

Beat: Travel

Strong earthquake strikes eastern Indonesia, no tsunami threat

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USPA News - A strong and shallow earthquake struck the Molucca Sea off the island of Sulawesi in eastern Indonesia on Sunday evening, seismologists said, but there were no immediate reports of damage or casualties. No tsunami warnings were issued.

The 6.6-magnitude earthquake at 7:34 p.m. local time (1134 GMT) was centered in the Molucca Sea about 179 kilometers (111 miles) east-northeast of Bitung, a city on the northern coast of the island of Sulawesi. It struck about 54.7 kilometers (34 miles) deep, making it a shallow earthquake, according to the United States Geological Survey (USGS). An estimated 3.3 million people who live close to the epicenter, which is roughly halfway between Sulawesi and the island of Halmahera, may have felt weak to light shaking, according to USGS computer models. The USGS said it did not expect to see damage or casualties from Sunday's earthquake. Both the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center and Indonesia's seismological agency BMKG said there was no threat of a tsunami. Indonesia is 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. In December 2004, a magnitude-9.1 tremor, one of the most powerful earthquakes ever recorded, struck off the west coast of Sumatra, unleashing a massive tsunami that struck scores of countries in the region and killed at least 227,898 people. More recently, in July 2013, at least 35 people were killed and more than 270 others were injured when a strong 6.2-magnitude earthquake struck the province of Aceh on the island of Sumatra. The tremors destroyed more than 1,900 homes in the region and damaged nearly 2,400 others.

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