

Mexico hit by ‘strongest earthquake in a century’ as magnitude 8.2 tremor triggers tsunami waves – latest news

8 SEPTEMBER 2017 • 11:06AM

- Magnitude 8.2 earthquake hits off Mexico
- Tsunami waves of 3.3 feet measured
- **At least five dead, including two children**
- Frightened Mexico City residents gather in streets
- Blackouts in capital

A rare and powerful 8.2-magnitude earthquake struck southern Mexico late Thursday, killing at least five people as seismologists warned of a tsunami of more than 10 feet.

The quake hit offshore in the Pacific about 75 miles southwest of the town of Tres Picos in far southern Chiapas state, the US Geological Survey said, putting the magnitude at 8.1.

Mexico's president said the earthquake magnitude was 8.2, the strongest in a century in the country.

The country's seismologic service initially gave a magnitude of 8.4, which if confirmed would be the most powerful ever recorded in this quake-prone country.

The quake shook a large swath of the country and was felt as far north as Mexico City – 600 miles from the quake epicenter – where people ran out of their homes in their pajamas as buildings trembled and swayed.

A tsunami warning and the prospect of aftershocks kept the nation on alert.

“Based on all available data ... widespread hazardous tsunami waves are forecast for some coasts,” the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center said.



A collapsed hotel in Matias Romero, Oaxaca, Mexico CREDIT: EFE/CIVIL DEFENSE
“Tsunami waves reaching more than three meters above the tide level are possible along the coasts of Mexico,” it said, with lower waves in other countries.

The tsunami warning was for the coasts of Mexico, down through Central America into Guatemala, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Panama and Honduras, and as far south as Ecuador.

The quake was felt in much of Guatemala, which borders Chiapas.



A handout photo made available by the United States Geological Survey shows an intensity map showing the location of the earthquake CREDIT: EPA
President Enrique Pena Nieto ordered schools to remain closed Friday in Chiapas and Mexico City so officials could inspect for structural damage.

He said on Twitter he was overseeing the emergency response from the National Disaster Prevention Center's headquarters.

In Mexico City, people ran out of buildings after hearing earthquake warning sirens go off just before midnight (6am UK time Friday).



Patients and doctors of a hospital of Mexico City wait outside after the earthquake CREDIT: EPA
The quake struck at a depth of 21 miles, the USGS said.

It is the strongest to hit quake-prone Mexico at least since 1985, when an 8.1-magnitude earthquake in Mexico City killed more than 10,000 people.



Picture on social media showed buildings were damaged in Chiapas state in Mexico CREDIT:TWITTER/@JUSTGONZO
The authorities have since instituted a stricter building code and developed an earthquake alert system using sensors placed on the coasts.

Mexico sits atop five tectonic plates, whose movement makes it one of the most earthquake-prone countries in the world.

No reports of deaths in Guatemala

Guatemala was also hit by the earthquake, striking the country at 10.52pm local time on Thursday.

But officials say that so far there are no reports of deaths, despite many houses suffering partial collapses in towns near the border with Mexico such as San Marcos.

Patients and doctors of a hospital in Villahermosa, Mexico
Schools will remain closed on Friday as a precaution in three departments: Quetzaltenango, San Marcos and Suchitepéquez.

10:54am

Puerto Madero evacuated

The ‘Plan Marina’ – a national body set up to aid civilians during natural disasters or national emergencies, has been helping to evacuate Mexico's southernmost port, Puerto Madero, in advance of an incoming tidal surge.

