Earthquake Report

# Buildings

The Catholic Church in Albania held mass in its churches on 27 and 28 November for earthquake victims and coordinated its relief efforts through local branches of the Catholic charity Caritas. The deadly quake was the strongest to hit Albania in decades, in a region known for its devastating temblors, and came just two months after the country was struck by another strong quake that damaged hundred of homes. “But after 40 years of relatively calm seismicity, strong quakes seem to be back.” Many residents who rushed out of their houses in Tirana or Durres in the early hours of Tuesday, only to face numerous aftershocks in the open air. Read more: EU's Frontex border force deploys teams to Albania to halt migrants The prime minister and President Ilir Meta later joined hundreds of residents at the funeral of nine members of a single extended family who were killed when a four-story villa collapsed. “Everything was moving in an unbelievable rhythm, I could hear the walls cracking, dishes and glass breaking,” Mr. Belidis, a 24-year-old Greek citizen, said by phone a few hours after experienced the deadly quake “in all its rage.” Videos and pictures shared on social media showed chaotic scenes of residents rummaging through the rubble, or trying to extricate people trapped under collapsed buildings. A magnitude-5.6 earthquake shook Albania on September 21, damaging about 500 houses, some of which were completely destroyed. The Orthodox Church of Albania under Archbishop Anastasios opened the local monasteries and churches to people displaced by the earthquake. Four buildings, including a five-storey apartment block, collapsed in Kodër-Thumanë and the town was hardest hit from the earthquake. Earthquake damage is being checked by civil engineers from the European Union, United States and local experts to assess whether buildings are structurally sound, unsafe and required demolition or just needed replastering. Rama said on Saturday that preliminary figures showed more than 1,465 buildings in the capital, Tirana, and about 900 in nearby Durres were seriously damaged in Tuesday’s 6.4-magnitude predawn earthquake. In Elbasan, a town about 35 miles from Durres, Olsi Shehi, a 39-year-old cook, said a four-story house had fallen, trapping people inside. Of those, more than 3,000 people were injured, 14,000 became homeless and throughout Albania 14,000 buildings were damaged of which 2,500 are rendered uninhabitable. Albanian troops working with limited resources rescued people from debris of collapsed structures and they were assisted by 250 troops from the United States and various European countries. The Turkish government will administer reconstruction in Laç and cooperate with the Albanian government on building designs and getting earthquake affected people quickly into homes. An Albanian military owned dwelling in Durrës, social centres in Tirana and various privately owned buildings such as 90 gyms in Krujë, Tirana, Lezhë, Durrës and numerous hotels in Vlorë, Durrës and Tirana were adapted and opened to shelter displaced people. He said more than 1,465 buildings in Tirana and about 900 in nearby Durres had been seriously damaged. President Erdogan, citing close Albanian-Turkish relations, committed Turkey to reconstructing 500 earthquake destroyed homes in Albania. Albania Earthquake Kills at Least 23 Rescuers in Albania dug through the rubble of collapsed buildings in search of survivors on Tuesday, after a 6.4-magnitude earthquake struck the Balkan nation, killing at least 23 people and injuring 650. 21, a 5.6-magnitude quake in Albania injured dozens of people and damaged hundreds of homes in the same area hit on Tuesday. Albania quake toll hits 51 as search for survivors ends The Health Ministry confirmed a 51st victim, a woman in the capital, Tirana, who had been in a coma since she was reportedly hit by a falling brick while leaving her apartment. Full reconstruction costs are estimated at €1.07 billion, with €800 million devoted to the rebuilding of homes and the rest allocated for repairing health centres, schools and infrastructure damaged by the earthquake. The most recent significant earthquake in the area was an M 5.6 event on 21 September 2019 with an epicentre ENE of Durrës, which was at the time the most powerful in 30 years and damaged 500 houses.

