



Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance

DISASTER CASE REPORT

Agency for
International
Development

Washington D.C.
20523

COSTA RICA - Floods

Date: December 14-21, 1980 (FY 81)

Location: Coastal areas in the Atlantic Zone

No. Dead: One

No. Displaced: 1,350

No. Affected: 200,000 (total population of affected area)

Damage: Homes inundated; personal belongings damaged; agricultural land, roads, and railroads flooded.

The Disaster

Four days of heavy rains during the second week of December 1980 caused serious flooding along the Atlantic coast from the city of Limon to the Nicaraguan border. Towns affected included Limon, Matina, Tortuguero, Barra del Colorado, Chirripo, Parasmira, and Bataan. Flooded roads and railroads left many of these communities isolated and without access to supplies of food, medicine, and fuel.

Action Taken by the Government of Costa Rica (GOCR)

Because the only GOCR helicopter capable of relief and rescue work was out of commission, President Carzo and Vice President Altmann requested helicopter support from the United States Mission in Costa Rica.

The local disaster relief effort was coordinated through Japdeva, the Port Administration and Economic Development Board of the Atlantic Coast, in Limon and the Costa Rican Red Cross. These agencies evacuated individuals stranded by the flooding, provided locally available relief supplies to victims, and established refugee centers in Limon, Colorado, Matina, and

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Tortuguero for those persons displaced from their homes. Approximately 1,350 persons were assisted by Japdeva and the Red Cross in refugee stations, or were otherwise relocated from their homes to places of safety. In addition, food, clothing, medicine, and other supplies valued at more than \$350,000 were provided by Costa Rican sources through Japdeva and the Red Cross.

Assistance Provided by the United States Government (USG)

On December 14, 1980, the Ambassador declared the situation to be a medium-intensity, local disaster and U.S. helicopter support was requested from USSOUTHCOM. A UH-1H helicopter and four U.S. Army personnel arrived in San Jose on December 15 and proceeded to Limon the next day where relief and rescue operations were begun in cooperation with Japdeva. A total of ten missions were flown; 54 people were evacuated by U.S. helicopter and 9,500 lbs. of food, medical supplies, and fuel were delivered to isolated refugee stations.

Funds to pay for the helicopter and TDY for the accompanying U.S. Army personnel came from the Ambassador's Disaster Relief Authority:

Flying time of 29.1 hours for one U.S. Army UH-1H helicopter at \$416 per hour.....	\$12,106
TDY for four U.S. Army personnel at \$540 per person.....	\$2,160
TOTAL	\$14,266

Assistance Provided by U.S. Voluntary Agencies

Church World Service - donated \$2,500 to Goodwill Caravans of Costa Rica to aid in the reconstruction of 70 homes in the poorest neighborhoods south of San Jose.

TOTAL	\$2,500
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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.