



Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance

DISASTER CASE REPORT

Agency for
International
Development

Washington D.C.
20523

FIJI - Cyclones Tia and Wally

Date: Cyclone Tia - March 23-25, 1980 (FY 80)
Cyclone Wally - April 2-4, 1980

Location: Vanua Levu (Cyclone Tia)
Viti Levu (Cyclone Wally)

No. Dead: 18

No. Injured: 250

No. Affected: 28,000

Damage: 895 homes destroyed; 630 homes heavily damaged; 30 classrooms, 21 teachers' quarters destroyed; 2 double dormitories destroyed valued at \$282,000; damage to roads estimated at \$1,920,000; damage to telecommunications estimated at \$54,000; water systems disrupted in 23 villages; some 200 families in Navua district lost over 1,000 acres of rice and 250 acres of vegetables; more than 1,000 cattle lost

The Disaster

Between March 23 and 25, 1980, Cyclone Tia swept across four of Fiji's islands, principally Vanua Levu, with winds of 50-60 knots. Heavy rain fell throughout the islands and some tidal waves were reported. In the wake of the storm, approximately 8,000 people in some 140 villages required assistance.

Then, between April 2 and 4, Fiji was hit by Cyclone Wally which inundated southeastern Viti Levu, the main island, with 684 mm of rain. The southeastern coast of the island was inundated, causing at least 7,000 people to flee their homes. Villages located near rivers and deltas were partially or totally destroyed; some were swept away entirely. Large numbers of homes, schools, stores, and churches were destroyed. Root crops, rice fields, coconut trees, and vegetables were destroyed along with thousands of head of livestock. Mudslides and the loss of bridges made travel by road impossible in many areas. The massive flooding combined with landslides and the disruption of telecommunications cut off hundreds of villages.

Flooding and damage to piped water supplies made obtaining potable water a major problem. The government had to provide food and care to some 28,000 flood victims for up to six months, and undertake major road and building repair and rehabilitation.

Action Taken by the Government of Fiji (GOF)

The Government of Fiji could have coped with the effects of Cyclone Tia by drawing on its own resources. However, the major flooding on Viti Levu caused by Cyclone Wally, combined with the damage caused by Tia, threatened to overwhelm the GOF's resources. As a result, the Prime Minister appealed to international agencies and potential donor countries for assistance.

The Prime Minister's emergency secretariat directed initial relief operations. At the height of the storm, 36 evacuation centers were in operation providing meals to six or seven thousand people. Emergency health centers were set up and some 45,000 people were immunized.

The Fiji Red Cross, church, and private groups were all active in relief work. Royal Fiji military forces set up a relief communications network, assisted Public Works Department engineers, and instructed villagers in how to erect tents.

On April 8, the Prime Minister appealed to the nation for assistance in the form of clothing, cooking utensils, and funds. Within two days, \$50,000 had been raised. Local organizations collected clothing and other essentials for distribution and also provided transportation and volunteers. The total value of the response was placed at \$85,000 in cash and kind. At a subsequent date, ten outboard motors and three electric saws were obtained through donations following an appeal over Radio Fiji.

The responsibility of the Prime Minister's emergency secretariat for the first phase of the relief effort ended on April 12. Direction of ongoing relief operations and rehabilitation work were turned over to the Prime Minister's Relief and Rehabilitation Committee (PMRRC). The PMRRC's central tasks were reconstruction of destroyed homes and reopening access to areas that were still cut off. Two helicopters were chartered to bring assistance to isolated villages and to land survey teams consisting of representatives from the Agriculture, Health, Forestry, and Public Works ministries. A program to provide supplemental food for cattle whose normal pasturage had been destroyed by salt water from the flooding was also undertaken.

Assistance Provided by the United States Government (USG)

The U.S. Ambassador declared the existence of a disaster on April 7, 1980, and made available to the Government of Fiji \$25,000 in discretionary disaster relief funds. At the request of the Prime Minister the funds were turned over to his emergency secretariat.....\$25,000

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On April 23, A.I.D.'s Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) made a further \$250,000 available for the local purchase of food because appropriate Food for Peace commodities were not available.....\$250,000

A U.S. goodwill mission and U.S. Peace Corps volunteers also assisted with reconstruction and rehabilitation projects

TOTAL \$275,000

Assistance Provided by U.S. Voluntary Agencies *

Church World Service (CWS) - cash contribution of \$5,000 through the Fiji Council of Churches.

TOTAL \$5,000

Assistance Provided by the International Community *

International Organizations

European Economic Community (EEC) - cash contribution of \$1,400,000.

UNICEF - cash contribution of \$25,000 for purchase of latrine bowls.

United Nations Development Program (UNDP) - cash contribution of \$20,000.

United Nations Disaster Relief Organization (UNDRO) - cash contribution of \$10,000.

World Health Organization (WHO) - 34,800 doses of typhoid vaccine, 5,200 doses of combined typhoid-cholera vaccine, 20,000 doses of tetanus toxoid, 20,000 sets of disposable syringes and needles, nine sprayers, 10,000 packages of oral rehydration salts, values not reported; 2,000 liters of IVC solution valued at \$10,609.

Governments

Australia - 200 tents, value not reported; 20,000 doses of tetanus toxoid, 20,000 doses of typhoid vaccine, 40,000 disposable syringes and needles, 113,000 ampicillin tablets, all valued at \$99,228; airlift of tents and medical supplies; cash contribution of \$55,127.

Japan - cash contribution of \$30,000.

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New Zealand - two Royal New Zealand Air Force helicopters and a detachment of 22 crew members for one week; crews flew about 90 hours, transporting 25,000 lbs. of relief goods to affected areas, including 3,000 blankets and 316 tents flown directly from New Zealand; helicopters also transported survey and medical teams to stricken areas and took injured back to the main island.

Papua New Guinea - cash contribution of \$70,000.

Solomon Islands - cash contribution of \$11,000.

Tonga - cash contribution; value not reported.

United Kingdom - cash contribution of \$45,000.

Voluntary Organizations

League of Red Cross Societies (LORCS) - cash contribution through the Fiji Red Cross Society of \$11,000.

Australian Council of Churches - one ton of clothing, 25 family emergency packs; values not reported.

TOTAL \$1,786,964

* 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.