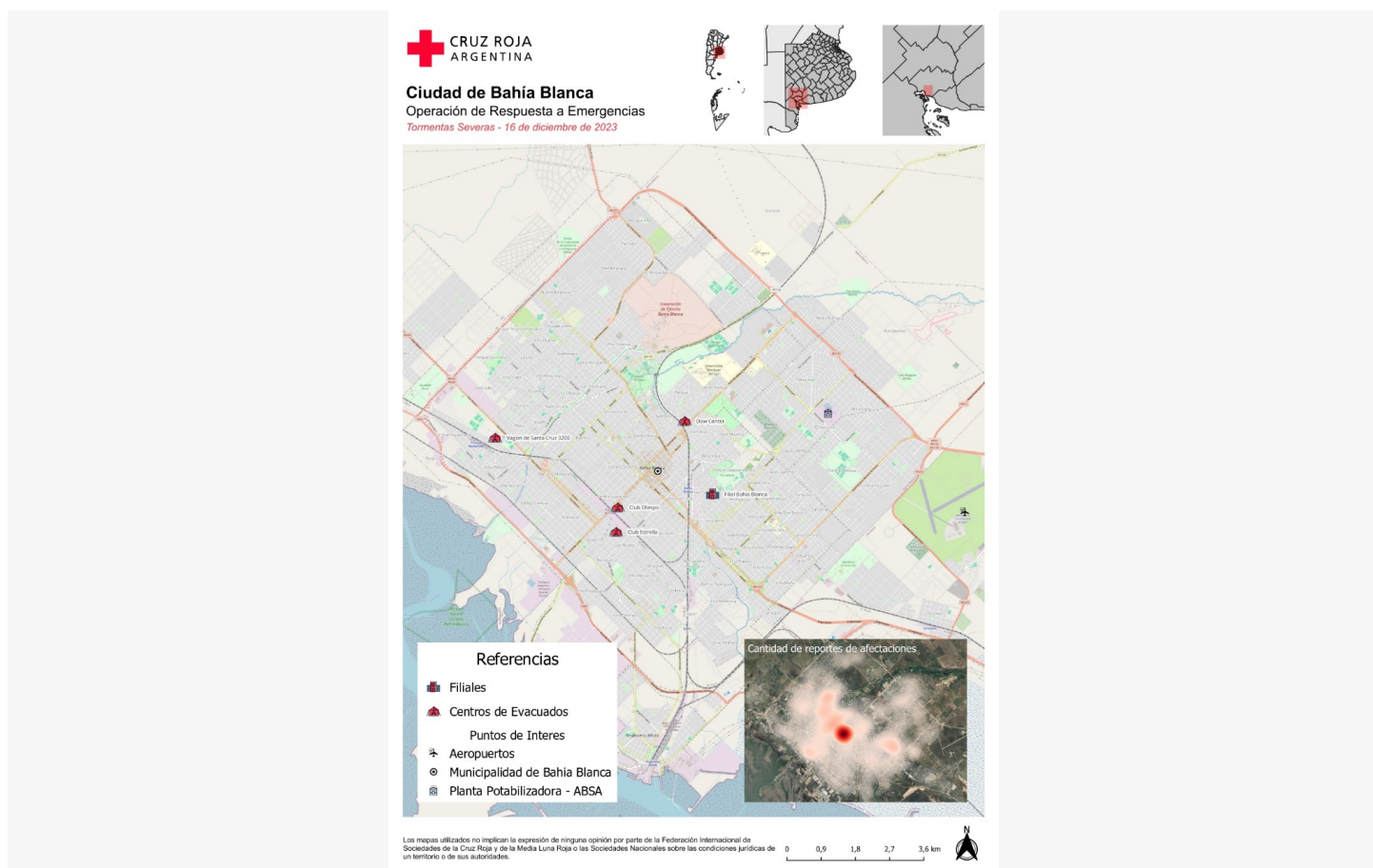




House destroyed by the storm. Bahía Blanca - Source: ARC.

Appeal: MDRAR020	Country: Argentina	Hazard: Other	Type of DREF: Response
Crisis Category: Yellow	Event Onset: Sudden	DREF Allocation: CHF 339,101	
Glide Number: -	People Affected: 8,000 people	People Targeted: 4,000 people	
Operation Start Date: 2023-12-28	Operation Timeframe: 4 months	Operation End Date: 30-04-2024	DREF Published: 29-12-2023
Targeted Areas: Buenos Aires			

Description of the Event



Map of areas affected and areas targeted by the National Society. Source: ARC.

Date of event / Date when the trigger was met

2023-12-18

What happened, where and when?

During the week of 11 December 2023 the National Meteorological Service (SMN) of the Argentine Republic has issued multiple weather warnings due to the atmospheric instability prevailing in several regions of the country. In addition, on 15 and 16 December, Short-Term Warnings (ACP) were issued due to the possibility of strong or severe storms, especially in the Province of Buenos Aires. Likewise, the alert level had been raised to "orange" in the Early Warning System of the SMN. These warnings were complemented by forecasts from private or civil society organizations and local agencies, anticipating a storm of great magnitude in several points of the area with strong wind gusts of between 120 and 150 kilometers per hour depending on the region.

On 16 December after 8:00 p.m., the effects caused by a surface low pressure front (F1 on the Fujita scale) began to materialize in the southern localities with a tendency towards the northeast of the province. The impact of the storm became effective in several cities of the region as gusts in some cases exceeded 140 kilometers per hour, with accumulations of rainfall exceeding 100 millimeters.

