

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

27 August 2003

Appeal No. 10/03 ; Operations Update no. 3

Appeal launched on 6 May 2003 for CHF 607,000 for three months for 8,000 beneficiaries. The operation has been extended until 31 October given the need to distribute additional relief goods.

Disaster Relief Emergency Funds (DREF) allocated: CHF 50,000

Period covered: 20 May – 20 July 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 over 180 countries.

For more information: www.ifrc.org

In Brief

Appeal coverage: 125.8%

Outstanding needs: None

Related Emergency or Annual Appeals: 01.51/2003 South America

Operational Summary: The emergency phase of the floods operation has been completed and currently only 2,600 people remain in evacuation centres. An assessment carried out in June resulted in the revision of the Argentine Red Cross (ARC) plan of action to assist those affected by the floods. Beneficiaries selected are those housed in eight evacuation centres and families from the neighbourhood of Monte Vera, north of the city of Santa Fé and one of the communities worst affected by the floods. Adjustments were made to the relief assistance required and new items identified including stoves and furniture, given that returnee families lost their property in the flood waters. The time-frame of the operation has been extended until 31 October in order that the additional components of the plan of action may be implemented. Distributions of personal hygiene sets for women and family hygiene packs donated by UNICEF are ongoing. The ARC vaccination and prevention campaign in support of the Ministry of Health was completed and 5,000 persons received vaccinations. Behaviour change in the evacuation centres has been secured through awareness-campaigns and dialogue with the evacuees. Effective coordination with bilateral Red Cross partners and external organizations has proved key to the success of the flood response operation.

Operational developments

Although there is no longer an emergency situation in Santa Fé, it is estimated that it will take years of sustained reconstruction and rehabilitation work in order that the conditions in the region return to those of the pre-disaster phase.

Water has now drained away both in the city and its surroundings, and public services such as schools, resumed at the beginning of June. The population in evacuation centres has been reduced from over 50,000 to a current 2,600 in 34 centres. Eight of these centres hold the majority of beneficiaries and are assisted by the Argentine Red Cross.

People still living in the centres are those who lost their homes and for whom the local authorities are planning new residential areas in safe zones. Security conditions have improved and although there are a number of protests by evacuees, the previous levels of tension have been reduced.

Experts forecast that climate conditions will not pose problems, although temperatures have fallen given that it is the winter season. Health problems among the population have subsided and are now within the seasonal average for the region, both in terms of persons affected and nature of disease. Concern at present is more related to diseases induced by the climate, such as bronchitis, rather than to possible epidemics.

The collection of garbage, which created serious problems for public health, has much improved, and the situation is now under control. Significant progress has also been made in hygiene and sanitation as evacuees have been trained and are succeeding in keeping the centres tidy.

Despite the fact that water subsided from all the affected areas, it is estimated that it will take much time to solve problems related to sectors such as public infrastructure, agriculture and industry. A study drafted by the UNDP for the provincial government estimates that damage and losses produced by the floods amount to Argentine Pesos (ARP) 2,879 millions, approximately USD 1,000 million.

This damage can be summarized, as follows:

- Social infrastructure: housing, health system, education and sports;
- Infrastructure: drinking water, sewer systems, electricity, transportation and telecommunications;
- Production: agriculture and cattle raising, industry and trade;
- The environment.

According to the document, reconstruction and rehabilitation activities will need to include financial assistance to the affected population and services, an effective early warning system and awareness campaigns in disaster prevention, while further development plans should include risk management and planning.

Provincial authorities confirmed that around 15,000 persons are in need of a new house and a fifth of the 25,000 damaged houses 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 Argentine Army is running a door to door service in order to estimate damage and to deliver food items, clothes and cleaning sets to returnees, while local authorities are conducting a survey in the affected areas in order to provide modest financial assistance to house owners.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Around 5,000 persons: 320 families from eight evacuation centres and 633 from the neighbourhood of Monte Vera were identified during the month of June as beneficiaries of ARC relief assistance. The needs of these beneficiaries, both at the centres and community level, resulted in an adjustment in the plan of action: new items were identified, such as stoves for evacuees and furniture for inhabitants of Monte Vera.

The vaccination and prophylaxis campaign in support of Ministry of Health's activities to prevent the spread of leptospirosis has been concluded, and, at present, volunteers' main duties include surveys and information sessions in the centres and neighbourhoods, distribution of relief items and different kits, and psychological support to evacuees.

