

Atsu has been living in Turkey since joining Hatayspor from Saudi Arabian club Al-Raed last summer. And he notched his first goal for his team on Sunday after coming on as a substitute with eight minutes of the match remaining.

According to [The Mirror](#), the 31-year-old had been celebrating his goal with his team-mates over a game of poker before returning home just 20 minutes before the earthquake hit.

And Atsu's agent Nana Sechere, who is in London, told the publication: "The last I heard from him was at midnight on Sunday. Christian and his team-mates were playing poker until 3.30am at a friend's apartment. The journey back to his apartment was around half an hour.

"He returned at 4am and the earthquake started around 20 minutes later. I didn't know anything until I received a call from a club official at 5am asking if I'd heard from Christian. He told me Christian's building had been completely destroyed and that they couldn't get hold of him.

"I was hoping he was awake and that the earthquake hadn't happened while he was sleeping. He was in an 11-storey building and he was on the ninth floor. The club officials were trying to help me find him but it was so hard because, understandably, they were trying to find their own friends and families as well.

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Christian Atsu made 121 appearances during a five-year spell with Newcastle (Image: GETTY)

"There were lots of reports out of England and Ghana that Christian was safe, but the first official confirmation I had was from the club at 6am on Tuesday morning. They told me that he was in hospital and that he is stable. He doesn't have his phone and, like all of us, he can't remember his numbers by heart, so I have to continue to wait to speak to him."

Atsu, who helped Porto win the Portuguese league title in 2013, made 121 appearances for Newcastle during a five-year spell at St James' Park. He initially joined the Magpies on loan from Chelsea in 2016, before making his move permanent the following summer after helping the team win the Championship. The Blues initially brought the player to England following his title-winning exploits with Porto and loaned him out to Everton and Bournemouth during his time at Stamford Bridge.

"I was due to fly out [to Turkey] on Friday," added Sechere. "But the flight would have arrived on Sunday after Christian's game had finished, so I asked for another flight. Had I taken that original one, I would have been there too. It's only God that saved me. There is a God. My wife is so grateful that I didn't fly in the end."