



Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance

DISASTER CASE REPORT

Agency for
International
Development

Washington D.C.
20523

EL SALVADOR - Power Shortage

Date: August 1981 (FY 81-82)

Location: San Miguel, Morazon, Usulután, La Unión

No. Dead: None reported

No. Affected: 990,000 (population of region)

Damage: Approximately 150 steel towers in the electric power transmission grid were damaged or destroyed; power to hospitals and water pumping sites was threatened.

The Disaster

Continuing conflict between rebel forces and government forces in El Salvador resulted in extensive damage to the country's electric power distribution system. Several power generating stations, transmission lines, and towers were destroyed. The eastern third of the country, around the towns of San Miguel, Morazon, Usulután, and La Unión, was particularly affected. As a result, major industrial and medical facilities, and water pumping sites were left without reliable or continuous power supplies. The threat of a shortage of safe drinking water and medical services posed a large potential risk to the health of the approximately 990,000 residents of the region.

Action Taken by the Government of El Salvador (GOES)

The GOES convoked a session of the junta, the ruling government council, with the directors of the electric, water, and telephone agencies, the principal military and civilian ministries, and the U.S. Ambassador to El Salvador, to assess the situation and coordinate a response. The GOES explored the possibility of relocating an existing 18.6 megawatt diesel fueled generator from an inoperative steel mill for use in supplying power to area hospitals and water pumping stations. When this became infeasible, the GOES made a request to the U.S. Ambassador for a mobile power source of between 15 and 25 megawatts.

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Assistance Provided by the United States Government (USG)

On August 31, 1981, the U.S. Ambassador to El Salvador declared that a disaster of sufficient magnitude to warrant USG assistance existed in El Salvador.

Through the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance in Washington, the USG procured 47 electric power generators and parts, valued at \$805,761, to be used by the Ministry of Public Health and Social Assistance. The generators and spare parts were airfreighted to El Salvador and arrived on September 4. Two engineers were also sent to train the Salvadoreans in how to operate and maintain the generators. Air freight of the generators and temporary duty for the engineers totalled \$396,308.

TOTAL

\$1,227,069

Assistance Provided by U.S. Voluntary Agencies

None reported.

Assistance Provided by the International Community

None reported.