

Alert

Uruguay

Tornado in Dolores, Uruguay

Geneva, 18 April 2016

1. Brief description of the emergency and impact

Last Friday April 15, at 16.30, a tornado hit the village of Dolores, Dpt. Soriano, 15 km. from the Uruguay River, in south western Uruguay, without warning. Dolores has a population of approximately 20,000. The tornado, considered as an F3, cut through the middle of the town travelling from West to Northeast, destroying everything in its path for 800 m. A third of this city's population has been affected. Until now, we have registered 4 deaths, 12 persons disappeared, and more than 500 wounded, mostly children. A primary school, the secondary school and the local Hospital are seriously damaged, as well as near 1,000 houses and other buildings. Many of the damaged buildings are still at risk of collapsing. People have been taken in by neighbours and family, others in improvised shelters set up by local authorities. It continues to rain, causing some flooding, making it difficult to save personal belongings from damaged buildings. If the rain doesn't stop, there will be health problems in addition to the existing housing problems.

2. Why is an ACT response needed?

Uruguay is currently affected by the El Niño weather phenomenon. It has been raining for the last two weeks; all the rivers are beginning to flood, including the San Salvador River, on whose banks Dolores is situated. The level of damage caused by the tornado and the floods far exceeds the capacity of response by local and national government, or civil society, including churches. All areas near the river, including the local flood plain are under water. This, added to all the people who are without shelter because of the tornado, is creating a very complicated scenario, and an external intervention is needed. We request ACT's assistance because local churches do not have funds or supplies for responding to emergencies.

3. National and international response

The local Police and National Army are patrolling the streets, to prevent looting. So far there is no sign of violence. The Regional and National Government have declared a state of emergency and have sent emergency personnel to tend to the wounded. The local health facilities have been overwhelmed by the demand. Food, clothes and mattresses are being received and distributed to those in need. The President of Uruguay visited Dolores today, to see for himself the damages and the best way to help.

4. ACT Alliance response

The ACT-Argentina forum is prepared to assist those who were affected by this disaster; a team is ready to support the diaconal work of the churches in Dolores. This will be this region's first ACT emergency response experience. Hora de Obrar should take the lead in this intervention.

5. Planned activities

The Waldensian Church is coordinating actions with the local Emergency Committee, to provide together critical items related to Health care, Food, and Clothing. They have asked the National Government to help in the rebuilding of the city's basic infrastructure and services such as the hospital, schools, destroyed houses, and some infrastructure that have served for community activities, including some churches. The National Government has committed help, but it will not be enough. Hora de Obrar will support the Waldensian church. It would help if we could count on the financial resources needed to run different planned activities. Accompaniment of teams with experience in this kind of emergencies could be very helpful.

6. Constraints

No constraints have been detected that would limit our ability to act for humanitarian assistance.

Any funding indication or pledge should be communicated to the Head of Finance and Administration, Line Hempel (Line.Hempel@actalliance.org).

For further information please contact:

ACT Regional Representative, Carlos Rauda (carlos.rauda@actalliance.org)

ACT Web Site address: <http://www.actalliance.org>