

# DREF operation update



International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

## Argentina: Floods

**DREF operation n° MDRAR003**  
**GLIDE n° FL-2008-000038-ARG**  
**Update n° 1**  
**17 July, 2008**

The International Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) is a source of un-earmarked money created by the Federation in 1985 to ensure that immediate financial support is available for Red Cross and Red Crescent response to emergencies. The DREF is a vital part of the International Federation's disaster response system and increases the ability of national societies to respond to disasters.

**Period covered by this update:** 27 March to 01 July 2008.

**Summary: CHF 127,000 (USD 120,952 or EUR 79,375)** was allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) on 27 March 2008 to support the Argentine Red Cross (ARC) in delivering assistance to some 2,200 beneficiaries.

During the week of 9 March 2008, the province of Salta in Argentina experienced severe downpours causing rivers to overflow which in its turn caused flooding. Overall some 17,000 families were affected and some 11,600 people were isolated in several departments. This DREF Operation, update No.1 shows the objectives fulfilled to date and the impact of relief activities on beneficiaries.

The ARC and International Federation have extended the timeframe of this operation, which is now expected to be implemented over four months (one additional month to the three originally planned). The DREF supported operation is scheduled to be completed by 27 July, 2008; a Final Report (narrative and financial) will be made available three months after the end of the operation (by 27 October, 2008).

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**Floods in the region of Salta.**  
**Source: Argentine Red Cross**

## The situation

The province of Salta is located in north-western Argentina, bordering Bolivia, Chile and Paraguay and has a population of approximately 1 million people. The capital city of the province is Salta, and is located 1,187 meters above sea level. As of March 2008, the Bermejo, Pilcomayo and Carapari rivers in the Salta province started to flood due to the constant rainfall. This deeply affected the southern and central region of the

Department of San Martín and the northern region of the Department of Orán. The southern region of the Department of Rivadavia was also affected. Due to infrastructural damages to roads and bridges, these areas were temporarily inaccessible and therefore isolated.

In the capital city, La Paz, 1ra Junta, Solidaridad and Libertad were the most affected areas. In the Department of San Martín, a total of 600 people were evacuated and placed in three evacuation centres. According to official information, 17,000 families were affected, of which 11,600 people isolated in the eastern area of Bermejo and the northern region of the province.

The following chart provides the number of families accommodated in the three evacuation centers in the department of San Martín:

Evacuation Centres	Districts	Children	Adults	Total	Total Families
Municipal Sport Complex	Lote 75 Tierra Fiscal	230	140	370	75
Presbyterian Bethel Church	El Tráfico	80	60	140	31
Asamblea de Dios Church	Lote 75 Tierra Fiscal	50	40	90	21
<b>Total</b>		<b>360</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>127</b>

The evacuees remained in the centers for a period of 10 to 12 days, starting 10 March, 2008, but by now all have returned to their homes.

The following chart provides the number of families that were self-evacuated in the region of Embarcación:

Districts	Children	Adults	Total	Total Familias
Lote 75 Tierra Fiscal	216	108	324	54
El Tráfico	196	98	294	49
<b>Total</b>	<b>412</b>	<b>026</b>	<b>618</b>	<b>103</b>

The communities of El Tráfico and Lote 75, located in the capital city of Salta, have returned to their daily activities.

General services did not collapse, but the provision of water was interrupted in the regions of Aguaaray and Salvador Mazza, due to damages to the purification plant through mud and rain, affecting 45,000 people. And although all main paved roads are now passable, several access roads had been closed down, due to damages to bridges and roads. Some schools in isolated areas saw high rates of absenteeism, desertion or discontinuity among students, but none of the schools were closed.

The local authorities responded in an efficient manner to the emergency with support from the National government. There is no Provincial Emergency Committee and the emergency coordination systems are not well established; therefore, the Ministry of Human Development coordinated all relief activities during the emergency. The Ministry delivered food parcels to the evacuation centers as well as to the affected communities once the people had returned to their homes. Additional food items were distributed to the community kitchens and family kits, clothes and footwear were provided in other communities.

The National government allocated USD 1 million to expand and redefine different housing and water and sanitation programs to meet the needs of the affected people in this emergency and in future ones. To date, more than 300 tons of relief items, such as food parcels, mattresses, clothes, and household items have been distributed to all the affected areas.

Even though the health system did not collapse, it is not functioning properly due to a lack of supplies and medicines. The demand for health services increased while the Central Community Health Center deals

with damages sustained and loss of equipment due to the floods. This forced people to walk three kilometers to the Public Hospital of Embarcación.

