



Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance

DISASTER CASE REPORT

Agency for
International
Development

Washington D.C.
20523

PORTUGAL - Floods

Date: December 29-31, 1981 (FY 82)

Location: Entire continental area of Portugal

No. Dead: 30

No. Injured: Estimated to be several hundred

No. Affected: Approximately 2,000,000 people were affected to some degree; 900 people were left homeless

Damage: Several million dollars worth of damage to homes, crops, roads, and telephone and electric lines was reported.

The Disaster

On December 29, 1981, the Portuguese National Institute of Meteorology and Geophysics (INMG) forecast strong winds with intense rain and seastorms for continental Portugal. The storm reached its peak on December 30 and 31 with wind gusts of 113 km per hour and torrential rainfall.

The storm caused numerous landslides and fallen trees as well as flooding of the Douro, Mondego, and Tagus Rivers. Severe housing damage and crop losses were reported due to high winds and heavy rain. Telephone communications and energy supplies were temporarily disrupted; roads and railways were blocked. Airports, bridges, and harbors were closed throughout the country, and at least 30 fatal accidents were confirmed.

Action Taken by the Government of Portugal (GOP)

On December 30, the President of the National Services for Civil Protection (SNPC) activated the Operational Center for Civil Protection (COPC) to plan and coordinate GOP disaster activities. The Coordination Centers for Civil Protection (CCPC) in the cities of Porto, Aveiro, Coimbra, Santarem, and Setuba were also activated. The Portuguese Navy supplied one landing craft and eight boats and the Air Force provided a helicopter to survey the flooding in the Santarem area.

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Assistance Provided by the United States Government (USG)

On January 4, 1982, Ambassador Richard Bloomfield determined that a disaster situation existed. A check in the amount of \$25,000 was presented to the Portuguese Red Cross (PRC) to assist disadvantaged families most adversely affected by the storm. The relief funds were distributed by the PRC to various district Red Cross offices. Approximately 100 families were provided with building materials (cement, sand, roofing tiles, water pipes) to repair their homes. Hundreds of people, mainly in Porto, were provided with food and temporary shelter.

TOTAL \$25,000

Assistance Provided by U.S. Voluntary Agencies

None reported.

Assistance Provided by the International Community

None reported.