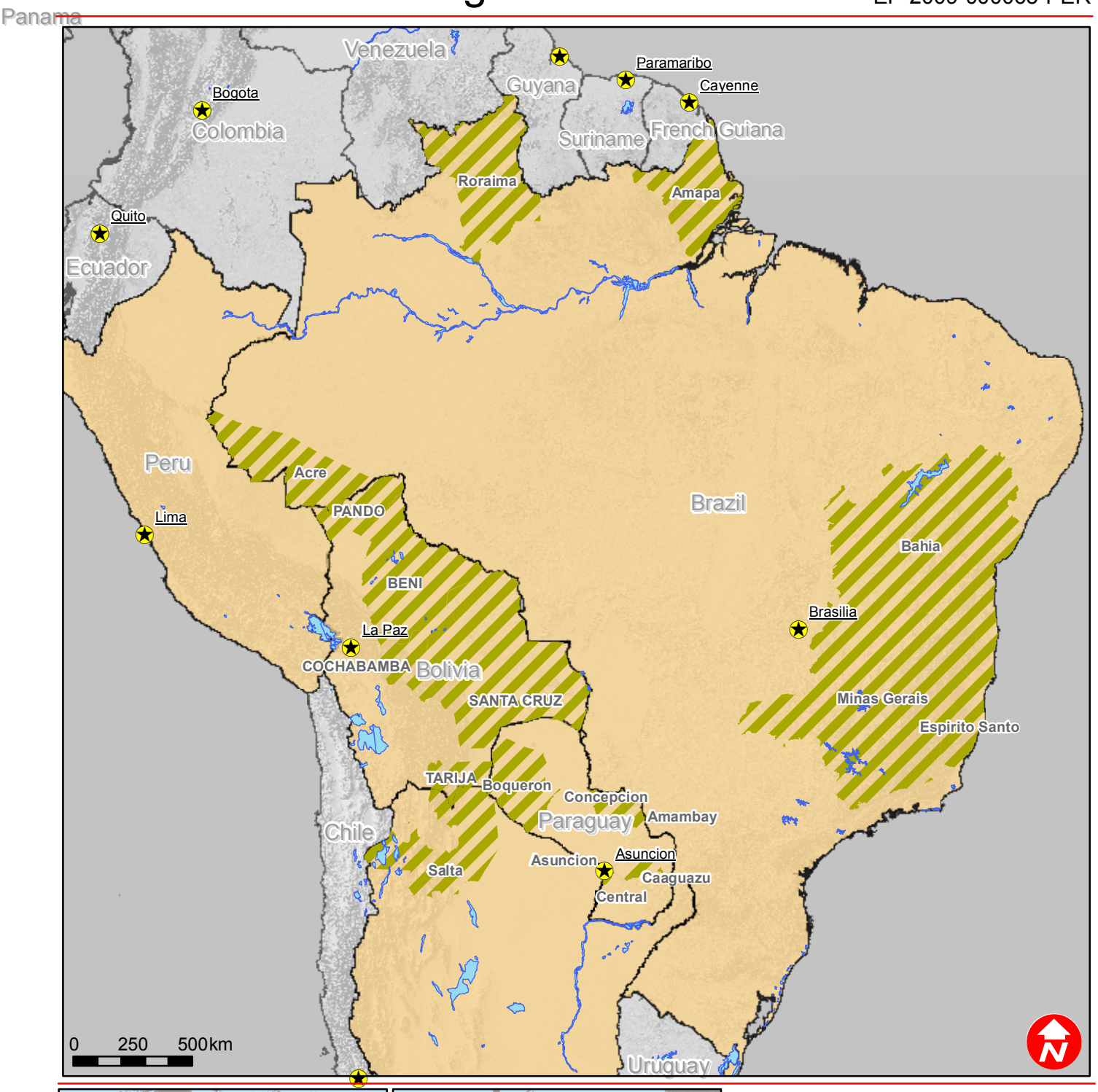

Affected areas
Lakes
Capitals

The maps used do not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies or National Societies concerning the legal status of a territory or of its authorities. Map data sources:ESRI, DEVINFO, International Federation - IB160309.MXD