

## 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**.<sup>[1]</sup>

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 km<sup>2</sup> 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?

