



# 21st CENTURY

## Argentina: Dreaming of a clean river

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Duration : 2'18"

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### VIDEO

LUZ WRITES LETTER

LUZ AT HOME

RIVER/POLLUTION

WORKERS DOING CLEAN-UP

### AUDIO

LUZ: (In Spanish)

“Dear President, I want you to clean the Riachuelo, because it is full of diseases and it stinks.”

“I am angry because you don't clean the Riachuelo. My name is Luz Maria Cejas. I am nine years old.”

NARRATION:

Luz's skin is scarred and blistered – she says her whole body itches.

The Riachuelo river is swollen with lead, chromium and oil, as well as raw sewage, from millions of homes and sludge from thousands of industrial plants. The air and the soil are also heavily polluted.

Clean ups are rare .... Except when special guests are expected. Today workmen are busy at the river, because tomorrow the

President of Argentina will visit.

DOCTOR FERRERO ON  
CAMERA

DR. FERRERO: (In Spanish)

“Luz and her brothers are an example of a family with health issues that are directly related to contamination.”

MARTA AND LUZ AT DOCTOR’S

NARRATION:

Dr. Ferrero says the pollution is so bad it can lead to permanent brain damage in children like Luz.

ESCOTO ON CAMERA

DR. LUIS ROBERTO ESCOTO:

(In Spanish)

“There’s no doubt there’s a problem – we just don’t know how big the problem is.”

RIVER SHOTS

NARRATION:

And that’s why, Doctor Luis Roberto Escoto of the World Health Organization, says his agency, together with the government, is carrying out a systematic investigation into the long-term impact of this pollution.

NARRATION:

Luz’s mother, Marta Quiroga, is determined to deliver Luz’s letter to the president. She’s desperate to help her daughter.

PRESIDENT ARRIVES

When President Cristina Kirschner gets out of her limo on her first ever visit to the island, Marta is waiting behind a barricade.

MARTA GIVES LETTER

Marta calls out to the President and manages to hand her Luz's letter.

PRESIDENT RECEIVES LETTER

MARTA QUIROGA: (In Spanish)

"We have been waiting so long for this. Do something for us!"

MARTA AND LUZ TRAVEL TO  
PARLIAMENT

NARRATION:

And three months after the President's visit, she's disappointed again when there is still no reply to their letter.

MARTA ON CAMERA

MARTA QUIROGA: (In Spanish)

"They told me the letter must have got lost. I will continue to fight for the river. Maybe I won't see it myself, but my children or my grandchildren will. They will see a clean river."