

Powerful quake rocks Guatemala, at least three people feared dead

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The magnitude 7.1 quake rattled the Guatemalan border region and town of San Marcos, which was also hit by a 7.4 magnitude earthquake in late 2012 that killed 48 people.

"This quake was pretty strong. Families in the area are really scared because of the whole experience of November 2012. There are houses destroyed," said Luis Rivera, governor of San Marcos.

Cracks opened up in buildings in San Marcos, there were landslides in the area, and power lines came down after the early morning quake, authorities said.



Damage in San Pedro Sacatepéquez, San Marcos. Image shared via Twitter by @Noti7Guatemala

"We have reports of damaged homes and apparently three people dead. For now, this is all supposition, we're going by air to make checks," said Sergio Cabanas, a spokesman for Guatemalan emergency services.

Raul Hernandez, a Guatemalan fire services spokesman, said two deaths were reported in San Rafael Pie de la Cuesta in San Marcos. He also said the quake had damaged 30 houses.

Twelve people are in hospital receiving treatment and 50 houses were evacuated in the region, which suffered major disruptions to communication, added Sergio Vasquez, another spokesman for fire services.

"The whole San Marcos region is pretty affected," he said.

The quake was centered 22 miles (35 km) west-southwest of the city of Tapachula in the Mexican state of Chiapas at a depth of about 47 miles (75 km) the U.S. Geological Survey said. Authorities in Chiapas said there were no immediate reports of major damage. The quake was also felt in El Salvador.

(Reporting by Mike McDonald in Guatemala City and Bill Trott in Washington; Editing by Doina Chiacu and W Simon)

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