

EMERGENCY APPEAL

Argentina | Economic Crisis 2024



Volunteers from the Mendoza branch of the Argentine Red Cross is providing food assistance to people affected by the socio-economic situation. Source: Argentine Red Cross

Operation №: MDRAR022	IFRC Secretariat Funding requirements: CHF 3 million Federation-wide funding requirements: CHF 3 million	
Glide №:	People (affected/at risk): 7.2 million people	People to be assisted: 20,000 people
DREF allocation: CHF 500,000	Appeal launched: 17/09/2024	Appeal ends: 30/09/2025



SITUATION OVERVIEW ¹

Argentina has been facing one of its most complex **socioeconomic crises** in recent years, marked by an increase in the number of people living in poverty and extreme poverty, limited access to health services and food, a shrinking labour market, and significant difficulties in sustaining livelihoods, among other issues.

Following the presidential elections of 2023, a new government took office in December. One of the first measures taken by the current administration was to declare a **public emergency in economic, financial, fiscal, administrative, pension, tariff, health, and social matters** through a **Decree of Necessity and Urgency (DNU No. 70/2023)**² which will remain in force until December 31, 2025. This decree characterises the current context of the country as “...**a situation of unprecedented gravity, generating deep imbalances, which have a negative impact on the whole population, especially in social and economic areas**”. Additionally, on 27 June 2024,

¹ Based on its experience as a Reference Centre of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), the Humanitarian Observatory has prepared a [report annexed](#) to this document that provides a disaggregated overview of the situation, set within a historical context and aligned with the regulatory framework in force at the national level.

the Law of Bases was approved which, among other aspects, modifies the declaration of emergency to focus on four areas—administrative, economic, financial and energy—for a term of one year.

These initial measures triggered widespread popular reactions (central and territorial) expressed through mobilisations and protests, in some cases, involving political parties (opposition), sectoral groups, trade unions (including two national general strikes so far), and social organisations.

Despite previous government efforts at social assistance and protection up until 2023, the deepening socioeconomic deterioration was already evident, with the poverty rate approaching 42 per cent of the population and extreme poverty almost 12 per cent. This deterioration was exacerbated by runaway inflation, which pushed the consumer price index up by 25.5 per cent by the end of the year. In 2024, as purchasing power steadily eroded for most of the population, a University of Buenos Aires (UBA) study indicated that Argentina had become the most expensive country in the region from January to July of this year, since it takes, on average, double the income to purchase a basic food basket, which has seen continuous price increases.³ Essential items such as fruits, vegetables, bread, rice, pasta, cereals, milk, and minced meat saw price hikes of 100 per cent to 360 per cent within the first seven months of the year, while the national price index hovered around 90 per cent.

In response, the incoming government implemented a series of measures aimed at improving macroeconomic variables (especially fiscal and trade surpluses), initially by sharply cutting government expenditures. These measures include the elimination of gas, electricity, and transportation subsidies for middle and low-income households, the closure and/or downsizing of government agencies, cutbacks in discretionary transfers to provinces, the suspension of public works, and the deregulation of private sectors such as internet, telephone, and private medical services, among others.

² República Argentina. (2023). Decreto 70/2023. Retrieved from: <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/normativa/nacional/decreto-70-2023-395521/texto>

³ Centro de Estudios de la Nueva Economía, Universidad de Buenos Aires. (n.d.). El costo de vivir en Argentina. Retrieved from: <https://centrora.economicas.uba.ar/el-costo-de-vivir-en-argentina/>

According to INDEC,⁴ by the end of 2023, **poverty reached a total of 41.7 per cent**, which represents 19.4 million people unable to afford the cost of the basic food basket. In addition, the **extreme poverty** rate⁵ reached 11.9 per cent, equivalent to 5.5 million people. The most affected regions were in the northeast, with 48.4 per cent in poverty, followed by the northwest at 45.6 per cent, and the Cuyo region at 44 per cent.