As of 8:30 p.m., the first effects were identified in the city of Bahía Blanca, south of the Province of Buenos Aires, where gusts of over 140 kilometers per hour not only affected access to services such as electricity and water, but also had an impact on urban infrastructure and homes. As a result, the Club Bahiense del Norte building collapsed and 13 people lost their lives, including a 4-year-old girl, and more than 20 were injured. The damage to the infrastructure of homes has been considerable, mainly in neighborhoods far from the central area of the city, with roofs blown off, falling masonry and walls, among others. Hundreds of electric power poles and old trees have fallen as a result of the intense winds, making it difficult to restore electric power and therefore delaying access to water in many communities, as well as delaying early recovery tasks, generating difficulties in accessing the most exposed communities. The same storm has affected, to a lesser extent, localities near this city such as Médanos, Punta Alta, among others. At the closing of the presentation of this Action Plan, the impact assessment tasks continue, a work that is being carried out jointly by different agencies and organizations, centralized in an emergency operations center that operates in the Municipality of Bahía Blanca.



During the same period, Necochea, in the southeast of the Province, faced winds exceeding 80 kilometers per hour and heavy rains. These events caused flooding in more than 60 houses, damage to roofs and infrastructure in vulnerable areas, along with downed electric poles and trees, requiring state and community intervention. The storm also affected other localities in the region to a lesser extent. Subsequently, in the early morning of 17 December, the metropolitan area of Buenos Aires suffered impacts, mainly in Chivilcoy, Chacabuco, Campana, Zárate, San Fernando, Vicente López, Avellaneda, Quilmes, La Plata and the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires. In Quilmes, there was a partial collapse of the Club Juventud de Bernal, roofs were blown off, houses were affected by fallen trees and evacuation centers were set up in different neighborhoods of the city.

On 18 December, the National Meteorological Service issued new warnings for storms of varying intensity which, after settling in the area, prevented work related to the reestablishment of basic services and hindered some situations in homes that had already been affected by the storm; The Naval Hydrographic Service (SHN) of the Argentine Republic issued an alert for the flooding of the Río de la Plata, which subsequently became effective, exceeding levels that had not been recorded since 1989 in some cases, affecting cities that had already suffered the impact of the prevailing storm in the region, mainly communities near La Plata, Berisso, Ensenada, San Fernando, Quilmes and Avellaneda.

At the closing of this Action Plan, new storm warnings with intense winds were issued for the next few days, which could aggravate the situation.

As a consequence of the above, on 18 December the Governor of the Province of Buenos Aires decreed a State of Emergency for 30 days for the entire territory of the Province, which was made official in the Official Gazette. (1)



Rapid assessments in Bahía Blanca. Source: ARC.



Crisis Committee in Bahía Blanca. Source: ARC.

Scope and Scale

The Emergency Operations Center (COE) led by Local Authorities in Bahía Blanca concentrates all the information that the different agencies and organizations, including the Red Cross, collect in the field. A total of 8,938 events were reported, including roof collapses, food needs, difficulty in accessing water, electrical problems, downed poles or wires, fallen trees, among others. Evaluations continue and it is estimated that during the next 48 hours, the amount of data entered into the systems will increase; currently it can be estimated that about 8,000 people suffered the direct impact of this event, and many others have suffered indirect effects. This information was obtained through rapid needs assessments carried out by the National Society and cross-checking of data within the Emergency Operations Center with local authorities, as well as using the dashboard (attached in links) produced by the municipality on the impact.

Among those affected directly are those people who have significant structural damage to roofs and/or walls of their homes, making it impossible to live in one or more rooms of the home; additionally listed here are people who have emergency situations resulting from the storm, such as people with minor damage or without electricity but who have health needs associated with them (such as insulin or other medications).

Among those indirectly affected are those people who have, or have had, damages but these do not represent an imminent risk to their lives; among others: prolonged power outages but without the existence of people in risk groups in the household, among others.

Breakdown of affected families: (2)

Type: Lack of electric power.

People: 311,704

Families: 62,340

At the time of presenting this Action Plan, 62% of the population has recovered electric power, with 118,447 people without electricity.



This situation generates various complications in reconstruction tasks due to the impossibility of using tools, in addition to problems in electro-dependent people, food refrigeration, refrigeration of medicines such as insulin, ventilation/cooling of the home, among other aspects.

Type: Evacuees

People: 350

Families: 70

In total, a maximum of 350 people (70 families) have been reported evacuated in the Evacuee Centers established at Club Olimpo, Down Center, Club Estrella and Vagón Santa Cruz, and hundreds of self-evacuated families. At the moment there are 85 people (20 families) who continue to stay in the shelters established by the municipal government, after many of the people who were evacuated decided to return to their homes, despite the fact that they were not in optimal conditions due to the roofs being blown off and damage to their structure, due to the proximity of the Christmas holidays, added to the fear of theft, looting and usurpation in their homes.

Type: Self-evacuees

People: 4,000

Families: 800

Although there are no official data or surveys on self-evacuated families, since it is very complex at the present stage of the city, it is estimated that due to the impact on home infrastructure more than 800 families are self-evacuated in the homes of relatives, neighbors or relatives, while others are sleeping in the rooms that have not been damaged or in cars, near their homes due to various concerns.

Type: Damage to household infrastructure

People: 5,390

Families: 1,078

At the close of this report, 1,078 roof bursts were reported, of which 929 are a high priority for review as they directly affect homes, while 149 partially affect homes.

