

2003 Santa Fe Flood



Santa Fe, capital of the **province of Santa Fe, Argentina**, suffered a severe flooding **April 2003**. Santa Fe is the fifth **populated city in Argentina** (~370,000 inhabitants), and it is surrounded **rivers**. The flooding was described as the worst since the city **founded in 1573**.^[1]

At the end of April 2003, several days of heavy rainfall caused some major rivers in the Santa Fe area to rise as much **50 cm** in 12 hours. The water level of the **Salado River** (**flows** through the north of the province and empties into the **Paraná**) rose by almost two metres in just three hours.

On 28 April, the Salado overflowed **margins** and flooded large sections of Santa Fe. About 100,000 people had to **evacuated**, 154 people died, and 28,000 houses **damaged or destroyed**. A dam had to be blown up in **to ease the flow of the floodwaters out of the city**. In this key area for the agricultural and ranching industries, over 30,000 km² of farmland were destroyed. The flood hit the capital hardest, but many other communities were **affected**.

The flood was unusual **it is generally the east side of Santa Fe, beside the Paraná, which is affected by floodings**. Salado River floodings are less usual.

Soon after the initial flooding, **President Eduardo Duhalde** declared the province a "disaster zone" and announced a \$2 million emergency aid package. The **World Bank** later offered an additional \$110 million. The **Red Cross** launched an emergency appeal **response to the flooding on 6 May**.

According **a UN** assessment requested by the provincial governor **Carlos Reutemann**, the total damages were about \$1,000 million, and implied the loss of about 12% of Santa Fe's GDP (Gross Domestic Product)

The rains continued into the next days, exacerbating the catastrophe. By 8 May, a quarter of Santa Fe remained **water**. Precarious evacuation centers appeared in the capital and nearby towns to accommodate the evacuees.

The provincial government was heavily criticized **ignoring warnings about the possibility a sudden rise of the Salado River, and for ignoring appeals to build the necessary preventive infrastructure contain or divert floods**. The official treatment of the people **lost their homes, possessions and jobs was also questioned**; food relief and promised subsidies for reconstruction were insufficient. Governor Reutemann saw the end of **term in office marked by problems**. The critical situation of Argentina at the time (recovering from a major **economic crisis**) did **help**. On 30 January 2004, nine months **the flood and under the administration of Jorge Obeid**, a demonstration asking for government assistance to those affected by the flood ended with the burning of the government house's facade and several offices destroyed.



A) Can you work out what the missing words are? Complete the article with the right words.

B) Answer these questions.

- 1 When did the flooding happen?
- 2 What caused it?
- 3 Which river overflowed?
- 4 How many evacuees were there?
- 5 Were there any fatal victims?
- 6 How much farmland was destroyed?
- 7 Why was the flood unusual?
- 8 Who was president of Argentina at the time?
- 9 Which organizations offered help?
- 10 What did the total damages amount to?
- 11 Who was Governor of Santa Fe at the time?
- 12 What happened nine months later?

