

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

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ARGENTINA: FLOODING

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 185 countries.

In Brief

Period covered by this update: 13 April to 8 June, 2007.

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

- CHF 178,400 (USD 146,711 or EUR 110,123) was allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) on 7 April 2007 to respond to the most urgent needs of the affected population.
- This operation is expected to be implemented over 3 months, and will be completed by 7 July, 2007;
- A Final Report will be made available three months after the end of the operation (by 7 October 2007). Unearmarked funds to repay DREF are encouraged.

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

Since February 2007 heavy rainfall and storms have caused severe flooding, affecting mainly the provinces of Entre Ríos and Santa Fe, situated on the South Coast of Río Paraná. In the last week of March 500 mm of rain was registered, almost duplicating the normal average for the whole month of March. In addition, the annual swelling of the Paraná and Salado rivers - reaching between four to five metres in different coastal localities - was exacerbated due to abundant rains in the south of Brazil surpassing Alert and Evacuation levels (five to seven metres). This phenomenon, combined with the strong rainfall has provoked internal draining canals to overflow, causing even greater damage.

Although there is no official governmental information on the impact of the emergency at this moment, it is estimated that more than 80,000 people were affected by the flooding. Some 56,000 people were evacuated from the flooded areas to more than 200 temporary shelters in different provinces. Within the two coastal provinces of Santa Fe and Entre Ríos, 65 localities have been affected, of which 59 are based in the province of Santa Fe. Most of those evacuated are from the cities of Santa Fe, Rosario, Esperanza and Gualeguay.

Almost four million hectares and complete neighbourhoods were affected by the floods, several bridges were severely damaged and main roads were obstructed and/or inaccessible. The flooding has caused major losses in the harvest of soybean and alfalfa in the affected area. Several services such as gas and electricity were closed preventively and school classes were suspended in the cities of Santa Fe, Rosario and Gualeguay. By now, the main roads in Rosario and Santa Fe are accessible and gas and electricity services have been restored.

The senate of the Argentine nation declared an economic and social state of emergency for 180 days in the provinces of Santa Fe and Entre Ríos. This decree allowed the Executive authority to allocate special funding to rebuilding infrastructure and extend funding to cover social plans.

Now, approximately two months after the flooding, temporary shelters have been closed as all the evacuated people have returned home.

Governmental response

The Government has established a Provincial Crisis Committee in the city of Santa Fe as well as Local Emergency Committees in order to improve coordination at local, provincial and national levels. At present, the main actions coordinated through this body are focused on evacuations, administrations of shelters, distribution of humanitarian aid, medical assistance in shelters (and monitoring the epidemiological situation) and re-establishment of basic services.

The Ministry of Social Development has sent 70 trucks and 3 Hercules flights carrying relief items to the affected areas. The Ministry of Health is focusing on the reinforcement of the sanitary control in the temporary shelters and the local Centres of Primary Health Attention (CAPS). Vaccination campaigns against Hepatitis A and tetanus and diseases like leptospirosis are being implemented. The Ministry of Health has sent more than 15 tons of powdered milk, 60,000 water-treatment tablets and 3,000 doses of vaccines, saline solution and medication to the affected areas.

To accompany the humanitarian aid sent to Santa Fe by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, a special logistics team of White Helmets (Cascos Blancos) commission was summoned by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In addition, another team of volunteers specialized in emergency shelter travelled to the province to provide psychosocial support to the affected population.

Social unrest has emerged as a result of the situation and some looting took place during the provision of humanitarian aid. As a result of this insecurity the Provincial Police and the Naval Prefecture increased their controls and patrolling actions and assisted with food distributions.

Red Cross action

The local branches of the Argentine Red Cross (ARC) were activated at the start of the emergency, providing initial response to the emergency situation through activities in rescue and evacuation, first aid care, needs assessments and the provision of immediate relief items. More than 200 volunteers were mobilised and attended more than 5,000 people (approximately 700 families).

