

Earthquake in Chile  
September 16, 2015



**11 people have died** as a result of the earthquake measuring 8.4 on the Richter scale and the tsunami that occurred Wednesday in Chile.

Eight regions of the country were affected by the earthquake, which had its epicenter in the ocean, 36 kilometers west of Canela Baja, a small coastal village of 1500 inhabitants in the northern region of Coquimbo, about 230 kilometers north of Santiago.



After the earthquake, the Navy sounded a tsunami alert for the entire length of the Chilean coast, leading to the **evacuation of more than one million people from several cities.**

So far seismologists have recorded more than 100 aftershocks greater than 4 on the Richter scale.

ONEMI (Interior Ministry National Emergency Office) reports that shelters have received approximately 1000 people, of whom 500 are in the Coquimbo Region. Hundreds of families are without electricity and drinking water.

The earthquake caused serious structural damage not only to the adobe-brick houses of the Coquimbo Region but also to the entire coastal zone as result of the tsunami.

SHOA (Navy Hydrological and Oceanography Service) described what it termed “wave trains” that occurred in some regions. Coquimbo registered a succession of waves of greatest magnitude, spanning more than 4 meters high. In Valparaíso, Chile’s main port, tidal waves reached 2 meters in height.

The port city of Coquimbo has been completely destroyed by the entering sea. Wave trains reported after the earthquake devastated more than 100 fishing and handicraft stalls.

One of the most badly affected sectors of production has been that of small-scale fishermen, particularly, of fishing villages of Peñuelas and Guayacán in Tongoy.

In the light of day, this morning the consequences of the natural disaster could be verified. Boats wrecked, debris cluttering the streets, and houses filled with mud and water are some of the scenes visible at this time.

Highways in and around Coquimbo sustained serious structural damage due to rock slides, a situation also observed in Valparaiso.

A total of 22 hospitals were evacuated after the earthquake. In most, patients were transferred to other sections of the same hospital; elsewhere, patients were transported to other hospitals. Only the public health facilities of the Region of Coquimbo sustained serious damage.

President Michelle Bachelet announced this morning that she would to travel to the Region of Coquimbo to assess the toll, cancelling plans to attend the inauguration of the traditional September 18 Independence Day commemoration celebrations.

Below are scenes from the Coquimbo Region, epicenter of the earthquake and tsunami.





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