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**OFDA**  
**Disaster**  
**Case Reports**

**Rwanda Food Shortage**  
**February-October 1977**

**Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance**  
**Agency for International Development**  
**Washington, D.C. 20523**

## RWANDA - Food Shortage

### Data

Date: February 1977 - October 1977 (FY 77)  
Location: Provinces of Gisenyi, Byumba and Gikongoro  
No. Dead: Unknown  
No. Affected: 1,000,000 to 1,726,000  
Damage: Food shortages of approximately 48,500 metric tons

### The Disaster

Prolonged periods of abnormally low rainfall in late 1976 and early 1977 culminated in a drought that significantly reduced agricultural yields. The resulting food shortage was compounded by the frailty of the transportation and distribution system and by a lack of funds for food imports. Although people were barely surviving by consuming seeds and starches, their actions threatened to aggravate any future famine. In anticipation of increased food shortages, the Government of Rwanda requested foreign assistance to maintain food stocks, prevent famine, and stabilize prices.

### Action Taken by the Government of Rwanda (GOR)

The President of Rwanda appointed the Foreign Minister to establish and organize a committee to coordinate relief assistance. OPROVIA (National Office for Development and Marketing of Agriculture and Livestock Products), the organization created in the wake of the 1974-75 drought to manage food relief, was reorganized in hopes of overcoming problems of transporting and distributing food supplies. On December 4, 1976, the President called for international assistance.

### Assistance Provided by the United States Government (USG)

On February 7, 1977, Ambassador Crigler responded to the request for emergency relief and exercised his disaster relief authority committing \$25,000 for initial assistance. Subsequent donations were made for emergency transportation support (\$30,000) and emergency food protection/storage support (\$5,000)....\$60,000

An A.I.D. technician was dispatched to Rwanda to conduct an in-country disaster assessment. He recommended that priority be given to upgrading the logistics system. An A.I.D. logistics specialist was then sent to assist in the development of storage, transportation, and distribution systems.....\$23,701

RWANDA - Food Shortage

The U.S. Mission requested 2,500 metric tons of whole grain sorghum under P.L. 480. Food for Peace approved the request and shipped the grain to Mombassa where it was picked up and transported to Kigali.....\$947,500

TOTAL \$1,031,201

Assistance Provided by U.S. Voluntary Agencies \*

Catholic Relief Services - purchased 6 metric tons of bean seed in Rwanda; provided 7 metric tons of milk powder committed to pre-emergency programs; and provided 3,000 metric tons of previously committed P.L. 480 commodities; total value unknown

Church World Services - \$12,000 in cash

TOTAL \$12,000

Assistance Provided by the International Community \*

Belgium - \$110,000 in cash

Canada (government) - \$50,000 to LORCS  
(Red Cross) - \$30,000 to LORCS

European Economic Community - 2,500 metric tons of milk powder (committed to pre-emergency programs)

France - unspecified quantity of wheat

International Donor Committee - \$40,000 in cash

World Council of Churches - \$9,000 in cash

TOTAL \$239,000

\* Please note: the figures for total U.S. voluntary agency and international assistance are an approximation. In many cases, the cash value of in kind aid is unavailable.