According to the Observatory of Social Debt at the Argentine Catholic University (UCA), by March 2024, **the poverty rate had surged to 55.5 per cent, while the rate for extreme poverty had risen to 17.5 per cent, confirming a critical peak of a near-doubling in the number of people living in extreme vulnerability.**

The living conditions of people in poverty are aggravated by inadequate housing conditions. According to the Ministry of Human Capital, 42.9 per cent live in overcrowded homes, while 18.1 per cent reside in substandard housing. This is particularly pronounced in the country's 6,467 vulnerable neighbourhoods ("barrios populares").⁶ Additionally, there were roughly 9,440 homeless people reported in 2023 by the National Survey of Homeless People (ReNaCALLE), mainly concentrated in the Metropolitan Area of Buenos Aires (AMBA) and other major urban centres. The challenging socioeconomic environment further restricts access to fundamental rights such as health, education, work, and identity.

Against this backdrop, the ability of the most vulnerable households to cover their basic needs and maintain their **livelihoods** is seriously compromised, as economic opportunities dwindle. According to official INDEC figures, year-on-year inflation accelerated, reaching 289.4 per cent in April 2024. This inflationary dynamic has been aggravated by the El Niño and La Niña weather phenomena, which have negatively impacted large productive sectors⁷ through droughts, fires, and floods.

A stark disparity exists between the minimum living wage set by the Secretary of Labour, Employment, and Social Security (Resolution 4/2024) at ARS 202,800 (CHF 178.60) for March 2024, and the cost of the basic food basket (which determines the poverty line), which INDEC reports as ARS 268,012 (CHF 236.04) for one person, and ARS 828.150 (CHF 729.35) for a family of four. This gap forces affected populations to seek new and alternative sources of income.

In this scenario, working families are facing increasingly difficult situations when trying to cover the basic cost of living, particularly for food, compounded by increases in utility rates over the last few months.

As a result, many are forced to take on multiple jobs or supplement their income through informal trades. However, many engage in these activities without adequate knowledge or training, further complicating their situation. The lack of necessary skills limits their opportunities and reduces the effectiveness of these alternatives for improving their economic well-being. According to the CETA group, some of the most in-demand jobs in 2023 include logistics personnel, cooks, maintenance operators, and meatpacking plant workers, highlighting the importance of training in these sectors to face new labour market realities.⁸

Children and adolescents living in disadvantaged environments, exposed to poor health, inadequate nutrition, and low levels of stimulation at home, are unable to reach their development potential, leading to a 20 per cent income deficit in adulthood. According to UNICEF (2023),⁹ monetary poverty affects 57 per cent of children and adolescents (7.1 million people), with even higher rates in impoverished neighbourhoods, where it reaches 84 per cent.

⁴ Source: National Institute of Statistics and Census (INDEC).

⁵ In terms of measurement, according to INDEC's definition, households whose total income does not exceed the value of the basic food basket capable of satisfying a minimum threshold of energy and protein needs are considered indigent.

⁶ Argentina's Ministry of Economy considers barrios populares as "vulnerable neighborhoods where at least eight families live grouped or contiguous, where more than half of the population does not have title to the land or regular access to two or more basic services (running water network, electricity network with a home meter and/or sewage network)". They are [characterized](#) by a high percentage of children and adolescents, a predominance of single-parent households led by women, and a concentration in the provinces of Buenos Aires (32%), Santa Fe (7.2%), Chaco (6.8%), and Misiones (6.4%).

⁷ In 2023 alone, due to the La Niña phenomenon, there were losses of more than USD 16.95 billion.

⁸ Source: Labour Data Report 2023/24, prepared by the Ceta Human Capital group.

⁹ [Situation of children and adolescents. 2023 UNICEF - Seventh Round.](#)

UNICEF's report also reveals that 2.5 million children and adolescents have had to skip some meals, reduce portion sizes, or downgrade the quality of their diets. Given the broader socioeconomic context, these indicators are expected to worsen. The current government has decided to review the Community Kitchens and Soup Kitchens aid programmes, which are largely managed by social organisations, and has even initiated legal proceedings against several of them for non-compliance. This, in turn, has generated social tension and sparked marches and mobilisations demanding that the government regularise and even expand these programmes. As of 2024, if current trends persist, UNICEF projects that monetary poverty could affect up to 70 per cent of children and adolescents.

