

Mid-Atlantic island girds for feared quake, volcano eruption

March 24 2022, by Barry Hatton

Authorities on a Portuguese island in the North Atlantic are preparing for the possible evacuation of local people, as six straight days of minor temblors stoke fears of a possible major earthquake or volcanic eruption.

The president of the Azores Islands' regional government said Thursday that airlines are increasing the number of flights into and out of Sao Jorge, where around 8,300 people live, for people who prefer to leave now.

Scientists say it is hard to predict the consequences of the persistent, though low-intensity, [seismic activity](#).

"Anything could happen, nothing might happen," Azores president José Manuel Bolieiro told reporters in televised comments during a visit to the island.

Officials in the island municipality of Velas, the epicenter of more than 2,000 minor earthquakes since March 19, are taking [elderly people](#) who might have difficulty in quickly evacuating to another part of the island as a precautionary measure.

Emergency services have established safe corridors for traffic and temporary accommodation for evacuees on the eastern side of the island in case they are needed. Velas has around 3,000 inhabitants.

Any public alerts are to be transmitted on local radio, on [social media](#) or

by ringing church bells, officials say.

Fishing and farming are the island's economic mainstays.

Sao Jorge is one of the nine islands that make up the Azores, which lie roughly 1,500 kilometers (about 1,000 miles) west of the Portuguese mainland.

Sao Jorge is around 58 kilometers (36 miles) long and six kilometers (almost four miles) across at its widest point.

A line of dormant volcanic cones extends along the island's central ridge, which reaches just over 1,000 meters (3,300 feet) at its highest point.

São Jorge is a volcanic island which witnessed eruptions in 1580 and 1808. Both are reported to have caused casualties, but reliable information from the time is not available.

The last [volcanic eruption](#) on land in the Azores was in 1957, on Faial Island. An earthquake on the same island in 1998 killed 10 people.

© 2022 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed without permission.

Citation: Mid-Atlantic island girds for feared quake, volcano eruption (2022, March 24) retrieved 12 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2022-03-mid-atlantic-island-girds-quake-volcano.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.