# Resilience

As the Albanian authorities requested international help, Montenegro and Serbia sent support and rescue teams, according to Prime Minister Edi Rama, who added that various leaders, including Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany, were preparing to help. Following the completion of the earthquake damage report by Albanian authorities, the European Council announced on 13 December that the European Union will organise an international donors conference for January 2020 in Tirana. Subsequently, rescue crews with specialised equipment, sniffer dogs and emergency supplies came to Albania from neighbouring countries and other European nations to help in the search efforts and provide for those left homeless. In Albania, volunteers, along with some small organisations established drop off points for donations of food, clothing, blankets and hygiene products at prominent landmarks throughout Tirana and used social media to mobilise people to provide assistance. Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama on Saturday said all bodies had been retrieved from the ruins of thousands of buildings struck by Tuesday's 6.4 magnitude earthquake. Albanians from North Macedonia responded in large numbers to the Albanian government's appeal for financial assistance through donations to various humanitarian organisations and special bank accounts fundraising for aid. National operational centres were established by the Albanian government along with a phone line for people affected by the earthquake needing clothes or food. In all, these non-state donations by Albanians from the Balkans and global diaspora totaled some 13 million dollars of humanitarian assistance to Albania. A blood donation effort for earthquake victims was organised by the Bosniak Youth Forum of Montenegro with hundreds of Albanians from Ulcinj partaking in the initiative. The Islamic Community of Kosovo organised a fundraising effort on 29 November after Friday prayers across all its mosques within the country and sent several convoys of aid to earthquake victims. Emergency teams from Kosovo, Romania, Italy and Greece joined the effort, and European Union officials said they had reached out to Albania’s government to offer assistance. Rama has called for additional expert assistance and monetary aid geared toward recovery from the international community stating that Albania lacks the capacity "to do this [reconstruction] alone." By mid December, 13 billion leks ($171 million) were allocated for future reconstruction by the Albanian government. Globally, the Albanian diaspora expressed its solidarity and held multiple fundraisers to send money to Albania and assist people impacted by the earthquake. Hundreds of Albanians in Albania and Kosovo opened their homes to people displaced by the earthquake. Football fan groups such as "Kuq e Zi" of the Albanian national team set up an emergency fund and sent volunteers from throughout the country to assist in relief operations. The search-and-rescue operation for earthquake survivors in Albania has ended, with the death toll standing at 51 and no more bodies believed to be in the ruins, Prime Minister Edi Rama said. International donors conferences and reconstruction efforts The European Union, the Catholic Pope, the Ecumenical Patriarch, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation Secretary General, presidents of Azerbaijan, China, Armenia, Serbia, Montenegro, United States and Greece, the German Chancellor, the monarchs of Qatar, Jordan and Saudi Arabia, the Bulgarian Prime Minister and the Iranian and Estonian foreign ministers expressed their condolences to the people of Albania. Albania’s search for quake victims ends as death toll rises to 51 Albania’s PM announces end of operation launched in the wake of deadly 6.4 magnitude earthquake on Tuesday. The quake, which had a preliminary rating of 6.4 magnitude, hit the European nation at an approximate depth of 20 kilometers (12 miles) early Tuesday local time, according to the United States Geological Survey. Albanian President Ilir Meta, Prime Minister Rama and opposition leader Lulzim Basha visited the earthquake epicentre to see firsthand the situation and damage. Some students from Tirana went to assist relief efforts in Durrës and delivered hundreds of meals to earthquake affected people. On 30 November Prime Minister Rama announced the end of the search and rescue operation, as no more bodies were expected to be under the rubble. In accordance with the Albanian constitution regarding an emergency situation, the Albanian parliament granted Prime Minister Edi Rama state of emergency powers to deal with earthquake aftermath. The first funeral for the deceased was held on Friday with hundreds of people in attendance including President Meta and Prime Minister Rama.

# Infrastructure

In early February 2020, the Albanian government publicised figures that earthquake damage to private and public properties cost €844 million. By early December, all donations for humanitarian assistance totaled $92 million.