Table 1
shows ARC human resources mobilised for the operation

	Staff	Volunteers
Headquarter		
	1 Operational assistant 1 Logistics Officer	
Branches		
Rosario	1 Local Technician	11
Santa Fe	1 Local Technician	108
Esperanza	1 Local Technician	50
Paraná	1 Local Technician	16
Guauguay	1 Local Technician	15
Total	7	200

The ARC is working in the localities of Santa Fe, Rosario, Esperanza, Casilda, Paraná, Guauguay, San Nicolás and San Pedro. The main activities carried out have been:

- Participating in the Provincial Emergency Committee of Santa Fe.
- Participation in the Local Emergency Committees of Santa Fe, Esperanza, Rosario and Guauguay).
- Support with evacuation of affected families.
- Providing support to 80 emergency shelters:
 - Provision of first aid care in 60 emergency shelter
 - Sanitary support in 15 emergency shelters (awareness raising, vaccinations etc)
 - Providing psychosocial support in seven emergency shelters, including activities of youth recreation in three of them.

As a result of local campaigns the ARC has been able to distribute food, clothing, blankets, hygiene products, candles, and plastic sheeting to emergency shelters, self evacuated families and affected families that were not evacuated.

At national level, the ARC headquarters has established a technical Crisis Committee through which the following activities are coordinated:

- Monitoring of the situation
- Identification of activities and support needs in the branches
- Design and implementation of the national communication campaign.
- Design and implementation of the national resources campaign, based on the donation of money through different alternatives (deposits in exclusive banking account, credit cards, etc).
- Design of intervention strategies (based on local assessments).
- Mobilisation of national resources to the affected areas. To the date, nine missions with 10 technicians (three of them trained as RIT - Regional Intervention Team) were carried out to the five localities in support

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of the local management of the emergency in aspects of Health and Psycho-social Support, and facilitating the "return Home" activities.

The ARC Plan of Action focused on addressing the basic needs of 350 affected families pertaining to vulnerable groups in the cities of Santa Fe, Esperanza, Rosario, Paraná and Gualeguay. The humanitarian aid offered by the ARC prioritised the elements of personal hygiene, bed clothing, cleaning and children's diapers, and raising health awareness within the affected communities (cleaning, prevention of diseases, etc.).

However, due to efficient logistics services and price negotiation during the local purchase of humanitarian aid items, it will be possible to provide humanitarian assistance to at least 190 additional families, achieving assistance to a preliminary number of 540 families: approximately 3,374 people. It is expected that the final number of beneficiaries will be larger.

Province	Communities	Selected families	Number of Beneficiaries
Province of Santa Fe	<i>Santa Fe*</i>	<i>202 families*</i>	<i>1,256 persons*</i>
	Esperanza	50 families	276 persons
	Rosario	200 families	1,462 persons
Province of Entre Ríos	Gualeguay	58 families	269 persons
	Paraná	30 families	111 persons
TOTAL		540 families	3,374 persons

* Pending confirmation from ongoing assessments

The ARC is working together with two of the indigenous communities of the coastal south region; the community of Mocoví (Santa Fe) and the Community of Toba (Rosario).

Beneficiaries	Women	Men
Children / Young (0 -24 years old)	1,085	979
Adults	599	548
Elderly (more than 65 years old)	96	67
SUB TOTALS	1,780	1,594
TOTAL	3,374	

The beneficiaries have been identified by the involved ARC local branches. Identification took place with support of and in coordination with the local community leaders and the different local governmental and non-governmental organizations present in the affected areas.

The identification mechanisms included:

- Visual identification in the affected area and random interviews during the need assessments.
- Crosschecking of data obtained during the first Red Cross activities since the beginning of the emergency.
- Crosschecking of data and validation with Cáritas (through its local parishes).
- Analysis of the obtained listings of evacuees of the municipal and provincial governments.
- Registration and validation by local volunteers.

The following progress towards the objectives has been achieved so far by the Argentine Red Cross, with the support of Federation:

Health

In order to prevent or diminish the incidences related to climatic emergencies, in relation to the handling of water, food, personal hygiene and first aid, the ARC planned several simultaneous activities such as workshops, training and the provision of kits.

Objective 1: Affected communities will benefit from first aid activities based in the community.

Planned activities:

- Identification of beneficiaries
- Workshops (to be held in community centres, schools, psychosocial support centres, private houses) on first aid care
- Distribution of first aid care guides

Implemented activities:

- Beneficiaries have been identified
- Three workshops on first aid care have been held in the following branches with a total of 130 beneficiaries:
 - Esperanza: 60 beneficiaries
 - Paraná: 12 beneficiaries
 - Gualeguay: 58 beneficiaries
- Guides have been distributed to the involved local branches:
 - 25 first aid care guides from the Argentine Red Cross
 - 2,000 pamphlets about acute respiratory infections, tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, diarrhoea diseases.
 - Three guides about diarrhoea diseases.