The Municipality of Bahía Blanca is centralizing all the assessments that are carried out in the following dashboard: https://lookerstudio.google.com/u/0/reporting/90882254-c674-4f0a-acb4-085a8a2d4f7f/page/p_cvacg9uscd?s=mBmEWO5fBHU

Affectation of services

As a result of the damage to telecommunication antennas and the lack of electric power, a large number of people have been affected and have been unable to access telephone and internet services. At present, the communities on the outskirts of downtown Bahía Blanca continue to be unable to access these services, with a total of more than 118,447 people (23,689 families) affected. These services are being gradually reestablished by the public services and the private companies that provide these services.

The Port of Bahía Blanca, one of the main exporting ports of the country, suffered great damage, including the fall of the main communication antennas that allow the Maritime Authority to control naval traffic; however, triangulations are being carried out with various stations of the Prefectura Naval Argentina to guarantee nautical safety; vessels have suffered considerable damages in the access to the Port, for which reason emergency works are still being carried out that do not affect the population in general.

The power cuts due to the more than 2,134 downed light poles or cuts in the power lines have initially reached the entire city; during the 24 hours following the main impact of the emergency the urban area partially recovered power, and at the close of this report 30% of the population is still without power supply, affecting, in addition to people, health centers, police stations, community centers, schools, and other establishments. It is estimated that in some cases it may take at least 10 more days to fully restore service.

Access to water was limited as it depends on electricity for its operation at the household level, mainly in the communities on the outskirts of the city. This has caused the service to be cut off in a large sector of the locality. At the moment, the company Aguas Bonaerenses S.A. is distributing safe water at specific points and has been able to reestablish this essential service to a great extent, however, there are some challenges in peripheral neighborhoods. The municipal state surveys reflect 336 claims for lack of water supply in the district.

Household waste collection (solid urban waste) has a reduced service due to various problems of the company's personnel and the work they are doing together with the Municipality to free the main roads of the city, and other non-regular waste, it is estimated that by 25 December 2023 it will be able to recover its normality.

The gas networks have suffered minor damage and have not been seriously affected, although there have been temporary interruptions at specific points.

Basic health services (hospitals, health centers, and emergency care on public roads) are functioning normally, due to the work of the local Health Secretariat together with provincial areas.



At the close of this report, at least 6 primary and secondary schools have been partially destroyed and cannot open their doors due to the risk of damage to buildings.

Affectation of access roads and main thoroughfares

Public transportation services operate with reduced schedules due to the interruption of traffic routes and the impact on road infrastructure; this situation is expected to continue at least until the end of this year. The city's bus terminal was severely damaged and the municipality is carrying out reconstruction work; however, long-distance buses are entering the city with reduced services.

The access roads to the city are operating with security operations due to the reconstruction work being carried out for the rehabilitation of services and public infrastructure. There is still mud and some major branches on access arteries, but free circulation is guaranteed, with caution.

Source Information

Source Name	Source Link
1. Provincial Decree	http://www.saij.gob.ar/B20231000027?utm_source=newsletter-semanal&utm_medium=email&utm_term=semanal&utm_campaign=decreto-provincial
2. Needs Assessment Municipality of Bahia Blanca.	https://lookerstudio.google.com/u/0/reporting/90882254-c674-4f0a-acb4-085a8a2d4f7f/page/p_cvacg9uscd?s=mBmEWo5fBHU
3. Breakdown of affected families	https://drive.google.com/open?id=1Pe4PJ0EjypOssZqjTk18j7Tznxu4PA_P&usp=drive_fs

Previous Operations

Has a similar event affected the same area(s) in the last 3 years?	No
Did it affect the same population group?	-
Did the National Society respond?	-
Did the National Society request funding form DREF for that event(s)	-
If yes, please specify which operation	-

If you have answered yes to all questions above, justify why the use of DREF for a recurrent event, or how this event should not be considered recurrent:

-

Lessons learned:

During the current year, although no similar storm-related operations have been recorded, the National Society, together with the IFRC, conducted a DREF operation in Quilmes and Neuquén due to flash floods. This operation culminated its activities on 30 November and is still under administrative/financial closure.

This event provided valuable lessons that, while not able to be developed due to the recent completion of the operation, are on the agenda for processes under review mostly:

- Dissemination and training on internal communication processes: it was suggested to disseminate the procedures associated with internal communication, prioritizing the use of existing tools in the National Society.
- Review of activity tracking and stock control systems: Tracking systems will be analyzed to monitor the availability, status and utilization of materials during emergency response. This initiative proposes effective management of financial and data resources, ensuring detailed control of available stock.



- Training in data collection and analysis tools: Training in the use of tools such as Kobo, as well as in the correct management and analysis of data, will be analyzed.

