

Nighttime Philippines quake kills at least six, damages runway

February 11 2017, by Jim Gomez



Residents look at the collapsed portion of a bridge in Surigao hours after a powerful earthquake rocked Surigao del Norte province Saturday, Feb.11, 2017 in southern Philippines. The late Friday quake with a magnitude of 6.5 roused residents from sleep in the province, sending hundreds to flee their homes. (AP Photo)

A powerful nighttime earthquake in the southern Philippines killed at least six people and injured more than 120 others, as officials on Saturday combed through cracked buildings looking for more casualties.

The late Friday quake with a magnitude of 6.5 roused residents from sleep in Surigao del Norte province, sending hundreds to flee their homes. The quake was centered about 14 kilometers (8 miles) northwest of the provincial capital of Surigao at a relatively shallow depth of 10 kilometers (6 miles), said Renato Solidum of the Philippine Institute of Seismology and Volcanology.

Nearly 100 aftershocks have been felt, officials said. Evacuation centers accommodated wary residents overnight but many have returned home by Saturday, Welfare Secretary Judy Taguiwalo said, adding officials were continuing to assess the damage in Surigao city and outlying towns.

Solidum said the quake was set off by movement in a segment of the Philippine fault, which sits in the Pacific "Ring of Fire" where quakes and volcanoes are common.

At least six people were killed, some after being hit by falling debris and concrete walls, provincial disaster-response official Gilbert Gonzales said. At least 126 others were injured in Surigao city, about 700 kilometers (430 miles) southeast of Manila.



Workers prepare to cover a damaged fast food chain in Surigao hours after a powerful earthquake rocked Surigao del Norte province Saturday, Feb. 11, 2017 in southern Philippines. The late Friday quake with a magnitude of 6.5 roused residents from sleep in the province, sending hundreds to flee their homes. (AP Photo)

"Rescuers pulled out a man pinned by a collapsed wall in his house but he died and was no longer brought to a hospital," Gonzales said by telephone.

TV footage showed the facade of a number of buildings heavily cracked, their glass windows shattered with canopies and debris falling on parked cars on the street below. Rescuers in one building are trying to break a collapsed concrete slab to check if there were people pinned underneath.

Roads had visible cracks in the coastal city and a bridge collapsed in an outlying town. Rescue teams were checking for possible casualties in a

village called Poknoy in the city of 140,500 people, officials said.

The city's airport was temporarily closed due to deep cracks in the runway, aviation officials said. A major port in Lipata district also was briefly closed while engineers checked the stability of an access road, Gonzales said.



A safety reflectorized vest is placed on a tire to warn motorists of the damaged road in Surigao hours after a powerful earthquake rocked Surigao del Norte province Saturday, Feb. 11, 2017 in southern Philippines. The late Friday quake with a magnitude of 6.5 roused residents from sleep in the province, sending hundreds to flee their homes. (AP Photo)

"The shaking was so strong I could hardly stand," coast guard personnel

Rayner Neil Elope told The Associated Press by telephone.

Village leaders asked residents to move to a school building on higher ground, Elope said, pausing briefly during a mild aftershock while talking on the phone.

Police officer Jimmy Sarael said he, his wife and two children embraced each other until the shaking eased. They later moved to the moonlit grounds outside the provincial capitol complex to join more than 1,000 jittery residents, he said.

The last major [earthquake](#) that struck Surigao, an impoverished region also dealing with a communist insurgency, was in the 1800s, Solidum said. A magnitude 7.7 quake killed nearly 2,000 people on the northern island of Luzon in 1990.

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