

OFDA
**Disaster
Case Reports**

Djibouti Civil Strife
1977-1979

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

DJIBOUTI - Civil Strife

Data

Date: 1977 - 1979 (FY 77)

Location: Refugees from the fighting in Eritrea and the Ogaden crossed into Djibouti

No Affected: 20,000

Damage: Property damage suffered by the Republic of Djibouti estimated at US\$3 million

The Disaster

In May 1977 refugees from the Eritrea and Ogaden regions of Ethiopia, fleeing hostilities in their home areas, began to cross into Djibouti. They were sheltered in camps and also by friends and relatives. The refugees were a heavy burden on the government as well as Djiboutians who were already coping with unemployment, poor housing, and a high cost of living.

Action Taken by the Government of the Republic of Djibouti (GROD)

The GROD established two outlying camps for refugees as well as one in the capital. District governors provided first aid assistance in the form of vaccinations and essential items such as blankets, pots and pans, and food supplies. The GROD created a national committee for refugee assistance and appealed for voluntary contributions; the \$117,000 raised allowed the committee to meet essential needs of the refugees.

Assistance Provided by the United States Government (USG)

In view of the difficulties posed for Djibouti by the refugee burden and in order to respond to a September 1977 appeal by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the U.S. Charge declared the existence of a disaster situation in Djibouti on September 21, 1977. The Ambassador's disaster authorization was used to: cover assessment of the refugee/displaced person situation in Djibouti including expenses for a disaster officer from the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), an epidemiologist from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) in Atlanta for the identification of possible smallpox and cholera cases, and a U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) representative; purchase medical supplies; and cover the donation of 1,000 blankets from the OFDA stockpile.....\$25,000

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Twenty Department of Defense general purpose large tents and 150 small tents and tent files from the OFDA stockpile in Italy were airlifted to Djibouti for use in the refugee camps. Cost of the tents and air transport, for which OFDA was reimbursed by the State Department Office of Refugee and Migration Affairs, was.....\$144,451

The following P.L. 480 commodities were contributed: 1,550 MT rice (\$497,550); 2,300 MT sorghum (\$437,000); 210 MT vegetable oil (\$132,000); for a total value of.....\$1,066,550

The USG made a contribution to the ICRC Ogaden relief fund from International Disaster Assistance funds for the supply of blankets, food, medical supplies, shelter materials, and agricultural tools. The funds were used to provide assistance to Ethiopia, Djibouti, and Somalia. The US contribution of \$450,000 is listed in the Ethiopia-Civil Strife Case Report, FY 1977.

TOTAL \$1,236,001

Assistance Provided by U.S. Voluntary Agencies

Direct Relief Foundation - medical supplies and equipment

Assistance Provided by the International Community *

International Organizations

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) - major contributor toward refugee problems on an ongoing basis. A \$200,000 emergency fund in addition to \$7,000 for local food supplies was made available immediately. UNHCR funding also covered transportation of commodities from port to refugee camps and numerous administrative services related to refugee registration, interviews, orientation, and resettlement. (See also Annex to the Ethiopia - Civil Strife Case Report, FY 1977, for UNHCR assistance subsequent to the UNHCR Ethiopia/Djibouti/Somalia refugee/displaced persons appeal of April 1978.) Total \$207,000

UNICEF - provided medical supplies using USG funds

World Food Program - 325 MT wheat, 40 MT vegetable oil, 20 MT canned fish and meat, through UNHCR, valued at \$169,300

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Governments

Canada - cash contribution used to construct a dispensary at one of the refugee camps, value of \$5,000

Germany, Federal Republic - 200 tents worth \$200,000

Norway/Sweden - cash contribution of \$360,000

Sweden - 100 tents valued at \$100,000

See also Annex to the Ethiopia - Civil Strife Case Report, FY 1977, for responses to UNHCR Ethiopia/Djibouti/Somalia refugee/displaced persons appeal of April 1978.

Voluntary Agencies

British Red Cross - 150 tents

Caritas and Brot Fuer die Welt (FRG) - 200 tents, 40 MT dried skim milk, cloth, blankets, through UNHCR valued at \$170,000

Diakonisches Werk (FRG) - donated and distributed food and medical supplies

International Hungry Child (Yugoslavia) - donated an ambulance and one ton of dried milk

International Missionary Society (Sudanese Baptist group) - cash contribution of \$10,000 to Djibouti National Refugee Committee through the U.S. Embassy in Djibouti; transportation costs for the Direct Relief Foundation contributions were met from this source

Medecins Sans Frontieres and Volontaires du Progres (France) - primarily engaged in medical assistance - sent doctors, nurses, and engineers, advised refugees on nutrition and sanitary matters, supervised construction projects

See also Annex to the Ethiopia - Civil Strife Case Report, FY 1977, for responses to UNHCR Ethiopia/Djibouti/Somalia refugee/displaced persons appeal of April 1978.

TOTAL \$1,014,300

* Please note - the figure for total international assistance is an approximation. In many cases the cash value of in kind aid is unavailable.



