



Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance

# DISASTER CASE REPORT

Agency for  
International  
Development

Washington D.C.  
20523

## SEYCHELLES - Airport Damage

Date: November 25-26, 1981 (FY 82)

Location: Pointe La Rue International Airport

No. Dead: Three

No. Affected: 12 people seriously injured; 100 people held hostage

Damage: About \$900,000 worth of damage to airport facilities

### The Disaster

On November 25, 1981, approximately 50 heavily armed mercenary soldiers attacked Pointe La Rue International Airport in the Seychelles. As a result of the attack, three men died, a dozen were wounded, and 100 people spent a night as hostages. Most of the mercenaries escaped early on November 26 in a hijacked jetliner after several hours of fighting at the airport. Seven mercenaries remained behind and were later captured. The Seychelles Peoples Liberation Army used artillery and rifle grenades to clear the mercenaries from outlying airport buildings.

Most of the damage that occurred during the disaster involved the airport. The control tower was damaged and much of the electronic equipment used in guiding large passenger aircraft was destroyed. Because the Seychelles are located 1,000 miles from the East African mainland, the airport is vital for bringing in supplies.

### Action Taken by the Government of Seychelles (GOS)

Local relief organizations met the immediate needs of the released hostages and the wounded. The GOS appealed for funds to repair the airport, particularly the control tower and the electronic equipment required for civil aviation operations. A senior government minister and other officials traveled to Dar es Salaam, Strasbourg, Paris, Brussels, Bonn, London, Stockholm, and Oslo to request financial aid to repair the airport. In addition, local fund drives raised about \$65,000 to be used for airport repairs.

SEYCHELLES - Airport Damage

Assistance Provided by the United States Government

Ambassador William Harrop, who is resident in Nairobi, was visiting the Seychelles when the attack occurred. Recognizing that the airport is the Seychelles' lifeline to the world, Ambassador Harrop declared on December 4, 1981 that the damage constituted a disaster. A check in the amount of \$25,000 was presented to the Secretary General of the Seychelles Peoples Progressive Front, Mr. Guy Sinon, to make immediate repairs to essential airport facilities.

TOTAL           \$25,000

Assistance Provided by U.S. Voluntary Agencies

None reported.

Assistance Provided by the International Community

European Economic Community - pledged \$240,000 for airport repairs.

Libya - The Libyan Peoples' Bureau in Victoria contributed a cash grant of \$100,000.

Norway - provided unspecified technical assistance.

Sweden - provided unspecified technical assistance.

TOTAL           \$340,000

\* Please note: the listings of assistance provided by U.S. Voluntary Agencies and the International Community are compiled from reports submitted voluntarily to OFDA. It is not always possible to verify the accuracy of these reports, nor the dollar value of in-kind contributions. As a result, the total dollar values indicated in these sections should be taken as representative figures.