

Beat: Travel

Strong quake jolts the Solomon Islands, months after deadly tsunami

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USPA News - A strong earthquake struck the South Pacific Ocean near the Solomon Islands on Wednesday afternoon, months after a major earthquake struck the same area and triggered a tsunami that killed nine people, seismologists and witnesses said. The 6.1-magnitude earthquake at 3:47 p.m. local time (0447 GMT) was centered about 89 kilometers (55 miles) south-southeast of Lata, the provincial capital of Temotu Province on Nendo island, which is part of the Santa Cruz Islands in the Solomon Islands.

It struck about 64.7 kilometers (40.2 miles) deep, making it a shallow earthquake, according to the United States Geological Survey (USGS). The tremors were felt on nearby islands, but there were no immediate reports of damage or casualties. Computer models indicated that around 8,000 people on islands near the epicenter may have felt `moderate` shaking, while at least 29,000 others are likely to have experienced `weak` to `light` shaking. A major 8.0-magnitude earthquake struck the same area on February 6, triggering a tsunami no less than 1 meter (3.4 feet) high that traveled up to 500 meters (546 yard) inland and destroyed entire villages, killing nine people and injuring 13 others. Nearly 6,000 people were left homeless. The Solomon Islands are on the so-called `Pacific Ring of Fire`, an arc of fault lines circling the Pacific Basin that is prone to frequent and large earthquakes. The Solomon Islands arc as a whole experiences a very high level of earthquake activity, and many tremors of magnitude 7 and larger have been recorded since the early decades of the twentieth century. On April 2, 2007, a massive 8.1-magnitude earthquake struck close to the New Georgia Islands of the Solomon Islands. It unleashed a regional tsunami, killing 52 people and destroying more than 300 homes, schools and a hospital at Sasamunga. Two people were killed as a result of landslides, which were triggered by the earthquake.

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