Cataloguing and distribution of public donations and relief items included into the appeal continue according to the Pan American Health Organization's (PAHO) SUMA system.

As of 15 July, the ARC had delivered a total of 125 trucks of relief goods provided by businesses, the Army and Navy and private individuals, with a total of 2,500 tonnes of humanitarian aid, including food and non food items.

Red Cross and Red Crescent Society

The two branches of the ARC which were partially or totally flooded, Santa Fé and San Cristóbal, resumed regular activities in the month of June.

Since the outset of the operation, more than 1,000 ARC volunteers, lifeguards and nurses from over 20 ARC branches around the country gathered in Santa Fé. 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. With the close of the emergency phase, the number of volunteers involved in relief and assistance operations in Santa Fé has been reduced from an average of 50 to an average of 20 per day.

The ARC national headquarters in Buenos Aires is coordinating the operation with the branch of Santa Fé, with the Federation's sub regional office providing support to the operation.

Objectives, activities and results

A readjustment of the plan of action was approved in mid June in order to better respond to beneficiaries' needs. ARC activities are now focusing on the most vulnerable sectors of the population: people who had to remain in evacuation centres because their homes were destroyed and returnees from rural communities who lost property, crops and cattle. Furniture and kitchen sets were added to the new list of items required, following a needs assessment carried out together with beneficiaries. In order to complete this new part of the plan of action, it will be necessary to extend the operation to the end of October 2003.

The assistance is provided according to SPHERE guidelines, and includes food, cleaning and hygiene sets within the appeal as well as public and private donations.

The operation is also providing beneficiaries in evacuees centres with psycho-social support and aims to offer community disaster preparedness in the event of future disasters.

Relief distribution of food and basic non-food items

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 3 July, the ARC had distributed public donations to a total of 60,591 beneficiaries in 320 evacuation 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:

Item	Quantity
Mineral water	68,992 units
Cotton	269 packs
Bleach	3,189 litres
Clothes	17,120 sacks
Shoes	3,141 sacks
Nappies	247,581 units
Toilet paper	6,743 packs
Bad sheets	8,690 pairs
Blankets	7,819 units
Mattresses	5,008 units
Matches	3,323 boxes
Soap	5718 units
Towels	2,789 units
Candles	11,014 units

Appeal title: Argentina: Floods in Santa Fé Province; Appeal no. 10/03; Operations Update no. 3

Pillows	2,107 units
Detergent	122 litres
Beds	8 units
Toys	89 sacks
Chlorine	55 packs
Camp lamp	118 units
Lamps	190 units

With regard to food assistance, the following public aid has been distributed:

Item	Quantity
Oil	1,620 litres
Rice	7,370 kg
Soup broth	16,802 packs
Salt	2009 kg
Bread	209 kg
Pasta	8,559 kg
Wheat flour	6,492 kg
Maize flour	9,950 kg
Tomato sauce	7,370 units
Canned beans	412 units
Dried beans	1,980 kg
Fresh vegetables	7 packs
Dairy products	674 packs
Powdered milk	11,173 kg
Long life milk	15,185 litres
Sugar	6,891 kg
Tea	18,245 boxes
Mate cocido (tea)	1,4048 boxes
Hierba mate (tea)	7,335 kg
Cakes	799 packs
Biscuits	5,471 packs
Cocoa	7,645 packs
Jam	252 boxes

As of 3 July, ARC volunteers had distributed also the following kits, included in the Federation appeal:

Family food packages (8 persons/1 month)	1,270 units
Cleaning kits	363 units
Personal hygiene sets	1,317 units
Female hygiene sets	10,378 units
Kitchen sets	34 units

The plan of action for the assistance to flood victims was revised in mid June, at which time eight evacuation centres and the beneficiaries from Monte Vera were identified for assistance.

The eight centres to which the Argentine Red Cross is providing assistance within the Federation appeal are:

Evacuation centre	Number of beneficiaries
Belgrano station and warehouse	650 116
La Florida	300
Campo Universitario	127

Telecom warehouse	116
Peñalosa y Hernanderias warehouse	48
Flenor warehouse	55
Grossi Warehouse	35
Mitre station	125
TOTAL	1,572 (320 families)

The number of beneficiaries indicated in the above figure is approximate since it corresponds to evacuees identified as per the ARC survey on 3 July.

