



Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance

# DISASTER CASE REPORT

Agency for  
International  
Development

Washington D.C.  
20523

## GUYANA - Fire

Date: December 1, 1979 (FY 80)

Location: Georgetown

No. Killed: 1

No. Affected: Approximately 200 people left homeless; 1 serious injury reported.

Damage: 4 commercial/residential buildings were destroyed

### The Disaster

On the evening of December 1, 1979, a fire of unknown origin started in a building close to the American Embassy in Georgetown and quickly spread to adjacent buildings. The fire department responded quickly but was unable to save the old wooden buildings; in all, four structures were destroyed. However, valiant efforts by the fire department did prevent the destruction of the American Embassy and other buildings in the area. One woman was killed when she apparently panicked and jumped from the top floor of one of the buildings on fire. Approximately 200 people were left homeless.

### Action Taken by the Government of Guyana (GOG)

The GOG provided temporary housing at the West End Youth Centre in Georgetown for the homeless who were unable to find accommodation with friends or relatives. Meals for the homeless were prepared by the Guyanese Defense Force. The Guyana National Relief Committee, a voluntary organization organized through the office of the Prime Minister, went into action promptly to aid the victims. According to the committee, the monetary value of assistance provided by the GOG was approximately \$6,000.

GUYANA - Fire

Assistance Provided by the United States Government (USG)

On December 6, 1979, the U.S. Charge in Georgetown declared the existence of a disaster and made a cash contribution equivalent to \$2,000 to the National Relief Committee to assist with resettlement of the homeless.....\$2,000

TOTAL \$2,000

Assistance Provided by U.S. Voluntary Agencies

Catholic Relief Services (CRS) - contributed food from an ongoing program (value not reported); contributed clothing to the victims valued at approximately \$500.

Total \$500

Assistance Provided by the International Community

None reported.

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