Current National Society Actions

Start date of National Society actions

2023-12-17

Health	<p>During the rapid needs assessments, in coordination with local volunteers, psychosocial support sessions were conducted with families that were affected by the storms. A total of 70 families were assisted through this activity.</p>
Coordination	<p>The National Society is in constant communication with the Executive Power of Bahía Blanca and all its governmental structure in order to articulate actions. It also maintains close communication with the authorities of the Province of Buenos Aires and the Nation. It actively participates in the Emergency Operations Center (COE), which is made up of all the national, provincial, and local active forces, academic organizations, essential services companies, among others.</p>
National Society Readiness	<p>The Argentine Red Cross has an updated law that recognizes its auxiliary role to the State in the context of emergencies, among other aspects. It is also a member of SINAGIR - Sistema Nacional de Gestión Integral del Riesgo y Protección Civil de la República- (National System of Integral Risk Management and Civil Protection of the Republic). Its Head Office has a structure that includes a specific area to ensure the integral management of emergencies, crises and disasters, and the National Society has a disaster response strategy (National Response Plan) that allows the necessary efforts to be made for the development of any response and/or early recovery operation.</p> <p>The National Society follows and pursues to comply with the "Preparedness for Effective Response -PER-" approach, pursuing the premise of providing relevant humanitarian services in accordance with its auxiliary role and mandate, being currently a key partner within Argentina.</p> <p>In addition, the Argentine Red Cross has a Humanitarian HUB located at Ezeiza International Airport, which keeps its own stock of the National Society and a minimum prepositioning of the International Federation. This HUB is active and at the disposal of the emergency, with immediate capacity for the most necessary distributions. In the region of the affected area there are 3 branches with volunteers who have been trained in the last 4 years to respond to emergencies, and there are various logistical resources available. The Bahía Blanca branch of the Argentine Red Cross has a staff of 15 volunteers recently trained in basic aspects of disaster response processes, and in the region there are nearby branches, with mobile and operational capacity, including Tandil, Necochea and Mar Del Plata, in addition to the AMBA branches, located approximately 650 km away.</p> <p>At the moment, volunteers from the Branches of Necochea, Tandil and Bahia Blanca, together with teams from the Head Office, are working in the field supporting the evaluations and first response tasks. A total of 23 people are in the field, in addition to 30 people providing virtual support through the National Intervention and Monitoring Teams.</p>
Assessment	<p>As a result of the weather warnings, in addition to the impact on different parts of the Province of Buenos Aires, the National Society's National Team for Monitoring Risks, Emergencies and Disasters (ENMO) was activated to follow up the situation and the effects produced, by analyzing primary and secondary sources in accordance with the Terms of Reference of said team.</p> <p>Likewise, the Argentine Red Cross (through the Bahía Blanca Branch and a team from</p>



	Headquarters led by the Undersecretary of Emergencies) is carrying out rapid assessments of the affected areas in order to contrast with official data, secondary data and validate the levels of affectation. During the last hours, more than 10 meetings have been held with local, provincial and national authorities, as well as random interviews to the community, visits to all the affected neighborhoods, among others.
Resource Mobilization	The National Society has a disaster response fund that has been activated for the initial support of the operation, currently allocating close to \$1,000,000.00 (Argentine Pesos - 1,000 USD) for the initial mobilization of people; it also has a stock of humanitarian supplies in its HUB for the response to this operation. Additionally, through the National Cooperation Directorate, efforts are being made with private companies to support the operation; at the moment there are no effective donations.
Activation Of Contingency Plans	The National Society has implemented the mechanisms of its National Emergency and Disaster Response Plan, activating the coordination of the different Secretariats at Headquarters, led by the Emergency Secretariat. The corresponding situation reports and activation have been carried out through the Integrated System for Disaster Risk Management (SIGRID).
National Society EOC	The Emergency Secretariat has activated the response mechanisms in accordance with its National Response Plan. Meetings have been held with the different technical and support areas of the National Society. The EOC is represented by the different Secretaries and Undersecretaries of the National Society, who maintain permanent communication regarding this event.

IFRC Network Actions Related To The Current Event

Secretariat	The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) has a Country Cluster Delegation (CCD) in Argentina, which provides assistance and support to the Southern Cone countries. This Delegation coordinates with both the Argentine Red Cross and the Disaster and Crisis Department of the IFRC's regional office for the Americas based in Panama. Throughout the emergency situation, permanent communication and technical assistance has been maintained through the CCD specifically designated for the Southern Cone, assisting in the development of the DREF Application.
Participating National Societies	There are no Participating National Societies (PNSs) providing support for this operation.

ICRC Actions Related To The Current Event

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) maintains offices in Argentina. Beyond fulfilling its mandate, which involves working with the authorities to integrate, implement and promote international humanitarian law and rules on the use of force, the ICRC focuses on improving the National Society's capacities to respond to emergency situations in the midst of violence and crises. In addition, it offers Restoring Family Links (RFL) services. While the ICRC has maintained contact with the CCD for the Southern Cone, it has not yet provided specific support for the current emergency situation.

Other Actors Actions Related To The Current Event

Government has requested international assistance	No
National authorities	State authorities: The Municipality of Bahía Blanca has deployed its entire structure to face this event; additionally the Province of Buenos Aires has mobilized all its teams linked to disaster response, as has the Argentine Nation. Both the President of the Republic, Javier Milei,



and the Governor of the Province of Buenos Aires, Axel Kicillof, both accompanied by other provincial and national authorities, have been present at the Emergency Operations Center providing support to the intervening teams. The work that each response agent is carrying out in the affected areas is detailed below:

National State

The National State, headed by the President of the Republic and accompanied by the Minister of Security of the Nation, mobilized the Federal Forces (Federal Police, Gendarmerie and Argentine Naval Prefecture) to support the prevention and security tasks in Bahía Blanca, and also mobilized the Civil Protection of the Nation with the purpose of providing technical support and different logistic resources, besides having mobilized the Argentine Army and the Argentine Navy which are collaborating with the coordination and logistic tasks.

Provincial State

The Province of Buenos Aires, headed by its Governor, mobilized, among others:

- Official Firefighters: Different detachments and fire stations of the Police of the Province were mobilized, among them: Bahia Blanca, Tandil, Mar Del Plata, Quequén, Necochea, La Plata, among others, with the purpose of providing support in rescue tasks, evacuation and logistic tasks for the release of roads and risk reduction.
- Ministry of Health: Different agencies were mobilized, including the Integrated Health Emergency System (SIES) and the Community Health Department, with ambulances, 4x4 vehicles, mobile clinics, health agents, doctors, nurses, and other resources. They are also currently supporting field assessments.
- Civil Protection: The Undersecretariat of Emergencies of the Province has mobilized the defense/civil protection, which deployed 4x4 units, cell phone charging equipment at critical points, lighting towers, among others.
- Security: The Ministry of Security reinforced police presence, mobilized various resources such as the ecological police, and various active forces.
- Provincial Roads: Specialists have been mobilized to support the restoration of provincial roads, access routes, and to accompany the technical-professional analysis, in addition to providing logistics.

