

= 1980 Azores Islands earthquake =

Striking the Autonomous Region of Azores on 1 January , the 1980 Azores Island earthquake killed 61 people and injured over 400 , causing severe damage on the islands of Terceira and São Jorge . Measuring 7 @. @ 2 on the Richter scale , it also shook the islands of Pico and Faial , and resulted from a strike slip fracture , typical of other historical Azorean earthquakes .

In response to the earthquake , Portuguese president António Ramalho Eanes announced three days of national mourning , while relief efforts , initiated by agents of the local Air Force , were soon accompanied by government @-@ supported agencies .

= = Geology = =

= = = Background = = =

In 1950 , another strong earthquake had rocked the Azores Islands region , and this was the largest earthquake since .

= = = Description = = =

Volcanic in origin , the Azores lie in a tectonically complex area on either side of the Mid @-@ Atlantic Ridge , between the European , Eurasian and African plate boundaries , forming their own microplate . The 1980 earthquake was the result of movement along the northwest to southeast trending strike @-@ slip fault .

After aftershocks from the quake had concluded , examination took place , producing a focal solution to the small events . Movement of these shocks was similar to that of previous earthquakes around the Azores . For these earthquakes , scientists had determined that the conjugate nodal plane was responsible , seeing shearing on the right @-@ lateral (dextral) side . All faulting in this area is strike @-@ slip @-@ oriented , and on a rather large scale . Because of this research , information now points towards Azores volcanism being controlled by earthquake movement .

= = Damage and casualties = =

The earthquake that struck the Azorean islands was a magnitude 7 @. @ 2 on the Richter scale . It caused considerable damage on three separate islands (Terceira , São Jorge , and Graciosa) , destroying several buildings . According to local reports , roughly 70 % of the houses on Terceira were completely demolished , including the historic quarter of the island capital , Angra do Heroísmo . In general , public buildings such as churches remained intact , while several buildings caved in on themselves . Public utilities such as electricity and water , were reported cut in several areas .

Initially , the number of fatalities was set at 52 , but it was later revised to 61 . Additionally , the injuries were set at 300 , but this was also revised to more than 400 . At least 20 @, @ 000 people were left homeless . Minor damage was recorded at Pico and Faial islands .

No fatalities were recorded at the Lajes Field air base , nor any major damage .

= = Relief efforts and response = =

United States Navy and Air Force troops stationed at Lajes functioned as disaster relief workers , sheltering as many as 150 families . Portuguese Air Force members brought supplies to earthquake victims , while a João Coutinho class corvette navy ship transported medical officials to the island . The Portuguese President , António Ramalho Eanes , flew in on a plane accompanied by medical personnel and supplies (such as bedding) . Local officials including policemen and volunteer firemen cleared roads for relief supplies and transports . Responding to the situation , these officials were also involved in looking for survivors in the rubble . Soon after , tents were erected to replace

the destroyed or unsafe homes for approximately 200 families of the islands . Portable homes were constructed by the People to People International project fund , resulting in 100 shelters .

Three days of national mourning were declared by Eanes . Following the relief efforts , 19 seismographic stations were installed to monitor seismic activities . Eleven of these were used to monitor earthquake activity , while the other eight also record information on the island 's geothermal areas .

The earthquake forced hundreds of people to leave the country for the United States . It occurred during a period of several major natural disasters in which many residents of the island left ; in 1975 , 8 @, @ 000 residents left . In 1981 , however , just 2 @, @ 500 people left the island .

Dino Meira , a Portuguese @-@ American singer , recorded and sold a 45 single " Acores 20 para as 4 " with the proceeds donated to the earthquake relief effort .

= = Analysis and current situation = =

Later studies of the events leading up to the tragedy found several factors contributing to the extent of the damage . A. Malheiro (2006) linked five major causes to damage from these earthquakes . The buildings most damaged by the earthquake were near fault lines on top of loosely packed soil . They tended to be of poor construction and did not conform to proper building code , nor had they been adequately examined .

The area around the Azores remains active . Threats from earthquakes and landslides remain .