

# Strong aftershocks rattle devastated Italian earthquake zone

August 26 2016, by Paolo Santalucia And Nicole Winfield

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An earthquake survivor is carried on a wheel chair in a tent camp set up as a temporary shelter following an earthquake in Pescara Del Tronto, Italy, Friday, Aug. 26, 2016. Rescue crews rattled by aftershocks dug through crumbled homes Thursday looking for earthquake survivors as donations began pouring into the area and Italy again anguished over its failure to protect ancient towns and modern cities from the country's highly seismic terrain. (AP Photo/Gregorio Borgia)

Strong aftershocks rattled residents and rescue crews alike Friday as

hopes began to dim that firefighters would find any more survivors from Italy's earthquake. The first funerals were scheduled for some of the 267 dead.

Some of hard-hit Amatrice's crumbled buildings suffered more cracks after the biggest aftershock of the morning struck at 6:28 a.m. The U.S. Geological Service said it had a magnitude of 4.7, while the Italian geophysics institute measured it at 4.8.

The aftershock was preceded by more than 50 overnight and was followed by another nine in the subsequent hour—some of the nearly 1,000 aftershocks that have rocked the seismic area of Italy's central Apennine Mountains in the two days since the original quake early Wednesday.

Rescue efforts continued through the night and into Friday, but more than a day and a half had passed since the last person was known to be extracted alive from the rubble. While Premier Matteo Renzi hailed the fact that 215 people had been rescued since the quake, civil protection officials reported only a steadily rising death toll that stood early Friday at 267.

Nevertheless, civil protection operations chief Immacolata Postiglione insisted that the rescue effort continued in full and hadn't switched to a recovery mission. Rescue workers have noted that a person was pulled out alive from L'Aquila's 2009 quake after 72 hours, or three full days.



A volunteer takes some rest in a makeshift camp set up inside a gymnasium following an earthquake, in Amatrice, central Italy, Thursday, Aug. 25, 2016. Rescue crews rattled by aftershocks dug through crumbled homes Thursday looking for earthquake survivors as donations began pouring into the area and Italy again anguished over its failure to protect ancient towns and modern cities from the country's highly seismic terrain. (AP Photo/Andrew Medichini)

"I confirm, once again as we have from the start, that the units that are doing the searches and rescues, including with dogs looking for other people trapped in the rubble, are absolutely fully active," she said at the agency's early briefing Friday.

On the ground, there was still determination to account for all missing, even though the number of people still unaccounted for is uncertain given the large number of visitors to the area for the final days of summer.

"Yes, there is still a chance to find someone alive," rescue dog handler Gianni Antonini said Thursday.



Earthquake survivors walk in a tent camp set up as temporary shelter after an earthquake in Pescara Del Tronto, Italy, Friday, Aug. 26, 2016. Rescue crews rattled by aftershocks dug through crumbled homes Thursday looking for earthquake survivors as donations began pouring into the area and Italy again anguished over its failure to protect ancient towns and modern cities from the country's highly seismic terrain. (AP Photo/Gregorio Borgia)

Italian news reports said the first funerals were to be held Friday for some of the victims: in Rome, for the son of a local police chief who was in Amatrice with friends; in Pomezia Terme for two grandmothers and their two grandchildren.

The vast majority of the dead were found in Amatrice, the medieval

hilltop town famous for its bacon and tomato pasta sauce that was leveled by the quake. The other dead hailed from the two other main hard-hit areas of Accumoli nearby and Arcquarta del Tronto and its hamlet Pescara del Tronto in neighboring Le Marche region.

Across the area, thousands were forced to abandon their homes, either because they were destroyed or were determined to be too unsafe. Overnight some 2,100 slept in tent camps, nearly 1,000 more than the first night in a sign that a significant number have found nowhere else to go.



This combination of two satellite images provided by DigitalGlobe shows tents in a field, top, in Amatrice, Italy on Thursday, Aug. 25, 2016 following an earthquake, left, and April 21, 2014. Aftershocks in central Italy rattled residents and rescue workers alike Thursday, as crews worked to find more earthquake survivors and the country anguished over its repeated failure to protect ancient towns and modern cities from seismic catastrophes. (DigitalGlobe via AP)



Sister Marjana Lleshi gets emotional during an interview with the Associated Press in Ascoli Piceno, Italy, Thursday, Aug. 25, 2016. Sister Mariana, a 32-year-old from Albania, was one of three nuns and an elderly woman who survived the earthquake that hit central Italy early Wednesday when she escaped a collapsing convent in Amatrice, a medieval hilltop town. When the quake struck, half of the convent collapsed, three nuns and four elderly women are still missing. (AP Photo/Gregorio Borgia)



Rescuers work amid collapsed building in Amatrice, central Italy, Thursday, Aug. 25, 2016. Rescue crews raced against time Thursday looking for survivors from the earthquake that leveled three towns in central Italy and Italy once again anguished over trying to secure its medieval communities built on seismic lands. (Italian Firefighters Vigili del Fuoco via AP)

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