

Lava flow from Spanish island volcano likened to a tsunami

October 15 2021



People clean up the ash off a house from the volcano in Las Manchas on the Canary island of La Palma, Spain on Thursday Oct. 14, 2021. Hundreds of people in Spain's Canary Islands are fearing for their homes and property after a new lava stream from an erupting volcano threatened to engulf another neighborhood on the island of La Palma. Credit: AP Photo/Saul Santos

The second 4.5 magnitude earthquake in two days rattled the Spanish island of La Palma on Friday, officials said, as scientists described a gushing river of molten rock from an erupting volcano as "a true lava tsunami."

The two quakes were the strongest to hit La Palma, part of the Canary Islands off northwest Africa, since the volcano erupted on Sept. 19, Spain's National Geographical Institute said.

Lava rolling toward the Atlantic Ocean forced the evacuation of more than 300 people late Thursday, bringing the number of people forced from their homes since Tuesday to 1,200, according to the La Palma government. About 7,000 people in all have had to flee since the eruption, the government said.

Authorities have reported no casualties from the eruption on the island of some 85,000 people. Most of the island, where the economy is based mostly on farming and tourism, has been unaffected so far.

Two main rivers of [lava](#) were still flowing from the Cumbre Vieja ridge Friday. The initial one has slowed to a virtual stop, but a second one is spewing a large amount of molten rock and compelling authorities to stay alert for further possible evacuations.

The Canary Islands Volcanology Institute likened one of the flows to a lava tsunami as the molten rock poured down a hillside.



A house is covered with the ash from the volcano in Las Manchas on the Canary island of La Palma, Spain on Thursday Oct. 14, 2021. Hundreds of people in Spain's Canary Islands are fearing for their homes and property after a new lava stream from an erupting volcano threatened to engulf another neighborhood on the island of La Palma. Credit: AP Photo/Saul Santos



Military personnel clean up the ash off a house from the volcano in Las Manchas on the Canary island of La Palma, Spain on Thursday Oct. 14, 2021. Hundreds of people in Spain's Canary Islands are fearing for their homes and property after a new lava stream from an erupting volcano threatened to engulf another neighborhood on the island of La Palma. Credit: AP Photo/Saul Santos



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The volcano has coughed up ocean sediment that pre-dates the island's formation 2 million years ago, Vicente Soler of Spain's Higher Center for Scientific Research said.

The lava has fully or partially destroyed more than 1,500 buildings, most of them homes, and covered more than 680 hectares (1,680 acres), according to an EU satellite monitoring agency.

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