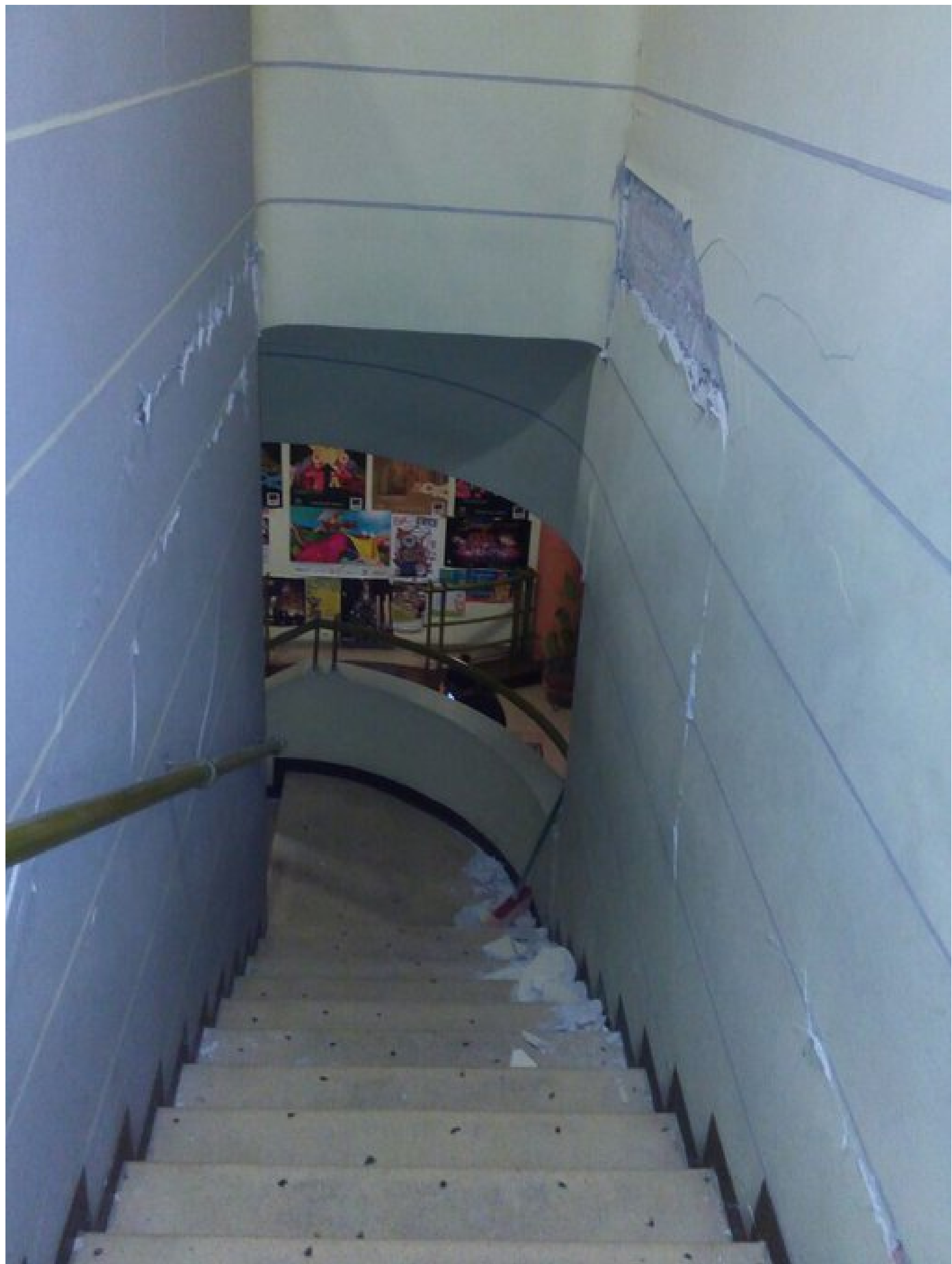
Fears of a tsunami have been quelled by President Pena Nieto after he said on national television that “the tsunami risk on the Chiapas coast does not represent a major risk. It's not very big. It's not a major worry.”



More hotels damaged by earthquake

Another hotel in Oaxaca, Casa Cue has been damaged by the earthquake. No injuries have been reported but the authorities say that there is severe structural damage to the building.

[View image on Twitter](#)



Meanwhile in Mexico City, which sits 450 miles from the earthquake epicentre, but felt the tremor nonetheless, the head of the local government Angel Mancera has assured residents that all transport systems will run as normal tomorrow.

Angel of Independence sways during quake

BuzzFeed News in Mexico has obtained some striking footage of the Angel of Independence, an icon of Mexico City, swaying during the earthquake.



In the 1957 during an earthquake which killed dozens in the capital, the Angel fell.

It was very much the symbol of the disaster, and a traumatising blow to Mexicans. So the Angel is now closely watched during every earthquake.

10:27am

Mexican president addresses nation via Twitter

The Mexican President Enrique Pena Nieto has been tweeting in the last few minutes. In a series of messages he said:

“According to the latest evaluation, the earthquake had a magnitude of 8.2, the strongest in nearly a century.

“Unfortunately there are deaths reported, and I send my deepest condolences to the families.

“Tomorrow classes are suspended in Mexico City, Chiapas, Guerrero, Higoaldo, Morelos, Oaxaca, Puebla, Tabasco, Tlaxcala and Veracruz in order to inspect the school buildings.

“At 3am, the CFE (Mexican state electricity provider) reported 1.85 million users affected. 1.38 million of those (74%) already have their power back.