Pamphlet used to invite children to the workshops in Rosario

Objective 2: 350 families will benefit from actions in the safe handling of food and hygiene promotion.

Health conditions of the 350 identified families will be improved through the promotion of preventative measures related to safe handling of food and water, prevention of diseases and the provision of hygiene kits, cleaning kit and diaper kit.

Planned activities:

- One community workshop about safe handling of food and environmental sanitation:
- Two community workshops (community centres, schools, psychosocial support centres) on the following topics: preventive measures, supply sources, storage, purification, safe water, personal hygiene, handling of garbage, ventilation and lighting, water and sanitation, excreta disposal, etc.
- Distribution of educational material
- Purchase of items for kits
- Preparation of kits
- Identification and registration of beneficiaries
- Distribution of kits accompanied by awareness-raising talks

Implemented activities:

Argentine Red Cross Headquarters distributed 500 pamphlets about water and sanitation to the local branches. Furthermore, all the items for the 540 hygiene kits, 540 cleaning kits and 53,720 diapers have been purchased and kits have been prepared and distributed to the local branches.

The Local branch of Gualequay has carried out one environmental cleaning workshop (90 beneficiaries) and distributed cleaning and hygiene kits to 300 beneficiaries.

The local Branch of Rosario has carried out a workshop about water and environmental sanitation (30 beneficiaries).



The volunteers from the Argentine Red Cross are preparing the hygiene kits in order to distribute them to the affected communities

Objective 3: Affected communities will benefit from actions carried out in the prevention of diseases.

Planned activities:

- Community workshops (to be held in community centres, schools, psychosocial support centres, private houses). The agenda of the two workshops will address different topics concerning the prevention of diseases such as: Acute Respiratory Infections, diarrhoea, dengue, HIV and AIDS and hepatitis.
- Distribution of educational material

Implemented activities:

The local branch of Rosario has carried out two health workshops with the participation of 20 and 50 people respectively. Distribution of educational material was done.

The local branch of Gualequay has carried out a health workshop with the participation of 90 people. Distribution of educational material was carried out.

The local branch of Paraná has carried out a health workshop with the participation of 12 people. Distribution of educational material was carried out.

The local branch of Santa Fe has carried out a health workshop with the participation of 102 people. Distribution of educational material was carried out.

Community based Psychosocial Support

In order to strengthen capacities of the affected families to cope with the floods and mitigate post-traumatic stress the ARC will provide psychosocial support to families who have been evacuated and will eventually return to changed circumstances. The selection of families and individuals will be based on the criteria of those who are most vulnerable (who have suffered any of the following: great material loss, loss of relatives, loss of crops and/or animals or other means of livelihood, have been hospitalized, or families that have been separated). This support will be delivered through techniques based on community work and recreational activities for children.

Objective 1: The resilience of people staying in temporary shelters is strengthened through community-based psychosocial support and recreation activities.

Planned activities:

- Identification of beneficiaries
- Domestic visits
- Distribution of pamphlets about the handling of stress
- Establishment of contacts and agreements with Centres of Mental Health (psychosocial support centres, hospitals, etc)

Implemented activities:

The Argentine Red Cross Headquarters distributed 500 pamphlets and seven guides about psychosocial support to the local branches. The local branches are executing this activity in a transversal way to all the other activities developed in each of the communities.

The local branch of Rosario has trained their volunteers, organized psychosocial groups who provided support to 20 heads of affected families and provided psychosocial to over 25 children.

The local branch of Paraná has identified that a significant number of children are showing problems of concentration in the study and has shared this information with the local health authorities.

The local branch of Gualeguay identified four seriously affected cases that were derived to a psychologist.

Objective 2: Affected communities will benefit from recreational activities

Planned activities:

The ARC will organize periodic recreation activities such as games and songs for children who have been evacuated to temporary shelters. These will take place either inside, or outside and can be based on educational themes such as health.