Local State

The city of Bahía Blanca maintains active all of its Departments, Undersecretariats and Secretariats, with 100% of its human and material resources being affected to the response and recovery of the city. The Municipal Mayor leads the response actions together with his teams, in a clear and effective coordination scheme.

UN or other actors

In addition to the strong presence of the state, different actors are involved in supporting all citizens in the response and recovery process, including:

- The Federation of Volunteer Firefighters Center-South is supporting with various resources, human and logistical, deployed on the ground since the beginning of the operation; more than 14 nearby firehouses are providing support.
- Scout of Argentina, through different groups in Bahía Blanca and under a permanent communication coordination with its national structure, is supporting tasks in local canteens and at the disposal of the state.
- Different local organizations are supporting food distribution tasks in affected neighborhoods, preparing hot food in many cases and functioning as reception points. More than 1,500 people have registered in a volunteer system created by the Municipality of Bahía Blanca to accompany the reestablishment of normality in the city.
- The city's College of Architects is supporting the structural assessment tasks and making proposals for temporary solutions for habitability.

Are there major coordination mechanism in place?

Since the first day, the Emergency Operations Center (COE), led by the Mayor, has been operating at the Municipal Palace, with the participation of official agencies from the Nation, the Province, the Municipality and the Argentine Red Cross.



Needs (Gaps) Identified



Shelter Housing And Settlements

After the storm with intense winds that hit the city of Bahía Blanca, the consequences on the urban fabric have been considerably devastating. Official records and surveys carried out by the Argentine Red Cross reveal that 1,056 roofs have been documented blown off and at least 600 houses have suffered significant damage. This damage includes not only the loss of sheet metal and wood on roofs, but also the partial or total destruction of walls and masonry, among other damages.

The impact has been especially severe in the most vulnerable structures, where light constructions have been severely affected. Most of these houses had precarious constructions and were therefore more susceptible to the storm's onslaught; however, middle and upper-middle class sectors have also been affected.

The presence of downed trees both on the land and on public roads has caused significant difficulties in accessing the affected neighborhoods. As the current closure of assessments in this area approaches, it is estimated that the number of families directly affected in terms of housing will exceed 1,600.

Although many inhabitants of the most affected areas are informal construction workers and have basic skills to repair their homes, they do not have the appropriate elements as tools for the recovery of their homes. In addition, a considerable shortage of materials such as sheet metal and wood for roofing has been detected in the local market, due to the demand generated by the adverse conditions not only in this locality, but also in other localities of the province of Buenos Aires. This situation makes it even more difficult to make the necessary repairs promptly and effectively, even before the next possible storm.

Likewise, the situation of insecurity is evident, as the vast majority of those affected refuse to leave their homes for fear of robbery and squatting. This has led some families to sleep in their vehicles or in what is left of their homes. At least 50 families are in this situation which leads them to be exposed to climate-related complications and inadequate housing conditions. As for basic services, approximately 40% of the city still lacks electricity supply, and it is estimated that full restoration could take at least 10 days, further complicating the situation for those who remain in their damaged homes.

Since the beginning of the emergency, 5 evacuation centers have been set up. At the close of this report, about 100 people remain in Club Olimpo and Club Estrella, and it is estimated that they will continue to be evacuated until 28 December. These centers have basic services and all needs are covered, complying with minimum standards (Sphere). The current coordination depends on the Municipal Government, through the Civil Defense and Social Action actors. In addition, the social clubs provide support for all the activities carried out.

The Municipal Government has activated different support mechanisms, including the distribution of metal sheets, nails and suspenders, in addition to increasing economic aid, but this is insufficient; in many cases this is due to the lack of supply in the local and regional market, not only because of the situation in this city but also in the rest of the Province. The Province of Buenos Aires, through its respective areas, has sent aid of these materials to contribute to the early recovery.

The delivery of tools and plastic tarpaulins is crucial to provide an immediate solution to the problems caused by the deterioration of roofs and the breakage caused by the impact of the storm. These supplies are vital to enable disaster-affected families to quickly begin home repairs and protect their homes from future rains, at least temporarily until the local and regional market is restocked and materials are distributed to all affected families, which may take several weeks.

In addition, the implementation of a cash transfer program offers a critical complementary strategy. This program will provide families with the ability to purchase, in the near future, the materials needed to rebuild their homes, allowing them a significant degree of autonomy and choice in acquiring the most appropriate supplies for their specific needs.

The combination of the delivery of tools and plastic sheeting along with a cash transfer program is presented as a comprehensive and proactive solution to address the immediate and future needs of the families. This will not only facilitate the initial restoration of homes, but will also provide a pathway for these affected communities to move towards long-term recovery.

At the close of this proposal, the temporary shelters provided by the state continue to be an alternative for people who consider it necessary, although many do not want to leave their homes for various reasons, mainly associated with the fear of robbery or looting. In some circumstances, although evacuation is recommended due to the great impact on homes, people prefer to evacuate themselves to the homes of relatives or neighbors, or even to spend the night in their vehicles.





Health

As part of the government's response to the impact of the storm, three mobile care posts have been set up in different strategic points of the city. These posts, staffed with medical and assistance personnel, aim to provide emergency medical care to those affected and offer basic first aid services to the community.