Assistance within the appeal is also being provided to 633 families from the neighbourhood of Monte Vera, for a total of 3,165 persons. This community, north of the city of Santa Fe, is one of the most affected by the floods and is a rural area in which crops were destroyed by the floods and where arable lands will be unproductive for several months as a result of the high level of humidity. The assistance provided to this neighbourhood, which is the only help received by the community, has been made possible thanks to funding from the German government obtained through the German Red Cross.

The population from Monte Vera has been divided into three categories according to their needs, with groups “A” and “B”, for a total of 280 families, being the most needy, and group “C”, composed of 353 families with less significant needs.

Families from Monte Vera have received the following items:

Item	Quantity
Blankets	2,000 units
Mattresses	2,000 units
Bed sheets	2,000 pairs
Pillows	2,000 units
Towels	4,000 units
Hygiene kits	500 units

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

Following the needs assessment and the adjustments made to the plan of action, it was decided to interrupt the purchase of mattresses and blankets, already widely distributed by the ARC, the local government and other NGOs, and to respond to other needs, as indicated by the beneficiaries.

As water completely flooded ground floors of houses, gas stoves and basic furniture sets represent an extremely urgent need, particularly for people who have returned to their homes.

For this reason, Spanish Red Cross funds previously assigned for the purchase of mattresses and blankets have been reallocated for the purchase of kitchen sets, gas stoves and basic furniture, which represent a new component of the relief assistance. Spanish Red Cross funded delivery of hygiene kits and food items is continuing and the next batch is expected for the beginning of August.

The 280 families from Monte Vera included in groups “A” and “B” received kits of stoves and furniture, while thanks to funding from Oxfam, it was possible to enter into an agreement with a technical high school in the community for the provision of wood for the construction of furniture for 50 families. These families are now building their own furniture sets made up of 2 beds, 1 table, 4 chairs and 1 kitchen cupboard.

Gas stoves are also being distributed to evacuation centres. This allows families to eat together and to recreate an atmosphere of a “household”, thereby improving living conditions and indirectly reducing the risk of social tension in the centres.

Health and Care

There are currently no public health concerns and epidemiological statistics are in accordance with average local indicators, both in the evacuation centres and in the province. The ARC vaccination and prevention campaign in support of the Ministry of Public Health's activities to prevent outbreaks of leptospirosis was completed with 5,000 persons fully vaccinated.

The delivery of cleaning kits and hygiene sets is ongoing and almost completed, as well as the delivery of public aid and bilateral donations related to health and care issues. The response to the hygiene awareness campaign carried out by ARC volunteers and Oxfam proved effective, and beneficiaries organized themselves in order to keep clean both private and public spaces in the centres.

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

Joint ARC and Oxfam teams are visiting evacuation centres on a regular basis, giving information to beneficiaries on hygiene and cleanliness. As a result of these activities, there has been behaviour change, and evacuation centres are now clean and free of garbage.

Intervention by Oxfam also included the adaptation of public toilets and showers, construction of cleaning equipment, and training of beneficiaries in health promotion, HIV/AIDS, other sexually transmitted diseases and water and sanitation. At the end of June, ARC and Oxfam experts held a seminar for volunteers, NGOs and public institutions on hygiene related issues.

As a part of the improvement of hygiene and living conditions, the community of Monte Vera received from Oxfam the necessary tools to repair a broken aqueduct, which will provide water for 483 beneficiaries.

ARC volunteers are distributing 20,000 personal hygiene sets for women and 350 family hygiene packs donated by UNICEF. The content of these kits is as follows:

Family hygiene kits (350 units)	
Item	Quantity
Detergent	10 litres
Bleach	10 litres
Shampoo	5 litres
Cloth	10 units
Duster	10 units
Sponge	10 units
Neutral soap	10 units
Garbage bags	100 units
Toilet paper	40 rolls
Toothpaste	10 units
Toothbrush (adult and child)	40 units
Disinfectant	10 litres

Female hygiene kits (20,000 units)	
Item	Quantity
Sanitary towels	40 units
Neutral soap	2 units
Deodorant	1 unit
Refreshing tissues	70 units

Thirty thousands brochures on health and care, drawn up by UNICEF experts, have been distributed to the affected population, together with a further 5,000 leaflets on hygiene and sanitation issued by the ARC. 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 sexually transmitted diseases
- promotion of breast feeding
- use of oral rehydration salts.

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 areas .