Food insecurity is also a growing concern, with the Argentine Catholic University (2024)¹⁰ confirming that 64.5 per cent of the country's children and adolescents are affected, a figure that has been steadily increasing since 2004.

Access to health care has been severely restricted by the economic crisis and its short and medium-term outlook. The social consequences have led to a deterioration in the quality of life and increased morbidity and mortality of the most vulnerable populations. According to the UCA's Social Debt Observatory, there has been an increase in mental and behavioural health emergencies among children and adolescents in 2024.

The economic situation and the significant increase in the cost of transportation have restricted people's ability to travel to health centres, a situation further worsened by the suspension and/or cancellation of several state programmes at the primary care level. As a result, accessibility for individuals and communities to both preventive and immediate healthcare, including follow-up and routine check-ups for signs and symptoms, has diminished.

A report by the Centre of Pharmaceutical Professionals (CEPROFAR) highlights a 146 per cent increase in the price of medicines during the first four months of the year. This price surge has led to a 20 per cent drop in the purchase of medications for chronic diseases such as arterial hypertension, diabetes, and metabolic diseases) in April 2024, which **directly affects adherence to treatments** and has medium to long-term consequences on public health.

Furthermore, these **limitations in access** to health care extend to vaccination services, particularly immunisations mandated and provided free of charge under the National Vaccination Calendar, which further hinders effective coverage. According to the UCA, vaccination rates in infants are less than 80 per cent, 15 percentage points below the optimum level needed to control epidemics.

The **negative impact on national vaccination coverage**, especially among school-age children and adolescents, increases the risk of re-emergence or reintroduction of vaccine-preventable diseases (VDPD) that had previously been controlled or eliminated in the country.¹¹

TARGETING

According to the UCA (March 2024), it is estimated that more than **seven million people**—15 per cent of Argentina's population—have been directly affected by the ongoing crisis over the past year, with the situation significantly worsening in the first half of 2024. Of these, 71 per cent, nearly five million people, are concentrated in the provinces of Buenos Aires, the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, Córdoba and Corrientes, with Buenos Aires and Córdoba being the most populated provinces in the country.

Initially, this emergency operation will focus on addressing the health and food security needs of 59 vulnerable communities (a total of 20,000 people), especially those living in socioeconomically vulnerable circumstances in

¹⁰ Buenos Aires Herald. (2024, August 5). The analysis finds that 55% of Argentines and 7 in 10 kids are poor. Retrieved from: <https://buenosairesherald.com/society/analysis-finds-55-of-argentines-and-7-in-10-kids-are-poor>

¹¹ [Document Vaccination Week of the Americas Argentine Society of Pediatrics - April 2024](#)

the provinces of Buenos Aires, the City of Buenos Aires, Córdoba, and Corrientes. Additionally, humanitarian aid will be provided to the homeless population in the most socioeconomically impacted urban areas of these localities. Secondly, 30 of these vulnerable communities will receive support for skills development in various trades, aimed at increasing the income-generating capacity of those whose livelihoods have been affected, with special attention given to mothers, fathers, and young people.

Priority will be given to families that have not received similar assistance from the government or any other entity, especially children from 0 to 12 years of age, single-parent families with children under five years of age, community leaders, guardians, youth, people with disabilities, and homeless adults. Additionally, this Emergency Appeal seeks to strengthen and complement the actions already undertaken by the National Society to mitigate the impacts of the current crisis. The target population will be broken down into specific groups, considering factors such as unemployment, family responsibilities, previous training, and socioeconomic vulnerability, ensuring that the assistance is effective, equitable, and tailored to the needs of each demographic group in the hardest-hit communities.

