Beat: Miscellaneous

Powerful earthquake hits southwestern Colombia, no casualties

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USPA News - A powerful 7.1-magnitude earthquake struck southwestern Colombia near the border with Ecuador on late Sunday morning, seismologists and witnesses said, but there were no immediate reports of damage or casualties. No tsunami warnings were issued.

The 7.1-magnitude earthquake at 11:31 a.m. local time (1631 GMT) was centered about 20 kilometers (12 miles) east of La Vega, a town in the Colombian department of Cauca, about 190 kilometers (118 miles) north of the border with Ecuador. It struck about 150 kilometers (93.5 miles) deep, making it an earthquake of intermediate depth, according to the United States Geological Survey (USGS). Luis Felipe Molina, a journalist who lives in Manizales, said the earthquake was felt across the central and southwestern regions of Colombia. "It was a very long quake. I think it lasted for about a minute," he said. "It felt very strong in the southwest of the country, according to family and friends testimonies." There were no immediate reports of damage or casualties following the earthquake, but the USGS estimated that more than 2 million people may have perceived moderate shaking. The agency said as many as 14.3 million others may have felt light shaking, according to computer models, which showed serious damage or casualties are unlikely. In January 1999, at least 1,185 people were killed and 700 others were left missing when a 6.2-magnitude earthquake struck close to the city of Armenia. "We didn`t have such a long quake in years. People get scared really easy in this region after the 1999 quake and death toll," Felipe Molina said. Because the epicenter of Sunday`s earthquake was located on land, no tsunami warnings were issued. "A destructive tsunami was not generated based on earthquake and historical tsunami data," the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center said in a bulletin.

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