



Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance

DISASTER CASE REPORT

Agency for
International
Development

Washington D.C.
20523

SRI LANKA - Cyclone

Date: November 23-24, 1978 (FY 79)

Location: Struck the eastern coast of Sri Lanka, took a northwesterly course from Batticaloa to Nuwara Eliya, crossed Anuradhapura to Mannar, and headed over the Gulf of Mannar

No. Dead: 740 officially reported

No. Injured: 5,000

No. Affected: Approximately 150,000 families

Damage: Some 100,000 buildings were destroyed and another 150,000 were damaged. Other damage included the destruction of 2.5 million coconut trees, 37,000 acres of teak, and \$1.6 million worth of fishing equipment

The Disaster

On the night of November 23-24, 1978, a tropical cyclone struck the southeastern coast of Sri Lanka. Taking a northwesterly course from the districts of Batticaloa and Amparai, the cyclone moved in a wide arc over the districts of Polonnaruwa, and Anuradhapura to Mannar. The storm, accompanied by torrential rains and winds of up to 160 mph, left a trail of destruction. Over 100,000 houses of wattle and daub were completely destroyed and another 85,000 houses were damaged. Damage to public buildings, including hospitals, schools, and food stores, was severe. Sea water penetrated 5-10 km. inland, destroying agricultural land and causing massive damage to water, sanitation, power, and communication systems.

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Action Taken by the Government of Sri Lanka (GSL)

As soon as weather conditions permitted, GSL officials made a preliminary survey of the disaster area. A state of emergency was declared in Amparai, Batticaloa, and Polonnaruwa districts and at the Colombo sea and air ports. In Colombo the armed forces were placed on standby to provide vehicles and personnel, and two government relief committees were established to implement and oversee emergency operations. Because roads were blocked by fallen trees and debris, the GSL airlifted relief supplies to the affected areas. Medical teams were also dispatched and dry rations consisting of rice, flour, sugar, milk, and kerosene were distributed to the needy. Contributions by local voluntary agencies were coordinated by the GSL.

To aid the victims in rehabilitation, the GSL made bank loans on easy repayment terms. The government also began preparing long-range reconstruction plans for the disaster area, including a program to mitigate future destruction by building cyclone-resistant structures.

Assistance Provided by the United States Government (USG)

On November 25, 1978, the Charge d' Affairs determined that an emergency existed and a \$25,000 grant from the International Disaster Account was given to the GSL for the purchase of medical supplies.....\$25,000

From the stockpile in Guam, the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) airlifted 1,361 tents, 10,000 cotton blankets, 19 two-person saws, 500 shovels, 50 axes, 100 machetes, and 14 radio sets. Replacement value for these items (\$472,950) and airlift costs (\$356,858) came to a total of.....\$829,808

A military Disaster Assessment Survey Team (DAST) was dispatched to the disaster area to assess the situation and make recommendations to the U.S. Embassy. Costs for local transportation, administrative expenditures, and personnel amounted to \$8,734. An OFDA relief officer was also sent to Sri Lanka to assist in operations (\$3,450).....\$12,185

TOTAL \$866,985

Assistance Provided by U.S. Voluntary Agencies

American Red Cross - \$25,000 cash donation to LICROSS

Baptist World Alliance - \$10,000 cash contribution to the Baptist Convention in Kandy.

CARE - supplied biscuits made from in-country P.L. 480 commodities (\$29,206); medicine valued at \$62,640; and plastic ground sheets (\$4,476).

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Christian Reformed World Relief Committee - \$5,000 cash donation to the Dutch Reformed Church.

Salvation Army - \$5,000 in cash for food and other relief supplies.

Save the Children Fund - \$3,000 cash donation.

Seventh-day Adventists World Service - \$10,000 in cash and 25 tons of clothing; value unknown.

World Vision - \$5,000 in cash.

TOTAL \$159,322

Assistance Provided by the International Community

International Organizations

European Economic Community (EEC) - \$32,000 in cash to LICROSS for the purchase of clothing.

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) - \$200,000 in cash for the purchase of rice seeds.

LICROSS - 100 tons of rice, 1,000 tents, and 10,000 pieces of clothing; value not reported.

United Nations - \$3,700 cash contribution by staff of New York office.

U.N. Development Program (UNDP) - \$20,000 in cash to UNICEF for medicine.

U.N. Disaster Relief Organization (UNDRO) - \$20,000 in cash for emergency medicines.

UNICEF - medical supplies, 30 portable water pumps, 12 hospital tents, 130 family tents, and 90 rolls of tarpaulin. Total value including airfreight was \$278,000.

World Food Program (WFP) - \$31,946 in cash; 10,400 tons of wheat flour and 690 tons of pulses; total value of \$2,971,000.

World Health Organization (WHO) - 100,000 tablets of furazolidine and 300,000 doses of vaccine; value not reported.

Governments

Australia - \$4,000 cash donation.