At the same time, provincial and municipal health teams are carrying out an exhaustive house-to-house survey in the affected areas. Despite the hard work done so far, the data collected are still limited and do not provide a complete picture of the medical needs of the population. This survey seeks to identify possible injuries, illnesses or urgent medical needs in order to offer the required assistance immediately.

So far, initial analyses have not detected any health problems directly related to the impact of the storm, beyond minor injuries; however, there is a lack of safety elements reported by families to carry out repairs to their homes. This situation poses a high risk of possible domestic accidents during reconstruction work due to the lack of resources and adequate tools to perform these tasks safely.

It is essential to underline the vital importance of preventive first aid kits during the repair work after the storm. Given the precarious environment and the lack of safety measures, having teams trained to provide first aid can prevent or reduce injuries or accidents that may arise during reconstruction. In addition, it is important to consider incorporating first aid training programs for community members. This measure not only ensures immediate attention in emergency situations, but also plays a crucial role in safeguarding the physical integrity of affected families.



Water, Sanitation And Hygiene

The water service in Bahía Blanca has faced significant difficulties after the passing of the storm. Although most homes receive water supply through the network, there have been complications due to problems with the city's pumps. These pumps, which are vital for water distribution, have gradually started to operate as the power supply that feeds them has been progressively restored. However, several neighborhoods, especially the most vulnerable ones and those still without electricity, continue to experience difficulties in the supply of drinking water.

In response to these difficulties, the government has implemented the delivery of bottled water to the most affected neighborhoods and water tankers have been deployed to supply drinking water at strategic points throughout the city. This measure seeks to provide access to clean and safe water for communities facing the greatest supply challenges.

Despite the current challenges, a gradual improvement in the water supply situation is on the horizon. With the gradual restoration of pumps and prioritization of infrastructure recovery, water supply to affected households is expected to normalize in the near future, bringing significant relief to the communities affected by the storm in Bahia Blanca.

The National Society will continue to closely monitor the water and sanitation situation in the affected areas, being prepared to make any additional interventions that may be necessary in the future.

Operational Strategy

Overall objective of the operation

Through this Action Plan, the Argentine Red Cross will focus on providing humanitarian assistance to families living in vulnerable areas that have been affected by the storm in the city of Bahía Blanca, focusing on aspects related to the housing and health sectors. The National Society's goal is to support 800 families (4,000 people) directly affected by this event. This support will be carried out through a cash transfer program aimed at the recovery of their homes, together with training and first aid assistance to those who require it during the reconstruction stage.

Operation strategy rationale

The information used for the development of the intervention strategy is the result of rapid assessments carried out by the National Society, with a team from its Headquarters and in coordination with the Bahía Blanca branch. This strategy seeks to address the immediate needs of the families affected by the storm in Bahía Blanca, providing both immediate assistance and long-term support for housing reconstruction, prioritizing the safety and health of the affected people. Assessments are still in process at the closing of this



Action Plan, however, sufficient information is available to define the response strategy presented here. All information from the different agencies and organizations is centralized in the Emergency Operations Center, and decision makers can access the dashboard mentioned before.

So far, the assessment of damages and needs has shown that the demands are mainly associated with the partial or total destruction of houses, as well as partial damage to walls or roofs.

Health: All participating volunteers and staff of the National Society are trained in community first aid, which is why all evaluations, distributions, satisfaction surveys, talks and workshops will have people who can eventually provide first aid until the arrival of the medical teams. During the ongoing evaluations, blood pressure checks and minor wound healing have been required in at least 20 cases, a situation that will surely extend throughout the operation. Given the geographic area affected, community first aid kits will be provided at strategic points so that people can provide basic care to neighbors who may be injured during the response to this emergency, until the arrival of professional emergency services; recommendations and instructions on basic care in the current context will also be provided to the communities. Strategic points such as community centers, churches, infirmary rooms, and community kitchens will be selected for first aid kit distribution during emergency operations based on their central location within communities, ensuring accessibility to a diverse population. These spaces also serve as gathering points where individuals are likely to seek support, making them key locations for timely and widespread distribution of essential first aid resources.

Multipurpose cash transfer: A detailed survey of affected families and a market and feasibility study will be carried out. A one-time cash transfer or voucher program will be implemented to help families cover expenses for construction materials or any other essential element for construction. A total of 2,000 people (400 families) will be assisted.

The amount allocated to the cash transfer program (CHF 380) was initially determined using the average costs of basic construction materials (CHF 195) and the minimum wage (CHF 185). It is important to note that this value could be modified once the feasibility studies are completed. The National Society has previous experience with cash transfers or voucher strategy for housing repairs; the distribution strategy will be defined once the market and feasibility studies are completed.

Shelter: A detailed assessment of the housing conditions of the affected population will be carried out as part of the survey of families to be assisted. Tool kits and plastic tarpaulins will be provided to 2,000 people (400 families) whose homes were affected by the storm in the most vulnerable areas. In addition, 50 tents will be provided to those whose homes were completely destroyed by the storm, and who are living in cars, or even inside the precarious constructions in unsafe conditions.

CEA: The National Society will continue to prioritize the community participation and accountability approach in all its activities. This approach will be implemented in all areas of work and will be under the permanent supervision of the National Society's National Communication Directorate. Special emphasis will be maintained on activities associated with community participation in the different stages of the response and early recovery processes. Communities will continue to be invited to participate in interviews during rapid assessments, and their feedback will be continuously sought during the distribution of relief items to evaluate their usefulness and propose improvements. In addition, feedback mechanisms will be established and satisfaction surveys will be conducted with the aim of strengthening the National Society's future interventions.

Targeting Strategy

Who will be targeted through this operation?

