



DISASTER  
RELIEF

CASE REPORT  
Chile—Earthquake  
July 8, 1971

Agency for International Development  
Washington, D.C. 20523

**Foreign Disaster Case Reports are publications of the Office of the Foreign Disaster Relief Coordinator, Agency for International Development. This office has responsibility for coordinating U.S. Government foreign disaster relief responses and for the further coordination of such activities with those of the U.S. private and international disaster relief communities.**

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# CHILE

## Earthquake

A violent earthquake on July 8, 1971, lasting three minutes, killed 85 and injured 451 people in Central Chile. In an area of 72,324 kilometers, more than 300,000 houses were damaged affecting an estimated population of 2,348,522.

Value U.S. Assistance .....\$925,985

USG - - - - - 861,985  
US VOLAG - - - - - 64,000  
Worldwide - - - - - 210,100

At approximately 2300 hours local time a severe earthquake rocked central Chile, causing death and destruction in the provinces of Coquimbo, Aconcaqua, Valparaiso and Santiago in the Andes Mountain region. The U.S. National Earthquake Information Center in Rockville, Maryland reported a reading of 7.8 on the Richter scale at the epicenter near the town of Illapel. Minor aftershocks continued for another 24 hours but did not cause further damage.

The quake registering 4 on the Richter scale at Santiago blacked out the city causing panic which accounted for numerous accidental deaths. The city was without electricity for more than an hour, and telephone services were disrupted for several hours. Water flowed from the broken mains flooding streets throughout the capital. Damage to streets and roads was slight though they were covered with masonry and fallen debris. Within two days these were cleared and a normal flow of traffic was restored.

First reports received from the port city of Valparaiso were fragmentary, but it was soon learned that Valparaiso suffered the greatest material damage.

This city of approximately 300,000 inhabitants had been built on steep hills and slopes above the harbor and was highly vulnerable. The tremors caused houses, particularly older ones in the slum areas, to collapse. Many fires started from toppled stoves in the shaking houses. Thousands of people were made homeless and had to be evacuated. Electrical power was cut off in



A mother and child living in a tent provided by the USG after their house was destroyed by the earthquake .

most of Valparaiso Province and communications were disrupted for several days. The largest number of deaths and injuries in a single location occurred in this province when a theatre collapsed upon its occupants.

Over 100 miles north of Santiago, Illapel, a farming and mining center, was without electricity and telephones, and roads to the town were blocked by tons of rubble.

The Government of Chile (GOC) estimated the following earthquake damage to have occurred: Basic infrastructure, \$26,781,326; industry, \$11,138,411; mining, \$2,047,502; commercial infrastructure, \$18,837,018; agriculture, \$9,009,009; municipal and local government, \$4,950,000; and private housing, \$163,800,163.

The greatest damage to private housing was primarily in the low-income areas throughout the affected zone, with "adobe" type houses sustaining most of the damage. Of the reported 300,000 houses damaged, more than 69,000 were beyond repair and had to be demolished.

**ACTION TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT OF CHILE AND LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS:**

As soon as the National radio resumed operating on emergency power, President Salvador Allende broadcast to the Nation, appealing for calm. At that time he declared a state of emergency and ordered the Chilean Army to assist the police in controlling traffic and preserving law and order. The President urged doctors and nurses to report to nearby hospitals, and he personally went to the Illapel area and later visited the cities of Valparaiso and Vina Del Mar. The President was accompanied by the Ministers of Economy and Mining and the Deputy Director of the National Health Service.

The GOC set up emergency displaced persons' centers and provided for food distribution. This program was administered by the Office of Emergency Planning (OEP) which had overall responsibility of coordinating disaster relief operations. The National Junta, in charge of the school feeding program, fed approximately 25,000 people for about 30 days.

Although no figures are available, local organizations sponsored community fund drives collecting considerable amounts of money and large quantities of clothing and building materials. Relief supplies were donated by private individuals and companies. The GOC allocated \$13 million for reconstruction/rehabilitation efforts and emergency work projects.

**ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY THE U.S. GOVERNMENT:**

The U.S. Government, through the Agency for International Development, responded



*Earthquake victims receiving food rations at one of the emergency displaced persons' centers set up by the Government of Chile.*



PL 480 Food for Peace food commodities for relief distribution



Emergency relief supplies being unloaded from a U.S. Air Force C-130

immediately to requests from the Government of Chile and sent the following supplies:

12,000	blankets, wool	\$ 40,800
1,000 liters	blood plasma	68,000
1,511	cots, sleeper type	4,800
288	tents	25,704
		\$139,304
	Transportation costs	55,000
		\$194,304

USG PL 480 food commodities were also provided as follows:

*From voluntary agencies' stocks on hand in the country:*

Flour, processed grains, non-fat dry milk, CSM and vegetable oil for 100,000 people  
CARE—48 metric tons

Catholic Relief Services—109 metric tons

World Relief Commission—37 metric tons

Seventh-Day Adventist Welfare Service—13 metric tons

Total—207 metric tons valued at \$35,681, plus transportation costs estimated at \$9,000 .....\$44,681

*Through the World Food Program:*

1,800 metric tons of wheat flour and 270

each of non-fat milk, vegetable oil and wheat-soy blend (WSB) sufficient to feed approximately 150,000 people for 60 days. Value including transportation charges . . . .

Total U.S.G. Assistance ..	\$623,000
	\$861,985

#### ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY U.S. VOLUNTARY AGENCIES:

C.A.R.E., Catholic Relief Services, World Relief Commission, Inc. and Seventh-Day Adventist Welfare Service released 207 metric tons of USG PL 480 food commodities from their ongoing programs. Their assistance was extremely successful because they were delivering food in cooperation with the GOC immediately after the quake.

Following is a breakdown of additional assistance provided by the voluntary agencies:

Catholic Medical Mission Board	
Medical equipment and medicines . . . . .	\$50,000
Catholic Relief Services	
Cash grant . . . . .	\$10,000
The Salvation Army	
Cash grant . . . . .	\$ 4,000
	\$64,000

**ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY OTHER NATIONS AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS:**

*World Food Program*

The Government of Chile requested WFP to supply 1,800 metric tons of wheat flour and 270 metric tons each of non-fat dry milk, vegetable oil, and wheat-soy blend (WSB), sufficient to feed approximately 150,000 people for 60 days. A.I.D. agreed with WFP that the commodities required be supplied by the USG. Under Title II of PL 480 the value of these commodities including their transportation is included under the USG contribution.

<b>OXFAM</b>	
Cash grant .....	\$ 7,200
<b>CARITAS/International</b>	
Cash grant .....	10,000
<b>CARITAS/Germany</b>	
Cash grant .....	3,000
<b>CARITAS/Spain</b>	
Antibiotics .....	*
<b>CARITAS/Switzerland</b>	
10 tons of clothing, shoes, and blankets .....	*
Based on available data, contributions from other governments were as follows:	
<b>Federal Republic of Germany</b>	
12,000 blankets (\$36,000), medicines (value not given), and 40 tents (\$4,000) .....	40,000
<b>Peru</b>	
2,300 blankets (\$6,900), food, medicines, blood plasma and serum* .....	6,900
<b>U.S.S.R.</b>	
1,000 blankets (\$3,000), 1,000 coats, 500 pair of shoes, 6,000	

kgs. rice, 4,000 kgs. sugar, 3,000 kgs. milk* .....	3,000
<b>Argentina</b>	
Blankets, tents, sheets, medicines, pillow cases, plastic mattresses, clothing, and bread .....	*
<b>Cuba</b>	
Medicines, clothing, and plastic shoes .....	*
<b>Mexico</b>	
Blankets, gowns, flashlights, medicines, and food .....	*
<b>Ecuador</b>	
Food .....	*
<b>Panama</b>	
Food, clothing, shoes, and medicines .....	*
<b>Poland</b>	
Clothing and medicines .....	*
<b>Israel</b>	
Medicines .....	*
<b>Spain</b>	
Blood plasma, tents, and blankets .....	*
<b>England</b>	
Tents (\$5,000) and \$120,000 cash grant .....	125,000
<b>Switzerland</b>	
Clothing, medicines, and shoes .....	*
<b>German Democratic Republic</b>	
Medicines .....	*
<b>France</b>	
Cash grant .....	10,000
<b>South Korea</b>	
Cash grant .....	5,000
Total contributions of which values were reported—	\$210,100

\*Value not reported



**CHILE**