The geographic targeting of the prioritised population will be adjusted in the second phase of the appeal, based on the results of a multi-sectoral assessment and in coordination with Argentine Red Cross branches and local government entities.

PLANNED OPERATIONS

Through this Emergency Appeal, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) aims to support the Argentine Red Cross in its response to the humanitarian needs arising from the economic crisis in the country. This appeal seeks to provide immediate humanitarian assistance in the first months of the operation, along with protection and recovery support to families and homeless individuals most affected by the crisis. The operation is designed to benefit 20,000 people over a 12-month period.

The IFRC's response strategy focuses on supporting the National Society in implementing activities to reach 20,000 people, **initially concentrating on integrated assistance and health**. This approach aligns with the IFRC's Strategy 2030, which aims to promote safe, healthy, and dignified lives, offering opportunities for all people to thrive.

Integrated Assistance (Shelter, Livelihoods, and Multi-purpose Cash)



This operation will directly reach **10,200** people whose lives and households have been affected by the economic crisis. Assistance will be delivered and tailored based on the results of a multi-sectoral assessment that will identify the specific damages and needs of families and homeless individuals in previously identified urban and peri-urban areas. In parallel with the assessment, during the first weeks of the operation, hygiene kits, food, school supplies, and psychosocial care kits will be distributed to the most vulnerable children, families, and homeless individuals. Once the multi-sectoral assessment is completed, training interventions will be implemented for technical skills that strengthen livelihoods in the medium and long-term.

The scope and scale of the livelihood restoration and strengthening programme will be determined by the results of the assessment, but initial activities are expected to focus on **skills training** that promotes income generation and **household economic management**. These training sessions will strengthen risk management practices to protect and improve household financial management in crisis situations. In this way, the content and format of the training will be aligned with the needs identified, contributing to the long-term sustainability of families. Additionally, awareness-raising sessions on nutritionally sensitive practices will be provided to improve the sustainable food security of participants through health-related actions. The National Society will maximise the effectiveness of the intervention by leveraging its previous experiences and the support and infrastructure of its affiliates in the areas where it has a presence. However, to ensure that no one is left behind and that the most

affected families and individuals are reached, a mobile classroom will be used. This classroom will be coordinated with schools and educational centres to facilitate livelihood-related activities in a respectful and safe environment for all.

Health and Care including Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH), and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support/Community Health



The health interventions aim to directly reach **20,000** people. The Argentine Red Cross, through a strategy focused on improving access to health, will provide first aid services, primary health care, mental health and psychosocial support through mobile devices and a mobile health unit. This health unit will coordinate with health wards in the most affected communities, with a special focus on overcoming economic and geographic barriers to access. In addition to providing primary care, referrals to more complex centres will be facilitated when necessary, and community health centres will be equipped with first aid kits and personal protective equipment (PPE) for health personnel.

Efforts will also be made to ensure access to hygiene and menstrual hygiene items, mainly through the delivery of family and dignity hygiene kits. These actions will be accompanied by hygiene promotion sessions to encourage the proper use of relief items and hygiene practices.


In addition, a comprehensive health promotion strategy aimed at children will be implemented, covering three key areas of development: neurodevelopment, nutrition, and vaccination. These interventions will take place in educational centres and will be complemented with integrated assistance and livelihood programmes, mainly targeting mothers and fathers. Health promotion sessions will focus on playful stimulation, differentiated according to neurodevelopmental stages, through workshops and activities to **promote healthy eating habits**. Through these activities, the aim is to collaborate and raise awareness of the importance of a balanced diet and the creation of a healthy growth environment, helping prevent malnutrition and supporting long-term well-being.

At the same time, awareness-raising activities will be conducted with fathers, mothers, guardians, and community leaders on the importance of **timely and safe application of the vaccines** included in the National Vaccination Calendar, based on community surveys that identify immunisation gaps.

With street communities and people experiencing homelessness, the Argentine Red Cross will implement social protection measures and **mental health and psychosocial support** interventions.

