

Ecuador volcano blasts more hot rock from crater

December 19 2012



The Tungurahua volcano emits an ash-filled plume as seen from Huambalo, Ecuador, Monday, Dec. 17, 2012. The country's National Geophysics Institute says that a constant plume of gas and ash is rising about half a mile (1 kilometer) above the crater, with ash falling on nearby communities. (AP Photo/Dolores Ochoa)

(AP)—The Tungurahua volcano in central Ecuador keeps spewing gas, ash and red-hot rock, forcing hundreds to evacuate from their homes.



Church steeples are silhouetted against the active Tungurahua volcano, seen from Huambalo, Ecuador, Monday, Dec. 17, 2012. The country's National Geophysics Institute says that a constant plume of gas and ash is rising about half a mile (1 kilometer) above the crater, with ash falling on nearby communities. (AP Photo/Dolores Ochoa)

The country's Geophysical Institute says incandescent rock shot from the crater of the 16,479-foot (5,023-meter) high mountain fell about half a mile (a kilometer) down its flanks. Explosions early Wednesday rattled windows 9 miles (14 kilometers) away, while rain-borne ash has been falling to the southwest of the crater.

Regional emergency director Lourdes Mayorga says that about 100 families are staying in shelters away from the [danger zone](#), though they return during the day to work their fields. She says there will be forced evacuations if the [volcanic activity](#) intensifies.

Tungurahua has been active for the past 13 years. An [outburst](#) in 2006 left four dead and two missing.

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