

FIELD ASSESSMENT REPORT

CADENA Argentina – Northern Zone of AMBA

Assessment Date: May 19, 2025

Emergency Context:

Since May 16, 2025, intense rainfall has hit Buenos Aires Province, with over 450 mm falling in some areas in just 72 hours. This volume far exceeded official forecasts (which predicted 60 to 100 mm) and led to the total collapse of urban drainage systems. As a result, entire neighborhoods in Greater Buenos Aires, especially in the northern zone, were submerged. As of May 19, more than 2,979 people remain evacuated, with thousands more directly or indirectly affected.

Assessment Objective:

On May 19, CADENA's team conducted a rapid field assessment in the northern zone of Greater Buenos Aires, covering the most vulnerable and affected neighborhoods. The objectives were:

- To assess the direct impact of the emergency in vulnerable neighborhoods.
- To visit evacuation centers and affected homes.
- To speak with affected families to identify their most urgent needs.
- To coordinate with local organizations to detect gaps in the humanitarian response.

Methodology:

The assessment was based on:

- Direct observation of flooded areas and evacuation center conditions.
- Semi-structured interviews with affected families.
- Meetings with local organizations involved in the response, including Puertas Abiertas al Trabajo Solidario, the Red Cross, the local municipality, and the Scouts.
- Photographic documentation and spontaneous testimonies.

Assessment Results:

1. Uninhabitable homes and total material loss

Many homes were completely flooded. In most cases, families lost mattresses, blankets, furniture, appliances, clothing, school supplies, and work tools, leaving them without resources to face winter.

2. School interruption and nutritional deterioration

Schools remain closed due to structural damage or inaccessible roads. This has a direct impact on children: many no longer receive the only full daily meal they used to get at school, worsening their nutritional situation.

3. Health risks

Stagnant water is mixed with waste and sewage. In the coming days, cases of fever, skin infections, and respiratory symptoms are expected. There is currently no stable access to piped or potable water. Families depend on donations of drinking water (which remain available for now), but the lack of piped water is hindering cleaning tasks. Water and power services are expected to resume by the weekend of May 24.

4. Psychosocial and emotional risk

Families report anxiety, fear, and exhaustion. Women—mostly heads of household—expressed feeling overwhelmed by caregiving responsibilities, uncertainty, and loss. The presence of children, elderly individuals, and people with disabilities further increases the household's vulnerability.

5. Theft and insecurity

Nighttime thefts have been reported in evacuated homes, leading many people to take turns returning to protect their houses, even at risk. This situation especially affects women, who must choose between staying in unsafe conditions or leaving their homes unattended while relocating to shelters. This risk is compounded by the lack of electricity in affected areas.

6. Lack of organized response

Although spontaneous local initiatives exist, there is no clear inter-institutional response strategy. Grassroots organizations are overwhelmed, municipal efforts are insufficient, and state assistance has yet to arrive—or is not expected to—leaving many families without formal support.

Conclusion:

The humanitarian situation in the northern zone of AMBA is severe and multidimensional. The disaster has disrupted access to housing, health care, food, protection, and education, especially in communities already living in precarious conditions.

This field evaluation confirms the urgent need for complementary humanitarian intervention, understanding that each family faces different needs. The response must focus on:

- **Distribution of non-food and shelter items (Household Kits):**
Many families have lost everything—mattresses, blankets, clothing, basic utensils, towels, and cleaning products. They are forced to sleep on the floor, without enough warmth and in unsanitary conditions. In winter, the lack of basic shelter and rest items poses a direct risk to health. Household Kits are essential to allow families to return home with minimum dignity and safety.
- **Food security:**
Due to the emergency, many families have no access to food. They lost everything in their homes and cannot cook due to lack of gas, firewood, or money to buy basic groceries. Moreover, school closures have left thousands of children without their guaranteed daily meal, increasing the risk of child malnutrition. Ensuring access to food during this period is critical for both physical and emotional health, particularly for the most vulnerable groups.
- **Psychosocial support and protection:**
The emotional toll of the disaster is profound. People have lost their homes, live in fear, and have no certainty about the future. Women, children, and older adults reported feelings of anxiety, distress, and insecurity. Additionally, incidents of theft and violence have been reported, which further exposes women to the risk of abuse. Providing psychosocial support, guidance, and safe spaces is key to preventing long-term damage and strengthening community resilience.
- **School kits:**
This is a critical yet overlooked need. When classes resume, many children will not have backpacks, school supplies, or clothes to return to school, as everything was lost in the floods. Although no one is considering this yet, it will be a direct barrier to educational continuity.



