

Strong earthquake hits off eastern Indonesia

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A strong earthquake hit off the coast of eastern Indonesia's Sulawesi island on Wednesday, causing panic among residents, but there were no immediate reports of injuries or damage. Authorities said there was no threat of a tsunami.

The magnitude-6.5 quake struck at a depth of 22.5 kilometers (13 miles) and was centered about 122 kilometers (76 miles) southeast of Mondayang, a town in northern Sulawesi, according to the U.S. Geological Survey.

The quake had no potential to trigger a tsunami, said Subagyo, an official at Indonesia's meteorological and geophysics agency who like many Indonesians uses one name.

The temblor was felt in Manado, the provincial capital of North Sulawesi, with the national disaster agency saying residents poured into the streets in panic.

Indonesia, the world's largest archipelago, is prone to earthquakes due to its location on the Pacific "Ring of Fire," an arc of volcanoes and fault lines in the Pacific Basin.

In 2004, a massive earthquake off Sumatra island triggered a tsunami that killed 230,000 people in a dozen countries. Most of the deaths were in northern Sumatra's Aceh province.

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