Belgium - wheat, sugar, and antibiotics; value unknown.

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Canada - \$21,930 in cash through the Canadian Red Cross.

British Columbia - \$2,400 in cash through the Canadian Red Cross.

Denmark - \$42,338 in cash and \$81,603 in medicaments together with the Danish Red Cross.

France - \$29,989 in cash.

Germany, Democratic Republic - \$32,242 worth of medicines.

Germany, Federal Republic - 400 tents and 2,000 blankets valued at \$51,282; 59 tons of dried fish valued at \$153,846; and \$20,767 in cash to the President's Fund.

India - 2 tons of bleaching powder (value unknown); services of 2 helicopters and one airplane for emergency transport (value unknown); clothing, biscuits, and medicaments worth \$38,709.

State of Tamil Nadu - \$193,798 in cash and 12 tons of bleaching powder.

Indonesia - \$1,600 in cash.

Japan - 100,000 meters of cotton cloth, 50,000 tins of mackerel, 600 family tents, 500,000 capsules of tetracycline, 200,000 tablets of chloramphenicol, and 13 power saws. Total value of \$336,774.

Korea - \$10,000 in cash.

Libya - \$99,041 in cash.

Maldives - \$639 in cash.

Netherlands - 40 tons of baby milk powder, 25 tons of canned fish, 10,000 yards of textiles, 400 tarpaulin sheets, and 50 pumps. Total value of \$471,698.

New Zealand - 30,000 pounds of milk powder; value not reported.

Norway - \$210,322 in cash through the Norwegian Red Cross.

Romania - \$31,949 in medicines with the Romanian Red Cross.

Sweden - \$87,948 in medicines through the Swedish Red Cross.

Switzerland - 200 multi-purpose tents, 200 canvas sheets, 10 tons of milk powder. Total value of \$137,419.

United Kingdom - 350 tents, 5,000 blankets, 4 generators, 44 rolls of polythene sheeting and medicines; value not reported.

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Voluntary Agencies

Australian Red Cross - \$2,816 in cash and 57 cartons of clothing worth \$1,613.

Australian Caritas - \$10,000 in cash.

Australian Catholic Relief Services - \$45,500 in cash.

Belgian Red Cross - \$4,391 in cash.

Belgian Caritas - \$4,000 in cash.

Canadian Red Cross - \$5,331 in cash to LICROSS.

Caritas Internationalis - \$20,000 in cash to Caritas Sri Lanka.

Chinese Red Cross - 367 cartons of canned meat, 17 cases of medicaments, 58 bundles of clothing, and 15 bundles of towels. Total value of \$33,306.

Danish Red Cross - see Danish Government.

Finnish Red Cross - 30 tents valued at \$15,910.

French Red Cross - 200 blankets and antibiotics worth \$1,819.

French Catholic Relief Services - \$6,800 in cash.

German (Fed. Rep.) Red Cross - clothing and medicaments worth \$130,262.

German (Fed. Rep.) Caritas - \$25,000 in cash and food, medicine, clothing, and plastic sheeting worth \$69,000.

German (Fed. Rep.) Freedom from Hunger - 8 tons of milk powder.

Indian Red Cross - clothing and biscuits worth \$25,806.

Irish Red Cross - \$2,158 in cash to LICROSS.

Japanese Red Cross - \$5,535 in cash to LICROSS and 3,460 blankets worth \$12,900.

Korean Red Cross - 420 kg. of medicaments worth \$14,194.

Netherlands Red Cross - 2,000 kg. of biscuits and infant food worth \$29,316.

Netherlands Caritas - \$22,700 in cash.

New Zealand Red Cross - \$7,148 in cash to LICROSS and 2 tons of baby milk powder worth \$3,634.

Norwegian Redd Barna - food, medicines, clothing, and plastic sheeting worth \$96,899; 5 jeep-type vehicles; value not reported.

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Norwegian Churches - one planeload of plastic sheeting and 5 jeep-type vehicles; value not reported.

Pakistan Red Crescent - \$2,194 worth of clothing.

Romanian Red Cross - see Romanian Government.

Singapore Red Cross - \$1,530 in cash.

South African Red Cross - \$648 in cash.

Swedish Red Cross - \$45,249 in cash to LICROSS and \$81,894 worth of medicaments.

Swiss Red Cross - 1,000 blankets, 2 tons of clothing, 10 tons of milk powder, 200 multi-purpose tents, and 200 canvas sheets. Total value of \$146,689.

Swiss Caritas - \$12,500 in cash.

Thai Red Cross - \$261 in cash.

United Kingdom Red Cross - \$6,452 in cash to LICROSS.

United Kingdom Catholic Action for Overseas Development (CAFOD) - \$9,500 in cash.

U.S.S.R. Red Cross - \$83,226 worth of medicaments and condensed milk.

TOTAL	\$6,571,175
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* 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.