During the month of May 2008, the political and social tension was aggravated due to the differences between the National Government and the agricultural sectors. This situation, still on-going, was characterized by:

- Partial and total cuts in transportation routes (especially in the central and northern region of the country).
- Rural group protests
- Transportation strikes
- Fuel shortages
- Lack of products related to agriculture
- Increase in prices

Because of these issues and continued heavy rains reported throughout the month of June 2008, several activities were delayed. These include the procurement of supplies, transportation, distribution of humanitarian aid as well as the mobilization of personnel and material to the affected areas.

## Coordination and partnerships

Since the beginning of the emergency the Argentine Red Cross (ARC) has been in direct contact with the Federation's Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) and the Regional Representation office for South America in Lima in order to coordinate immediate response activities.

The state government has closely coordinated relief activities with different non governmental organizations present in the country. Various organizations and individuals offered their services to those affected. These included the collection of donated clothing by Caritas, the assistance through general items by the Human Rights Foundation and the donation of tennis shoes for the affected people in Lote 75 and El Tráfico through the Nike Corporation. The municipality of Embarcación coordinated the transportation of ARC's volunteers and provided the space in order to conduct a workshop on Contingency and Response Planning.

## Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Ever since the beginning of the emergency in January 2008 the Argentine Red Cross (ARC) mobilized its volunteers to perform evacuation activities in the affected areas. A plan of action was elaborated after performing damage and needs assessments, with a special focus on the community of La Paz in the city of Salta.

Persistent rain caused water levels from several rivers to rise. Accordingly, the ARC carried out new assessments of the situation in coordination with several regional, national and international organizations. Therefore, the existing plan of action was revised, incorporating these evaluations that include the community of La Paz (capital city of Salta) and Embarcación. On 20 and 21 March, within this revised plan



The Argentine Red Cross set up this flooded house in a lake in downtown Buenos Aires to raise awareness of the emergency.  
Source: Argentine Red Cross

of action, the ARC visited Embarcación. It provided psychosocial support and carried out recreational activities for 600 children. In addition, the ARC conducted several workshops on psychosocial support, on prevention of diseases and on emergency preparedness. It also distributed material on prevention of diseases and held several meetings with leaders of the community in order to establish lines of action in case disaster strikes. The ARC trained the evacuated families on how to handle residual water and performed sanitation of community shared latrines.

On 2 April, the ARC visited the community of Embarcación once more, in order to follow-up on the activities undertaken in March and also to start work with another community, Lote 75, which was in urgent need of medical services.

From 3 to 9 April, different coordination and preparation activities were held. These included volunteer meetings in order to improve activities while employing local technical personnel for the implementation of the plan of action.

Subsequently, the ARC prepared the documentation necessary for the procurement, preparation and distribution of the relief kits. On 25 and 26 April, 18 volunteers from the local branch of Salta received training in psychosocial support in order to provide this service to the affected people in the areas of Lote 75 and Trafico (Embarcación). On 27 April, an HIV and AIDS prevention workshop was carried out for an additional 15 volunteers from the local branch of Salta.

On 1 May a member of a National Intervention Team (NIT) member specialized in logistics carried out a logistics training for 17 volunteers focusing on distribution systems, the volunteer's role, how to identify the adequate location, handling of kits, distribution of vouchers, control systems and kit transportation.

Follow-up visits were carried out during the last week of May to monitor the situation. Due to the current socio-political situation in Argentina the operation will be extended for one additional month in order to complete the previous objectives. The ARC performed additional assessments and discovered several needs that had not been met yet. These identified needs are the following:

- Sanitation: The Health Community Center in Embarcación sustained severe damages and needs to be repaired.
- Education: There is a great need for school supplies
- Home supplies: Blankets, basic home supplies

On 1 July, the ARC presented the revised plan of action that included the yet to be completed objectives and those mentioned above. The ARC will cover the additional needs with the savings obtained since the jerry cans were donated by a private company. The jerry cans were originally going to be procured by the ARC (included in the kitchen kits).

## Progress towards objectives

### Relief distributions (food and basic non-food items)

#### Objective 1: Humanitarian aid is distributed to families affected by the floods.

300 families will receive cleaning kits, school kits and 230 families will receive kitchen kits. Some 520 families will receive blanket kits and 55 students will receive school kits with the revised plan of action.

#### Activities planned:

- Preparation of the kits
- Purchase and distribution of kit products
- Purchase and distribution of 520 blanket kits
- Identification and census of beneficiaries

In addition, 70 families receive livestock in order to replace the losses suffered by the floods.

The identification mechanisms used by the ARC to identify the beneficiaries were the following:

- Random interviews during the assessment phase
- Interviews with Salta's Provincial Secretary experts
- In field interviews with the local community in Embarcación
- In field interviews with Salta's Civil Protection
- In field interviews with Salta's Municipal Secretary of Development

On 2 May, four ARC volunteers distributed identification cards to the beneficiaries in Embarcación and Salta.