Protection and Prevention (Protection, Gender, and Inclusion (PGI), Community Engagement and Accountability, Migration, Environmental Sustainability, Risk Reduction, Climate Adaptation and Recovery, and Education

PGI activities will be integrated into the screening and needs assessment process to ensure an understanding and response to individuals and groups based on their risks, needs and concerns, considering gender and other diversity factors, with data disaggregated by gender, age, and disability. In addition, the Argentine Red Cross and IFRC will adhere to the Protection, Gender and Inclusion (PGI) minimum standards to make sure that all actions are aligned with the Dignity, Access, Participation and Safety (DAPS) Framework. This also involves establishing child protection measures and safeguards against sexual violence, exploitation, and abuse, which will be conducted through training sessions for National Society staff and health personnel at community health centres, as well as awareness-raising sessions in vulnerable neighbourhoods through local branches or the mobile classroom. The existing referral routes will be validated during the operation's implementation.

This response will prioritise the meaningful participation of affected communities through feedback mechanisms that will be defined according to the situation and context, taking advantage of this information. The Argentine Red Cross and IFRC will develop interventions that accurately address community needs and feedback while continuously refining their strategies. 

ENABLING APPROACHES

The above sectors will be supported and enhanced by the following enabling approaches:



Coordination and Strategic Partners: The Argentine Red Cross maintains close coordination with all components of the International Movement, including neighbouring National Societies and several Participating National Societies such as the German Red Cross and Spanish Red Cross, the Secretariat of the International Federation, the International Committee of the Red Cross and, potentially, embassies, and international cooperation organisations and agencies. In addition to internal cooperation within the International Movement, the National Society, through this appeal, aims to engage with various embassies in Argentina and hold meetings with sectors of the national, provincial, and local governments. The goal is to present this appeal and, where appropriate, coordinate actions in the field. The Argentine Red Cross Headquarters has established its Crisis Cell (a leadership mechanism for major crises), comprising representatives from all technical and strategic areas of the National Society. Within this appeal, they propose a marketing and resource mobilisation strategy, together with actions such as developing materials to present action plans to donors, Participant National Societies, and governments, organising meetings with ambassadors and technical teams in Argentina, and meetings with Participating National Societies. They will also update online platforms to demonstrate the progress in implementing these actions, among other initiatives.

IFRC Secretariat Services: The IFRC will work closely with the Argentine Red Cross to achieve the objectives and goals defined in the Operational Strategy, ensuring that actions are implemented effectively and in accordance with the Federation's policies and procedures. The IFRC will support the Argentine Red Cross in:

1. Staffing surge: Providing personnel for the initial implementation of the Emergency Appeal.
2. Membership coordination: Supporting alignment of new and ongoing projects to meet the national and broader Argentine Red Cross objectives, ensuring complementarity and collective impact.
3. Resource mobilisation and external communications: Through the regional communications team and cluster, visibility will be given to this response to obtain and attract funding. Support may also include audiovisual products, information management, and communication materials to help with resource mobilisation.
4. Financial management, logistics and procurement: Providing long-term support to the Argentine Red Cross to ensure rapid project processing and implementation, with accurate and high-quality reporting.
5. Technical expertise in thematic sectors: Offering temporary support for the management of this large-scale operation, including external coordination with other stakeholders involved in the response.
6. Logistics: The Regional Logistics Unit will support the Argentine Red Cross and the Regional Logistics Hub with logistical processes, ensuring the timely purchase and distribution of humanitarian assistance in compliance with the established norms and standards of the IFRC.



Strengthening of the National Society: During the response, the National Society's capacities will be strengthened to effectively and sustainably respond to the socioeconomic situation, for which the operation will include support in financial management, logistics, and volunteer development at the provincial and district levels.

The Argentine Red Cross will implement a comprehensive capacity-building strategy that will be reflected in the appeal's Operational Strategy and subject to continuous review. The purpose is to ensure that the activities developed during the appeal have a lasting impact and that fundraising mechanisms and accountability management are improved.

In addition, special emphasis will be placed on the care and protection of volunteers through the proper management of services, provision of PPE, training, and accident insurance.

