

Quake from Mount Etna volcano jolts Sicily, sparks panic

December 26 2018, by Frances D'emilio



Debris of a partially collapsed house sit on the street in Fleri, Sicily Italy, Wednesday, Dec. 26, 2018. A quake triggered by Italy's Mount Etna volcano has jolted eastern Sicily, slightly injuring 10 people and prompting frightened Italian villagers to flee their homes. (AP Photo/Salvatore Allegra)

A quake triggered by Mount Etna's eruption jolted eastern Sicily before dawn Wednesday, injuring at least 10 people, damaging churches and houses on the volcano's slopes and prompting panicked villagers to flee

their homes.

Italy's Civil Protection officials said the [quake](#), which struck at 3:19 a.m., was part of a swarm of some 1,000 tremors, most of them barely perceptible, linked to Etna's volcanic eruption this week.

The quake struck north of Catania, the largest city in the eastern part of the Mediterranean island, but no damage or injuries were reported there. Italy's national seismology institute said the quake had a magnitude of 4.8 on the open-ended Richter scale and 4.9 on the moment magnitude scale, which is related to the amount the ground slips.

The temblor occurred at a relatively shallow depth, 1 kilometer (0.6 mile) under the mountain's surface.

The most seriously injured by the quake was a 70-year-old man who fractured ribs and was undergoing surgery for chest injuries. A 71-year-old patient was being kept in hospital for observation, while others were treated and released, the Italian news agency ANSA reported. Additionally, some 18 other people went to local hospitals suffering from panic attacks or shock, news reports said.



Debris stand in front of the heavily damaged church of Maria Santissima in Fleri, Sicily Italy, Wednesday, Dec. 26, 2018. A quake triggered by Italy's Mount Etna volcano has jolted eastern Sicily, slightly injuring 10 people and prompting frightened Italian villagers to flee their homes. (Orietta Scardino/ANSA Via AP)

Heavily monitored by geologists, Etna, the largest of Italy's three active volcanoes, has been particularly active since July.

In recent days, Etna's latest eruption has been shooting volcanic ash, heavy smoke and lava stones into the air, coating roads and homes nearby with ash. A new fracture has opened near Etna's southeast crater and lava has been flowing down an uninhabited slope.

The quake Wednesday opened up cracks in homes in several towns, including some abandoned structures, toppled a Madonna statue in a church in the town of Santa Venerina and broke up a stretch of highway,

forcing it to close for inspection, Rai state radio said.



Italian Civil protection volunteers gather near the heavily damaged church of Maria Santissima as plumes of smoke come out the Mount Enta Volcano in Fleri, Sicily Italy, Wednesday, Dec. 26, 2018. A quake triggered by Italy's Mount Etna volcano has jolted eastern Sicily, slightly injuring 10 people and prompting frightened Italian villagers to flee their homes. (AP Photo/Salvatore Allegra)

In the town of Piano d'Api, firefighters removed cracked stucco from the bell tower of the damaged Santa Maria della Misericordia church. Italy's culture ministry said the quake damage to churches was being tallied by experts.

Some stone walls along farm fields and local roads crumbled.

One 80-year-old man was safely extracted from the rubble of his home, the Italian news agency ANSA said.



A smoke column comes out of the Etna volcano in Catania, Italy, Monday, Dec. 24, 2018. The Mount Etna observatory says lava and ash are spewing from a new fracture on the active Sicilian volcano amid an unusually high level of seismic activity. (AP Photo/Salvatore Allegra)

A woman told state radio that a heavy armoire in her home had toppled over, trapping her sister, who was then safely pulled out by her father. The ceiling collapsed in another house, and in others homes parts of exterior walls crumbled.

"Etna remains a dangerous volcano, and this country of ours is unfortunately fragile," government undersecretary Vito Crimi said as he

reported 10 people injured.

The quake was also felt in the upscale Sicilian resort town of Taormina and in other towns in eastern Sicily.

The Civil Protection agency said temporary shelters were being set up in gyms or municipal buildings for people whose houses were damaged or who were too frightened to return to their homes.