Implemented activities:

The local branch of Gualeguay organized two recreational activities (“Red Cross’ Children Court - Patio Infantil Cruz Roja”) in which over 80 children participated in total in educational games and story readings about hygiene habits.

The local branch of Rosario also carried out two playful recreational activities for a total number of 65 children, in which art was incorporated and health topics were included.

The local branch of Paraná organised recreational activities based in natural materials and team games for 25 children.

27 recreational guidelines have been distributed to the Rosario, Santa Fe, Esperanza, Parana and Gualeguay branches, involved in the operation.



Volunteers from ARC Paraná branch carrying out recreational activities with children in Paracao locality

Replacement of basic necessities

Objective 1: 350 families will be provided with bed clothing kits in order to assist them in recovering from the effects of the floods.

Planned activities:

- Purchase of kit products
- Preparation of the kits
- Identification of beneficiaries
- Distribution of 350 kits

Implemented activities:

The Argentine Red Cross headquarters purchased the items for the 540 bed clothing kits, and prepared and distributed the kits to the local branches.

The local branches of Gualeguay, Paraná, Santa Fe and Rosario have started the distributions of bed clothing kits to some of the identified beneficiaries, herewith assisting 300, 106, 628 and 50 beneficiaries respectively up to date.



Distribution of bed clothing kits in Mocoví locality (Santa Fe).

Community development

In order to strengthen communities affected by the floods, the ARC, supported by the local branches, will identify sustainable lines of community work.

Objective 1: The affected families will benefit from actions to promote community development, based on their needs.

Planned activities:

At a later stadium of the operation the ARC will organize five two-day meetings for volunteers and personnel of the ARC (one meeting at each of the local branches involved) in order to identify possible lines of community work that promotes the sustainable development within the affected communities. Based on the experiences of local branches and the previous work carried out within the affected communities the ARC will formulate a plan of action for community work in some of the affected communities. Depending on different levels of articulation and involvement of different social actors, the possibility of including at least three focal points per community will be considered.

Implemented activities:

Planning of the workshop for the communitarian insertion of volunteers involved in the Plan of Action.

Institutional strengthening

In order strengthen the capacity of the local branches to cope with the different activities within this operation and on request of the Red Cross volunteers, several capacity building workshops will be carried out addressing the following topics:

- Institutional training
- Strategic framework
- Management of volunteers
- Community based psycho-social support.
- Recreational activities
- Health (acute respiratory infections, nursing, diarrhea)
- Identification of continuity actions
- HIV and AIDS
- Water and sanitation

Implemented activities:

Workshops carried out:	Local branches	Participants
Institutional Training	Paraná	15
Strategic Framework	Paraná - Rosario	37
Management of volunteers	Paraná	15
Psychosocial support training	Parana, Esperanza and Gualeguay	15
Community based psycho-social support.	Rosario	23
Communitarian health	Paraná, Gualeguay, Rosario, Esperanza and Santa Fe	24
TOTAL		129



Volunteers Workshop held in Gualeguay – 21 April.

To support these workshops, the ARC headquarters has distributed institutional documents and policies regarding Human Resources Management, Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment, Communication and information management, VIH/AIDS, Youth, Health, Disaster Management, among others, and visibility items to all the five branches.

Coordination

The ARC is part of the Governmental Provincial Crisis Committee and actively participates in local crisis committees. Furthermore, the ARC is closely coordinating with the local and provincial Civil Defence, Government Ministries, UN agencies and other humanitarian organizations present in the affected areas in order to identify and prioritize humanitarian assistance, avoid the duplication of efforts and identify available resources. The ARC is also in close contact with the Ministry of Health and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) in order to monitor the epidemiologic situation in the affected areas. The coordination with local community leaders and non governmental organizations present in the affected areas proved to be extremely useful to identify beneficiaries and improve the actual need analysis.

The ARC is part of an inter-institutional Network that has among its members White Helmets, Save the Children, Caritas, UNICEF, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Action against Hunger and the Scout Movement with whom they shared information and evaluations.

Moreover, the ARC is in constant communication with the representatives of the Prevention, Preparation and Attention in Disasters (PPAD) of the local branches. From the onset of the emergency, the ARC keeps close contact with the Federation's Regional Delegation in Lima and the Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) through the Disaster Management delegate based in Lima.

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