In agreement and coordination with the country's government authorities, the National Society's response in this DREF will be developed mainly in the city of Bahía Blanca, since this is the area where the National Society has the necessary resources to carry out the activities (a branch in the area, nearby branches that can support the response and a duly trained team). This operation will focus on providing support to 4,000 people (800 families) who have been directly affected by the storm in Bahía Blanca and have suffered total or partial damage to their homes; this group does not include families who have suffered minor damage or prolonged power outages, except for those who have particular difficulties or pre-existing vulnerabilities.

Explain the selection criteria for the targeted population

- Families whose homes have suffered considerable damage, total or partial destruction due to the disaster.
- Families with at least one minor member, people over 60 years of age, pregnant women and/or people with disabilities, due to their greater vulnerability to emergency situations.
- Families that are not receiving direct assistance from other organizations to avoid duplication of efforts and to ensure that assistance reaches those most in need.



The needs of all population groups will be considered, taking into account age, sex, gender and persons with disabilities or special needs or requirements.

Total Targeted Population

Women	800	Rural	10%
Girls (under 18)	1,200	Urban	90%
Men	800	People with disabilities (estimated)	2%
Boys (under 18)	1,200		
Total targeted population	4,000		

Risk and Security Considerations

Please indicate about potential operation risk for this operations and mitigation actions

Risk	Mitigation action
Lack of knowledge of volunteers regarding the Cash Transfer Program.	Training and virtual workshops for volunteers on the implementation of the theme.
New rains or storms that hinder operational logistics.	Follow-up of activities from the Secretariat of Emergencies through its National Monitoring Team and constant communication with the National Meteorological Service contemplating potential immediate actions to be taken. Currently, the National Meteorological Service maintains an alert in force for the area, expecting new winds on 24 December. https://www.smn.gob.ar/alertas
Delays in receiving the required humanitarian aid items.	Immediate involvement of Logistics in the purchase/transfer strategy of inputs to meet the established operational deadlines.

Please indicate any security and safety concerns for this operation

The main security concerns include exposure to possible incidents of theft, taking into consideration the local context and previous experience in operations of this nature. As a strategy, a security sheet will be prepared for field mobilizations. Likewise, communication will be maintained with the police authorities and the municipality in order to ensure eventual support if deemed necessary.

In addition, we are concerned about possible injuries to Argentine Red Cross volunteers and personnel during mobilizations in the affected areas. For this purpose, volunteers will be provided with insurance and the necessary safety equipment to carry out the activities.

Has the child safeguarding risk analysis assessment been completed?

No



Planned Intervention



Shelter Housing And Settlements

DREF Allocation: CHF 339,101

Budget: CHF 51,067

Targeted Persons: 2,000

Indicators

Title	Target
# families reached with Shelter Tool Kits (tools and tarps)	400
# families reached with family tents	50

Priority Actions

- Detailed shelter assessment.
- Purchase and distribution of Shelter Tool Kits for 400 families.
- Purchase and distribution of PVC tarpaulins for 400 families (2 tarpaulins per family).
- Purchase and distribution of family tents for 50 families.



Multi Purpose Cash

DREF Allocation: CHF 339,101

Budget: CHF 165,448

Targeted Persons: 2,000

Indicators

Title	Target
# market and feasibility study	1
# of families assisted through a cash transfer program	400

Priority Actions

- Feasibility and market study.
- Survey of families.
- Induction of volunteers for the development of the cash transfer program.
- Design and distribution of the cash transfer program.
- Follow up of CVA programme



Health

DREF Allocation: CHF 339,101

Budget: CHF 11,715

Targeted Persons: 4,000



Indicators

Title	Target
# of first aid assistance services provided	50
# of first aid kits delivered in community centers	40
# families reached with Health Promotion activities	800

Priority Actions

- First aid assistance throughout the operation.
- Community first aid promotion activities.
- Delivery of first aid kits at strategic points in the communities (referrals, health centers, community centers, etc.).



Community Engagement And Accountability

DREF Allocation: CHF 339,101

Budget: CHF 4,793

Targeted Persons: 3,600

Indicators

Title	Target
% of people satisfied with receiving good quality distributions and with dignity	90

Priority Actions

- Post-distribution follow-up surveys.
- Dissemination of information and key messages.
- Ongoing situation assessment through focus groups, surveys, etc
- Design and printing of distribution materials.



Secretariat Services

DREF Allocation: CHF 339,101

Budget: CHF 35,768

Targeted Persons: -

Indicators

Title	Target
# of field monitoring visits conducted	3
# of deployments of Surge Logistics	1

Priority Actions

- Operations follow-up (implementation of financial activities and procedures).
- Deployment of Surge Logistics (3 months)





DREF Allocation: CHF 339,101

Budget: CHF 70,311

Targeted Persons: -

Indicators

Title	Target
# of lessons learned workshops conducted	1
# of volunteers receiving personal protective clothing and gear	180

Priority Actions

- Procurement and distribution of protective and visibility equipment for volunteers.
- Monitoring missions
- Lessons Learned Workshop
- Emergency Management Workshop

About Support Services

How many staff and volunteers will be involved in this operation. Briefly describe their role.

The Argentine Red Cross has a National Response Plan that stipulates the processes and stages of alert and mobilization in general. The National Society has more than 6,000 volunteers, among which there is a large concentration in the Buenos Aires Metropolitan Area (AMBA). More than 500 volunteers have been trained in emergency response in the last 3 years in this region of the country.

At least 180 volunteers can be mobilized in the field for different activities, in addition to staff from Headquarters to support operations. Depending on the operational needs and the contextual situation, human resources will be mobilized for early recovery.