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Italian Civil protection volunteers and firefighters gather near the heavily damaged church of Maria Santissima as plumes of smoke come out the Mount Enta Volcano in Fleri, Sicily Italy, Wednesday, Dec. 26, 2018. A quake triggered by Italy's Mount Etna volcano has jolted eastern Sicily, slightly injuring 10 people and prompting frightened Italian villagers to flee their homes. (AP Photo/Salvatore Allegra)



A woman carries her belongings as she walks debris of a partially collapsed house in Fleri, Sicily Italy, Wednesday, Dec. 26, 2018. A quake triggered by Italy's Mount Etna volcano has jolted eastern Sicily, slightly injuring 10 people and prompting frightened Italian villagers to flee their homes. (AP Photo/Salvatore Allegra)



Debris sit on the street in front of an heavily damaged house in Fleri, Sicily Italy, Wednesday, Dec. 26, 2018. A quake triggered by Italy's Mount Etna volcano has jolted eastern Sicily, slightly injuring 10 people and prompting frightened Italian villagers to flee their homes. (AP Photo/Salvatore Allegra)



Debris of a damaged house sit on a street as Italian Civil Protection volunteers, seen on background, gather in Fleri, Sicily Italy, Wednesday, Dec. 26, 2018. A quake triggered by Italy's Mount Etna volcano has jolted eastern Sicily, slightly injuring 10 people and prompting frightened Italian villagers to flee their homes. (AP Photo/Salvatore Allegra)



Cracks are seen on a wall of a damaged house in Fleri, Sicily Italy, Wednesday, Dec. 26, 2018. A quake triggered by Italy's Mount Etna volcano has jolted eastern Sicily, slightly injuring 10 people and prompting frightened Italian villagers to flee their homes. (AP Photo/Salvatore Allegra)



People walk in front of the heavily damaged church of Maria Santissima in Fleri, Sicily Italy, Wednesday, Dec. 26, 2018. A quake triggered by Italy's Mount Etna volcano has jolted eastern Sicily, slightly injuring 10 people and prompting frightened Italian villagers to flee their homes. (AP Photo/Salvatore Allegra)



The remains of a collapsed structure are backdropped by plumes of smoke coming out Mount Etna volcano in Fleri, Sicily Italy, Wednesday, Dec. 26, 2018. A quake triggered by Italy's Mount Etna volcano has jolted eastern Sicily, slightly injuring 10 people and prompting frightened Italian villagers to flee their homes. (AP Photo/Salvatore Allegra)



A collapsed wall is cordoned off as Italian Civil Protection volunteers gather in Fleri, Sicily Italy, Wednesday, Dec. 26, 2018. A quake triggered by Italy's Mount Etna volcano has jolted eastern Sicily, slightly injuring 10 people and prompting frightened Italian villagers to flee their homes. (AP Photo/Salvatore Allegra)



People walk past an heavily damaged house in Fleri, Sicily Italy, Wednesday, Dec. 26, 2018. A quake triggered by Italy's Mount Etna volcano has jolted eastern Sicily, slightly injuring 10 people and prompting frightened Italian villagers to flee their homes. (Orietta Scardino/ANSA Via AP)



Debris of damaged houses stand on a street in Fleri, Sicily Italy, Wednesday, Dec. 26, 2018. A quake triggered by Italy's Mount Etna volcano has jolted eastern Sicily, slightly injuring 10 people and prompting frightened Italian villagers to flee their homes. (Orietta Scardino/ANSA Via AP)



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A view of the heavily damaged church of Maria Santissima in Fleri, Sicily Italy, Wednesday, Dec. 26, 2018. A quake triggered by Italy's Mount Etna volcano has jolted eastern Sicily, slightly injuring 10 people and prompting frightened Italian villagers to flee their homes. (Orietta Scardino/ANSA Via AP)



Debris of a collapsed wall are seen on the furniture of a damaged house in Fleri, Sicily Italy, Wednesday, Dec. 26, 2018. A quake triggered by Italy's Mount Etna volcano has jolted eastern Sicily, slightly injuring 10 people and prompting frightened Italian villagers to flee their homes. (Orietta Scardino/ANSA Via AP)



Debris stand in front of the damaged Sacro Cuore (Holy Heart) Church in Santa Venerina, Sicily Italy, Wednesday, Dec. 26, 2018. A quake triggered by Italy's Mount Etna volcano has jolted eastern Sicily, slightly injuring 10 people and prompting frightened Italian villagers to flee their homes. (Orietta

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Debris stand near the damaged structure of a Church in Fleri, Sicily Italy, Wednesday, Dec. 26, 2018. A quake triggered by Italy's Mount Etna volcano has jolted eastern Sicily, slightly injuring 10 people and prompting frightened Italian villagers to flee their homes. (Orietta Scardino/ANSA Via AP)



Debris stand in front of a damaged building in Fleri, near the Sicilian city of Catania, Italy, Wednesday, Dec. 26, 2018. A quake triggered by Mount Etna's ongoing eruption jolted eastern Sicily before dawn Wednesday, injuring 10 people, damaging churches and houses in hamlets on the volcano's slopes and prompting panicked villagers to flee their homes. (Orietta Scardino/ANSA Via AP)



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