



Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance

# DISASTER CASE REPORT

Agency for  
International  
Development

Washington D.C.  
20523

## HONDURAS - Hurricane Greta

### Data

Date: September 17-18, 1978 (FY 78)

Location: Northern department of Gracias a Dios (between Brus Laguna and Cruta) and Bay Islands of Roatan and Guanaja

No. Dead: 0

No. Injured: Some

Damage: 1,178 houses destroyed; coconut trees, rice and cassava crops damaged; 84 primary school classrooms destroyed or damaged; total hurricane damage was estimated to be \$1 million

### The Disaster

On September 17th and 18th, Hurricane Greta swept across the sparsely populated coast of the Honduran department of Gracias a Dios, an area that is characterized by small villages accessible only by foot or by light airplane. Damage from high winds and flooding was concentrated between the towns of Puerto Lempira and Brus Laguna, especially in Barra Patuca (also called Butucamaya), a village of about 2,000 people.

### Action Taken by the Government of Honduras (GOH)

In anticipation of Hurricane Greta, the GOH broadcast warnings, thereby reducing the severity of the subsequent damage. After declaring the northern coast of Gracias a Dios a disaster area, COPEN (the Honduran National Permanent Emergency Council) and the GOH military conducted aerial assessments of the affected area and established a command post at Puerto Lempira to which six C47s from the Honduran Air Force formed an air bridge to ferry food, helicopter fuel, and relief supplies. From Puerto Lempira, two helicopters delivered the assistance to the isolated disaster area, flying continuously from September 24th to October 5th. During this time, some 100,000 pounds of food purchased by the GOH were delivered, as were tents and other relief supplies.

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Assistance Provided by the United States Government (USG)

On September 22, after receiving an official request for assistance from the GOH, Ambassador Jaramillo determined that a disaster of such magnitude existed as to warrant USG assistance and authorized \$25,000 for the GOH. The authorization was used to purchase hand tools, roofing for schools, outboard motors, cement, and other rehabilitation items.....\$25,000

On September 24th and 25th, six U.S. Air Force C-130s were used to airlift the following relief items from the USG disaster relief stockpile in Panama to Puerto Lempira: 500 family-sized tents, 495 double decker cots, 1,009 single cots, 3,000 sheets, 2,000-five gallon water cans, water purification tablets, two water purification units, seven water pumps, two 2.5 kW generators, two 5 kW generators, and three collapsible water tanks. In addition to the items above, a Disaster Area Survey Team (DAST) accompanied the first C-130 to Puerto Lempira. The DAST unit coordinated the unloading of the aircraft, distributed supplies at the airport, and operated the water purification plants and generators.....\$231,484

Additional aid provided to disaster victims included 20 Peace Corps volunteers who helped design and supervise the construction of permanent houses. In addition Catholic Relief Services diverted 60,000 pounds of P.L. 480 commodities for emergency feeding purposes after GOH-sponsored feeding ended, while Seventh-day Adventist World Services was reimbursed \$29,345 for transportation costs for relief supplies.....\$48,840

TOTAL \$305,324

Assistance Provided by U.S. Voluntary Agencies \*

American National Red Cross - \$20,000 cash grant, part of which was used for Nicaraguan refugees

Baptist Mission - tools, lumber, and vehicular support.

Catholic Relief Services - diversion of P.L. 480 food for use during the rehabilitation period (7,500 pounds of powdered milk, 22,500 pounds of corn-soy-milk, 22,500 pounds of bulgar, 7,484 pounds of vegetable oil)

Christian Reformed World Relief Committee - \$5,000 in cash to CEDEN for emergency relief activities, and later provided \$45,000 worth of milk powder, eggs, vitamins and blankets, total assistance \$50,000

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Church World Service - appeal for \$200,000 issued for victims of Hurricane Greta in Honduras and in Belize; Honduran counterpart, CEDEN, distributed food, often by helicopter; airfreight of 230,400 water purification tablets valued at \$2,295

Mennonite Central Committee - \$5,000 in cash

Moravian Church in America - \$20,000 in food and building materials

Seventh-day Adventist World Services - 200 tents, 2,000 blankets, 480 bales lightweight clothing, medicines, and medical supplies worth \$86,372

TOTAL        \$143,162

Assistance Provided by the International Community

None reported.

\* Please note: the figure for total U.S. voluntary agencies contributions is an approximation. In many cases the cash value of in kind aid is unavailable.