While during the emergency phase ARC volunteers delivered medicines directly to beneficiaries together with Médicos sin Fronteras (MSF), in the post emergency phase assistance is provided by the Ministry of Public Health, which is providing drugs to evacuation and health centres in need of medicines. As of 15 July, 14 evacuation centres, 8 schools, 4 primary health centres and 2 hospitals, together with the Ministry of Health's Department for Pharmacy and Biochemistry, have been provided with antibiotics, anti hypertension pills, analgesics, anti diabetics, antiseptics, anti parasitic medicines.

Disaster preparedness

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

Training of the population training in disaster preparedness is not currently taking place as a separate activity, given the lack of appropriate conditions in the vulnerable communities. Basic awareness activities are carried out by volunteers in evacuation centres, while information provided to the media includes elements of disaster prevention.

Advocacy

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

Activities run so far in order to reduce social tension in evacuation centres include speeches, psycho-social consultancy and delivery of relief items according to transparent criteria. Needs assessments and readjustments in relief baskets have been decided together with beneficiaries, who have taken the responsibility to take care of the centres.

Coordination

Since the situation has returned to normal, the number of meetings held by the inter-agency crisis group has been considerably reduced. Nonetheless, bilateral relations with partners involved in the operation continue actively both in Santa Fé and Buenos Aires, where ARC activities were recently presented to a forum of NGOs and other stakeholders.

At the operational level, coordination is closely maintained with Oxfam regarding water and sanitation issues, with UNICEF regarding maintenance of hygiene, with Caritas, the Municipality and the Province regarding priorities for assistance and with the Argentine Army regarding logistics and transportation. Intensive information exchange continues with local authorities and NGOs.

Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement – Principles and initiatives

- Ongoing activities, as well as search and rescue and relief activities carried out during the emergency phase, are based on the principle of humanity.
- Beneficiary selection criteria focus on the level of vulnerability of those affected, 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 supported by 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.

National Society Capacity Building

The National Society ensured effective response to the disaster in terms of coordination and resources, implementing successfully both the emergency and the post emergency phases: improved organizational and decision making processes were adopted at both the headquarters and branch levels.

At the outset of the operation, a training course on the use of the SUMA system for stock management and delivery was held with the help of PAHO for the benefit of ARC volunteers and staff working in Santa Fé. The same personnel were trained in community health education, psycho-social assistance and hygiene promotion. A course on water and sanitation held by Argentine Red Cross and Oxfam experts took place in Santa Fé at the end of June, with participants from the ARC, Caritas, Acción Contra el Hambre (ACH) and local and provincial authorities.

A broader programme for strengthening of capacities is ongoing in Santa Fé and Buenos Aires, where a presentation of ARC activities was held for stakeholders and NGOs. A National Intervention Team (NIT) course is now being organized, and will take place at the headquarters at the end of July. Participants selected are volunteers and staff from the ARC and other National Societies in the region, as well as Federation staff from the sub regional office in Buenos Aires.

A national emergency plan including capacities, vulnerabilities and organizational responsibilities is now being drawn up by the headquarters with feedback from the 76 ARC branches.

Federation Delegation

During the period covered by this update, a new sub regional coordinator took up office in Buenos Aires and a regional intervention team (RIT) member from the Ecuadorian Red Cross, responsible for Federation support of the operation in Santa Fe, and whose tasks include assisting the National Society in drafting a new national emergency plan, joined the staff in Buenos Aires. The remainder of the staff is composed of a regional focal point for humanitarian values, a finance officer, an information officer, a technical assistant, a youth officer and a reporting delegate assigned to the social crisis operation.

Media/Public Information

The ARC headquarters is now preparing an updated version of the brochures already published on ARC activities carried out. These brochures will be delivered to branches and thereby to the population during events to which the public is invited. ARC activities were publicized in Buenos Aires on the occasion of a national fair on health, when videos and information on the operation in Santa Fé were provided to the public, together with other materials on the Argentine Red Cross.

A television campaign to collect funds for the operation in Santa Fé was launched in June, and is now being aired both on cable and national television. Information continues to be provided to the local media, and the next ARC bulletin will also include updates on the operation.

The ARC organized several public events such as concerts in Buenos Aires and its surroundings in order to collect public donations such as clothes, food, and cleaning materials. An archive is being kept with all the articles which have appeared in the national and local media, and ARC activities are being regularly recorded in order to produce a video at the close of the operation.