The planned response reflects the current situation and is based on information available at the time of this Emergency Appeal launch. Details of the operation will be updated through the Operational Strategy to be

released in the upcoming days. The Operational Strategy will also provide further details on the Federation-wide approach, including the response activities of all contributing Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies, and the Federation-wide funding requirement.

RED CROSS RED CRESCENT FOOTPRINT IN THE COUNTRY

Argentine Red Cross

The Argentine Red Cross was founded in 1880 with the mission of improving the lives of people, especially those in vulnerable situations. One hundred and forty-four years later, the National Society continues to pursue this objective through its headquarters, 65 branches, and 33 Institutes of Higher Education spread across the country.

The National Society works with people in vulnerable situations, considering a range of factors, including socioeconomic challenges, exclusion from social or individual elements, and exposure to violence, among other aspects of multidimensional poverty.

In 2023, the Argentine Red Cross reached 7,693,375 people by:

- Training individuals in first aid to respond in emergency situations.
- Purifying and distributing millions of litres of water to indigenous communities.
- Helping connect people from different communities to safe water and sewage networks.
- Promoting community risk reduction initiatives associated with Early Warning Systems, Forecast-based Anticipation, and School Risk Management, among others.
- Providing humanitarian response aid in response to floods and fires in different parts of the country.
- Offering vocational training to promote job reintegration and strengthen livelihoods.
- Conducting HIV/syphilis tests and running campaigns to prevent sexually transmitted infections, in collaboration with the IFRC.
- Accompanying migrants and/or refugees in border areas and urban centres.
- Providing medical coverage for large-scale events.
- Assisting people experiencing homelessness and conducting multiple health promotion and disease prevention campaigns.

Additionally, the Argentine Red Cross has a National Emergency and Disaster Response Plan, updated in 2021, which remains in effect.

Main areas of activity	Number of employees:	1,855
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health Promotion • Mental Health and Psychosocial Support • Formal and Non-formal Education • Emergency and Disaster Response • Emergency and Disaster Risk Reduction • Accompanying migrants • Protection and Strengthening of Livelihoods • Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Promotion • Protection, Gender, and Inclusion • Community First Aid 	Number of volunteers:	7,160
	Number of branches	65

IFRC Membership coordination

The IFRC has a Multi-Country Delegation (CCD) office in Argentina, which provides assistance and support to the Southern Cone countries. This office coordinates with both the Argentine Red Cross and the Disasters and Crises Department of the IFRC's Regional Office for the Americas, based in Panama. In response to the worsening social situation in Argentina due to the current economic crisis, ongoing communication and technical assistance have been maintained through the CCD specifically designated for the Southern Cone, helping in the development of this Appeal.

Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement coordination

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) maintains a regional delegation in Brazil from which activities in Argentina are managed. Beyond fulfilling its mandate, which involves collaborating 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 contexts of violence and crisis. In this regard, the National Society is implementing a Cooperation Action Plan with the ICRC that seeks to address various issues associated with the ICRC's mandate and support to the National Society. In recent months, the social tensions arising from measures adopted by the government have led the National Society and ICRC to hold more frequent coordination meetings and review aspects related to the framework of Safer Access (AMS), the strengthening and training of volunteers and members of the National Society to respond to contexts of social tension and sharing ongoing information through technical teams on situations of violence and unrest in the country.

External coordination

The Argentine Red Cross, through its Territorial Network, maintains close coordination with the most vulnerable communities and various actors involved in humanitarian assistance, whether they are small local organisations or large civil society organisations such as Scouts of Argentina, ADRA, and the CADENA Foundation, among others. In addition, regular coordination meetings are held with local authorities (municipal/departamental). The National Society's head office organises meetings with national authorities, strengthening its relationships, within the framework of its auxiliary role, with the Ministries of Security, Human Capital, and Health, among other national portfolios, while maintaining coordination with different provincial authorities in the regions most affected by this crisis.

Contact information

For more information specifically related to this operation, please contact

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