

Scientists hear the earth ripping apart

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Scientists are using nuclear test monitoring microphones to analyze sounds caused by December's massive Indian Ocean earthquake and resulting tsunami.

"It's really quite an eerie sound to hear the earth ripping apart like that," Maya Tolstoy, a marine geophysicist at Columbus University's Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory, told CNN. "It really gave me the chills when I first heard it."

The sounds of the rupture of the Sumatra-Andaman Fault came from microphones that are part of a global network of instruments monitoring compliance with the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty.

The microphones that picked up the sounds of the 9.3 magnitude earthquake were located in Diego Garcia, an island more than 1,700 miles from the quake's epicenter, CNN reported Wednesday.

Scientists said the sounds suggest two distinct stages of the underwater temblor.

"The first third is much faster, the second two thirds slower," Tolstoy said. The length of the rupture was about 750 miles.

"We are able to tell how long it ruptured, how fast it went, and those are important things to know for disaster mitigation," said said

Tolstoy's research appears in the July/August issue of *Seismological*

Research Letters.

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