#### Progress:

The Argentine Red Cross purchased, prepared and distributed the cleaning kits, benefiting a total of 300 families in Salta and Embarcación. The table below demonstrates the # of kits distributed:

Area	# of cleaning kits	Family beneficiaries
Embarcación - Lote 75	150	150
Embarcación - El Trafico	80	80
Salta Capital - Barrio La Paz	70	70
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>300</b>

The ARC purchased, prepared and distributed 300 school kits to 300 evacuated children in order to assist and encourage a rapid return to the school activities. The kits were distributed in Embarcación as follows:

Area	#of school kits	# of children
Lote 75	189	189
El Trafico	111	111
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>300</b>

The original plan was to distribute two different kinds of school kits classified by age, but since there was no adequate census done by age it was decided to combine the school kits.

The 230 kitchen kits were purchased in Salta and Buenos Aires, prepared on 14 May and consequently distributed on 18 May in Lote 75 and El Tráfico in the region of Embarcación.

These items supported the affected families during their initial rehabilitation process; as the initial needs were met, other issues regarding the emergency could be dealt with.

The 520 blanket kits will be procured and distributed during the month of July 2008. The beneficiaries are included in the original 2,200 beneficiary target.

The blanket kits contain the following:

Blanket kit 1 family of 7 people	
Item	Quantity
1 blanket	Double
5 blankets	Singles

**Challenges:** The ARC identified the need to improve the procurement process since it was difficult to find items that adhered to International Federation standards. Another challenge was encountered concerning the distribution of livestock to the identified beneficiary families due to the current political and social situation in the country. But, with the one month extension of the operation, the ARC and International Federation hopes to resolve this challenge; the ARC plans to procure and deliver the livestock to the 70 families by mid July 2008.

## Emergency health

**Objective: 127 evacuated families will receive psychosocial support and will be more aware of water borne diseases; the Health Community Centre in Embarcación will receive basic medical supplies.**

This objective has been expanded, based on the identified needs and the revised plan of action of the ARC.

Activities planned:

- Recreational activities with children in the temporary shelters
- Workshops
- Distribution of informational material
- Procurement and delivery of medical equipment

Sanitary Equipment consists of:

- 1 pediatric balance
- 1 adult balance

- 2 adult stretchers
- 3 nebulizers
- 6 adult nebulizer masks
- 6 pediatric nebulizer masks
- 1 pedometer
- 10 mercury clinical thermometers
- 1 foetal cardiac beat detector
- 2 gestogram kits
- 5 adult stethoscopes
- 5 pediatric stethoscopes

**Progress:**

The ARC provided psychosocial support to 600 evacuated people. On 22 and 29 March, the first activity was carried out. It included recreational activities with 120 children placed in common shelters. The activity included games, singing and theme games (on for example Health). On 2, 12 and 26 April additional recreational activities were undertaken with more than 200 children. The second activity included psychosocial workshops and the distribution of information pamphlets on stress management for men and women in the common shelters.

The ARC carried out several activities in order to increase awareness of common diseases amongst the evacuees. The first activity was the completion of two workshops on disease prevention focusing on:

- Respiratory diseases
- Diarrhoea
- Distribution of informational material

The second activity took place in the city of Embarcación (El Tráfico and Lote 74 districts) where the following activities were carried out, with the participation of 14 ARC volunteers at each event:

- Two workshops on disease prevention focusing on respiratory infections for at least 50 community leaders;
- Two workshops on disease prevention focusing on diarrhea infections for at least 30 community leaders;
- Two workshops on disease prevention focusing on skin infections for at least 70 community leaders;
- 150 pamphlets with information on respiratory infections and diarrhea infections were distributed;

In the city of Salta (La Paz district) the following activities took place, with the participation of five ARC volunteers:

- One workshop on disease prevention focusing on skin diseases. Approximately 17 community leaders were participating.
- Three first aid workshops were held with 15 participants.

The ARC held community talks on how to handle waste water and safe water in the city of Embarcación (Lote 75 district). There were 30 participants (the majority of the participants were staying in common shelters but have since returned to their homes). 200 pamphlets with information on respiratory infections and two radio spots on diarrhea infections were designed. Twelve ARC volunteers participated in these activities.

The medical equipment will be procured and distributed during the month of July 2008.

**Challenges:** According to the ARC, the management of local volunteers can be improved, especially in the areas of motivation and decision making. Stronger coordination between local branches and the national ARC branch along with increased visibility and improved communications were also identified as areas for improvement.

## 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

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