Media coverage took place on the occasion of the visit to Santa Fé of the German Ambassador and the Consul from New Zealand. On this occasion, the news was disseminated by the national media and press agencies.

A note on all the fundraising activities carried out by the ARC appeared in the Federation News bulletin, which is delivered to international media from the Federation's headquarters.

Outstanding needs

International response to this appeal has been prompt and effective. The National Societies of Austria, Finland, Germany, Japan, Norway, Spain, Sweden and the USA contributed together with UNICEF, Oxfam, Médicos sin Fronteras, Greenpeace, the government of New Zealand; other public and private donors have also responded to the emergency directly through the framework of the appeal or to the achievement of the appeal objectives through bilateral initiatives.

The affected population remains mainly in need of houses in the case of evacuees and furniture in the case of returnees. The municipality announced the possibility of obtaining funds for the construction of new homes, but the time frame for the implementation of this project remains unclear at present.

The extension of the operation until 31 October 2003 will not affect the total budget for implementation of the plan of action, and is intended to ensure that beneficiary needs are met as fully as possible.

For further information please contact:

- Argentine Red Cross; 'Phone (54) 11 4952 7200; Fax: (54) 11 4952 7715; e-mail; info@cruzroja.org.ar
Web site <http://www.cruzroja.org.ar>
- Fernando Casanova, sub regional coordinator, Buenos Aires, Phone (54) 11 4951 0720; Fax; (54) 11 4951 7662; e-mail; ifrcar01@ifrc.org
- Olaug Bergseth, Regional Officer, Americas Department; 'Phone (41) 22 740 45 35; Fax; (41) 22 733 03 95
e-mail; olaug.bergseth@ifrc.org

All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the Code of Conduct and is committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (SPHERE Project) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or 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

27/08/03

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
-------	----------	----------	------	-----------	------	---------

CASH

REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->					607,000	TOTAL COVERAGE 125.8%	
AMERICAN - RC		15,000	USD	20,393	12.05.03		
ARGENTINA - GREENPEACE		1,500	ARS	746	19.06.03		
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		
NETHERLANDS - GOVT		5,000	ARS	2,485	21.08.03	BILATERAL	
NEW ZEALAND - GOVT		14,534	USD	19,635	16.06.03		
NORWEGIAN - RC		300,000	NOK	56,100	16.05.03		
PRIVATE DONORS				2,876	26.06.03		
PRIVATE DONOR BANCO COMAFI		7,766	ARS	3,859	21.08.03	BILATERAL	
PRIVATE DONOR SHOW MIDACHI		66,669	ARS	33,134	21.08.03	BILATERAL	
SPANISH - RC		90,000	EUR	135,990	22.05.03	BILATERAL	
SPANISH - RC		63,106	EUR	97,751	21.08.03	BILATERAL	
SPANISH - GOVT		44,488	EUR	68,911	21.08.03	BILATERAL	
SWEDISH - GOVT/RC		500,000	SEK	80,000	19.05.03		
WHO - PRIVATE DONORS				1,000	22.05.03		
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				735,170	CHF		121.1%

KIND AND SERVICES (INCLUDING PERSONNEL)

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
UNICEF				28,525	21.08.03	BILATERAL, KITS
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES				28,525	CHF	4.7%

ADDITIONAL TO APPEAL BUDGET

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
COOPERATIVA AGRICOLA MIXTA				3,250	21.08.03	BILATERAL, YERBA
PRODUCTOS DE AGUA SA				5,000	21.08.03	BILATERAL, MINERAL WATER
DANONE SA				7,500	21.08.03	BILATERAL, YOGURT

Argentina - floods

ANNEX 1

APPEAL No. 10/2003

PLEDGES RECEIVED

27/08/03

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
KIMBERLEY-CLARK				11,250	21.08.03	BILATERAL, DIAPERS
CARREFOUR				5,600	21.08.03	BILATERAL, MILK & MINERAL WATER
PROCTER & GAMBLE				75,000	21.08.03	BILATERAL, DIAPERS
SATLER & CIE				3,820	21.08.03	BILATERAL, GRUPO ELECTORGENO
OXFAM		102,195	ARS	50,790	21.08.03	BILATERAL, WATSAN EQUIPMENT
PERFUGROUP/MOLINOS		29,965	ARS	14,892	21.08.03	BILATERAL, FOOD ITEMS
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED				177,102	CHF	