

Mass of rock slides down mountainside above evacuated Swiss village, narrowly misses settlement

June 16 2023



General view of the village of Brienz-Brinzauls below the rockfall "Brienzer Rutsch", in Switzerland, Friday, June 16, 2023. On Friday night, a large part of the rock masses fell towards the village. The rock masses just missed the village and left behind a meter-high deposit on the main road near the school building. No one was injured since the village was evacuated on May 12. Credit: Michael Buholzer/Keystone via AP

A large mass of rock slid down a mountainside above a Swiss village that was evacuated last month, stopping just short of the settlement, authorities said Friday.

Brienz, in the southeastern Graubunden region of Switzerland, [was evacuated on May 12](#) after geology experts warned that the Alpine [rock](#) looming over the village could break loose. In recent days, local officials said rock movements on the slope were accelerating.

Much of the rock mass tumbled toward Brienz between 11 p.m. and midnight on Thursday night, the [local council](#) said. It added that there was no evidence of damage to the village and the rockslide stopped just short of it, leaving a "meters-high deposit" in front of the school building.

It wasn't immediately clear how much of the 1.9 million cubic meters (67 million cubic feet) of rock that had been at risk of breaking away actually came loose, but the local council said it appeared to be a large part of the material.

Authorities stepped the alert level up another notch after the rockslide as a precaution, closing some local roads and a railway line and evacuating two houses in the neighboring village of Surava.

The rockslide came a bit over a week after residents of Brienz were allowed to make their first visits back to the [village](#) since the evacuation to retrieve essential items from their houses. Only two people per household were allowed in for 90-minute visits.

Officials said at the [time](#) of the [evacuation](#) that residents would be able to return from time to time, depending on the risk level, but not stay

overnight.



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A view shows parts of the rockfall "Brienzer Rutsch" above the village Brienz-Brinzauls in Switzerland, Friday, June 16, 2023. On Friday night, a large part of the rock masses fell towards the village. The rock masses just missed the village and left behind a meter-high deposit on the main road near the school building. No one was injured since the village was evacuated on May 12. Credit: Michael Buholzer/Keystone via AP

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