Volcanic activity pauses at Hawaii crater but more eruptions expected

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Steam rising from a fissure on Moku Street in the Leilani Estates, Hawaii

Volcanic activity from Hawaii's Kilauea volcano paused on Tuesday,

authorities said, while warning that more outbreaks should be anticipated.

The US Geological Survey said two new fissures broke ground on Monday near Leilani Estates, spewing lava and hazardous fumes.

It added that though the eruption had paused early Tuesday, gas continues to emanate from a fissure system that is now 2.5 miles (four kilometers) long—and more seismic activity and lava flow was expected.

"This pause is likely temporary and resumption of lava emission or additional fissure outbreaks are possible at any time," the USGS said in a statement.

The Hawaiian Volcano Observatory said that since the volcano began erupting last Thursday, 12 fissures have emerged and 35 structures, including 26 homes, have been destroyed.

Authorities said residents of Leilani Estates subdivision, located in the Puna district, are being allowed to check on their property and retrieve personal items during the day but are advised to leave the area by 6:00 pm.

Residents of Lanipuna Gardens, another neighborhood evacuated, are not being allowed access to their homes, however, due to dangerous volcanic gases, the Hawaii County Civil Defense said in a statement.

Cracks in Highway 130 outlined in orange at Leilani Estates, Hawaii

Some 1,700 residents of the communities of Leilani Estate and the smaller Lanipuna Gardens were ordered to evacuate the area last Thursday amid threats of fires and dangerous levels of toxic fumes.

Authorities on Tuesday said some 200 people were still sheltering at two centers and were being assisted by the Red Cross.

Kilauea, one of the most active volcanos in the world and one of five on the island, began erupting Thursday afternoon.

A magnitude 5 earthquake under its south flank preceded an initial eruption. Several severe aftershocks have occurred since then.

A quake Friday was measured at magnitude 6.9, the most powerful to hit the islands since 1975.

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