In addition, Volunteer Technicians from the National Intervention Team (NIT) will be deployed to support the local branch in field coordination tasks and the Territorial Network in integral coordination. The Team has 12 active members. Additionally, the National Monitoring Team will be mobilized to support PMER and Monitoring tasks for events that occur during the operation, in addition to contributing to the Risk Analyses during the operation.

Volunteers:

National Teams: The National Society has several support teams, considered in its Response Strategy, among them the National Intervention Team (NIT) and the National Monitoring Team (ENMO). In recent operations, the mobilization of volunteers from these teams to Headquarters and in the field has proved to be a good practice and has provided significant support to the teams in the field, mainly in terms of security, administrative and operational management. Both teams have their members mainly in the interior of the country; therefore, mobilization by plane and lodging in areas close to Headquarters and/or in Bahía Blanca will be planned.

Volunteers: Priority will be given to the mobilization of volunteers from Branches close to Bahía Blanca that have logistic capacity and training in emergencies, among them the Branches of Necochea, Mar Del Plata and Tandil; additionally and due to the experience in operations that included lodging and PTM lines, volunteers from Branches of the AMBA and from different points of the Province of Buenos Aires will be mobilized, mainly by land. During the last month, different economic measures of the National Government have generated significant increases in fuel and vehicle maintenance costs, increasing up to 100% or even more, and it is not excluded that during the operation these costs will continue to increase.

Training: Taking advantage of the experience of qualified and experienced personnel who will participate in the different missions to be carried out, workshops and meetings will be held with the local volunteers of Bahía Blanca Branch associated with emergency management, with the National Society's own training that provides an induction on disaster response processes, both administrative



and operational, and that will involve volunteers from different Branches participating in this operation.

In all cases, volunteer rotations will take place in mission periods of less than 2 weeks, within the framework of the volunteer care processes, and all costs related to lodging, food, transportation, will be considered when applicable. All National Society volunteers have personal accident insurance paid for by the National Society.

Will surge personnel be deployed? Please provide the role profile needed.

Surge Logistics Deployment - The deployment of additional logistics personnel will be essential to coordinate the efficient distribution of supplies, manage inventories, optimize transportation routes and establish temporary warehouses.

If there is procurement, will it be done by National Society or IFRC?

The National Society has recently certified the OCAC assessment process. In addition, the National Society follows IFRC WPP processes.

The Argentine Red Cross has a Logistics and Systems Sub-Secretariat, which is responsible for the National Society's procurement area, which has the capacity to purchase locally available supplies. In addition, this area of the Argentine Red Cross is in permanent contact with the IFRC Logistics Unit.

The Argentine Red Cross is a leader in the region in terms of humanitarian logistics, with a Humanitarian HUB at the Ezeiza International Airport (Buenos Aires) that has hygiene and cleaning kits, among other relief items, in stock for immediate dispatch. The National Society has stock of all the items in its HUB, so they will be replenished.

In addition, vehicles from the branches and all the fleet from the headquarters are in a state of pre-positioning, as well as all the logistic resources of the National Society.

The main logistical resources available are as follows:

- More than 15 4x4 vehicles.
- More than 25 single traction vehicles.
- 2 passenger transport units.
- 3 cargo vans for cargo transportation.
- 11 Trailers for different purposes (toilets, kitchens, etc).
- Unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs).
- Among other elements.

The National Society will make use of the stock pre-positioned in the Humanitarian Hub to initiate distributions as soon as possible. And these products will be replenished during the operation, purchased and shipped from Panama to Buenos Aires through the Logistics unit.

How will this operation be monitored?

The planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting of the operation will be the responsibility of the Secretariat for Emergencies and Disasters. A report will be submitted in the second month of the operation and another at the end of the operation. At the end of the operation, a lessons learned workshop will be held, which may be conducted in person or remotely, and the IFRC will be invited to participate as a participant. Additionally, the IFRC will supervise the proposed DREF operation.

Please briefly explain the National Societies communication strategy for this operation

The National Society has extensive experience in communication in emergency contexts, including support to several National Societies in the region. For this purpose, it has a National Communication Directorate that manages the National Society's social networks and the relationship and link with the media.

In this sense, with the purpose of disseminating the National Society's humanitarian action and strengthening the processes of community participation and accountability to the community, different activities will be carried out, including:

- Audiovisual recording of the main activities of the DREF operation.



- Production and editing of testimonial and accountability audiovisual pieces.
- Printing of multi-threat pieces.
- Development of community consultation tools, with permanent contact with the Red Cross.
- Design of a final accountability of the operation to be presented to the community and strategic partners.
- Creation of a virtual resource (virtual folder) with an audiovisual record of the operation.
- Review and elaboration of key messages for volunteers in the field and references for the execution of the response strategy.
- Press actions to accurately disseminate the activity to different audiences and subsequent clipping of notes (subject to an analysis of the situation).



Budget Overview



DREF OPERATION

MDRAR020 - Argentine Red Cross Argentina: Storm Bahia Blanca

Operating Budget

Planned Operations	233,022
Shelter and Basic Household Items	51,067
Livelihoods	0
Multi-purpose Cash	165,448
Health	11,715
Water, Sanitation & Hygiene	0
Protection, Gender and Inclusion	0
Education	0
Migration	0
Risk Reduction, Climate Adaptation and Recovery	0
Community Engagement and Accountability	4,793
Environmental Sustainability	0
Enabling Approaches	106,079
Coordination and Partnerships	0
Secretariat Services	35,768
National Society Strengthening	70,311
TOTAL BUDGET	339,101

all amounts in Swiss Francs (CHF)



Contact Information

For further information, specifically related to this operation please contact:

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[Click here for the reference](#)

