

Mexico earthquake: tsunami warnings after 8.4 magnitude quake kills two

Residents on the southern coast have reportedly been told to evacuate amid fears of three metre tsunami.

A magnitude 8.4 earthquake has been reported off the coast of Mexico, with residents told to evacuate and a tsunami warning issued for the region and neighbouring countries.

The quake struck 200km south-west of the city of Tuxtla Gutiérrez just after midnight on Thursday local time, and was said to be the strongest earthquake to hit the country since 1985, according to the civil protection agency.

The Pacific tsunami warning centre said hazardous waves could be possible “within the next three hours” for the coasts of Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Panama, Honduras and Ecuador.

In an updated warning, the centre predicted waves over 3m for parts of the Mexican coast, and waves between 0.3 and 1 metres for the Cook Islands, Ecuador, Fiji, French Polynesia, Guatemala and Kiribati.

Initial waves recorded arriving on the coast at the Mexican cities of Salina Cruz, Puerto Madero and Huatulco were between 0.3 and 0.7 metres over tide level.

Waves below 0.3 metres were forecast for countries as far as Australia, Japan and Vietnam.

The tsunami threat to Hawaii was still under evaluation, said the warning centre.

In Mexico, civil protection officials were checking for damage in Chiapas, but the quake was so powerful that it frightened residents in Mexico City more than 1,000 kms (650 miles) away. People fled apartment buildings, often in their pyjamas, and gathered in groups in the street.

Around midnight buildings swayed strongly for more than minute, loosening light

fixtures from ceilings.

Rodrigo Soberanes, who lives near San Cristobal de las Casas in Chiapas, told the Associated Press his house “moved like chewing gum” with the quake.

Civil Defense in Chiapas said on its Twitter account that its personnel were in the streets aiding people and warned residents to prepare for aftershocks.

In Mexico City, helicopters crisscrossed the sky with spotlights. Some neighbourhoods had electricity while others were in darkness.

The Mexican seismological authority reported a series of magnitude 6 aftershocks.

More to come ...

Sources: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/sep/08/mexico-earthquake-warning-tsunami>

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