Members of the Mexican army look at damage caused by an earthquake in the Port of Veracruz on September 7, CREDIT: VICTORIA RAZO

“It is recommended that people check gas installations, and the state of walls and columns. Report any defects to the authorities.

“Pay attention to the news from The National Office for Civil Protection, because there could be a repeat of the quake in the next 24 hours.

People gather on a street in Mexico

“The national emergency committee is working to evaluate the damage and coordinate the action to best take care of the population.

He said an estimated 50 million people felt the earthquake.”

10:00am

Hotel collapses in Oaxaca

Authorities in Mexico say that a hotel in Oaxaca has collapsed, but no one from the building has been reported dead.

Civil Defense photos showed the crumbling facade of the Anel hotel in Matias Romero. President Enrique Pena Nieto said no one was reported dead at the hotel.

[View image on Twitter](#)



Earlier, Oaxaca Gov. Alejandro Murat said that some people were able to escape from the hotel and authorities were working to determine if they were any casualties or missing people.

9:47am

School and university classes suspended

Jamie Johnson reports:

The Mexican Education Secretary Aurelio Nuño has been tweeting, saying that nurseries, schools and universities in the states of Tabasco, Guerrero, Oaxaca, Edomex, Puebla, Hidalgo, Morelos and even as far away as Veracruz, on the gulf of Mexico will see classes suspended today.

In a statement, Mr Nuño said that the measure had been taken to “guarantee the safety of students, teachers, administrative personnel and families.”

9:35am

Buildings in Oaxaca reduced to rubble

Some of the worst initial reports of the earthquake came from Juchitan in Oaxaca state, where sections of the town hall, a hotel, a bar and other buildings were reduced to rubble.

Rescue workers labored through the night in badly affected areas to check for people trapped in collapsed buildings.



Debris from a collapsed wall sits in Oaxaca, Mexico CREDIT: LUIS ALBERTO CRUZ/AP

9:24am

More information about Chiapas, Mexico’s poorest state

Jamie Johnson reports:

Chiapas is Mexico’s southernmost state and also its poorest. Chiapas has the highest poverty rate in the country – standing at 74.7 per cent according to the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI) in 2014 – and the median income is less than half the national average.

Made up of a great mix of indiginous communities, speaking different Mayan languages, its three million inhabitants rely mainly on tourism for its modest income.

Despite heavy investment in infrastructure, the population has not been lifted out of poverty.

The state has mountainous highlands and thick rainforest in the south, where it borders Guatemala. There are numerous Mayan ruins in Chiapas including the UNESCO world heritage site of Palenque – where there was a pre-hispanic city.

The state capital Tuxtla Gutierrez welcomed Pope Francis in February last year and he celebrated mass with indiginous locals, speaking in Spanish as well as saying prayers in three native languages.

The state is no stranger to earthquakes, with warning systems in place and alerts on public radio, but there has not been an earthquake of this size in the last century, according to President Enrique Pena Nieto.

Recently there has been a tourism drive, with a promotional video for the state garnering more than 1,000 retweets from the President’s account.



8:59am

‘Strongest earthquake in a century’ for Mexico

Mexico’s president says earthquake magnitude was 8.2, the strongest in a century in the country.

8:45am

Dozens of aftershocks

James Badcock writes that local media is reporting that schools will remain closed today in many southern and central states of Mexico.

The National Seismology Service said that in the two hours following the initial earthquake, there were 61 aftershocks up to a magnitude of 6.1.

President Enrique Peña Nieto has asked people not to panic, and the government is warning against the spreading of unofficial rumours.

Mr Peña Nieto said that 1.5 million people had lost their electricity supply immediately after the earthquake, but that half of these had now had power restored.

He said that aftershocks of up to 7.0 on the Richter scale were still possible.

8:41am

VIDEO: Buildings shudder as deadly earthquake hits

Mexico

Buildings shudder as deadly earthquake hits Mexico
00:43

8:29am

Tsunami waves of 3.3 feet measured

Tsunami waves have been measured off Mexico's Pacific coast.

The Pacific Tsunami Warning Center says waves of 1 metre (3.3 feet) above the tide level were measured off Salina Cruz. Smaller tsunami waves were observed on the coast or measured by ocean gauges in several other places.

The center's forecast said Ecuador, El Salvador and Guatemala could see waves of a metre or less.

No threat was posed to Hawaii and the western and South Pacific.

8:10am

Five dead, including two children

The death toll in Mexico has risen to at least five people, including two children in Tabasco state.

Tabasco Governor Arturo Nunez said that one of the children died when a wall collapsed, and the other was a baby who died in a children's hospital that lost electricity, cutting off the supply to the infant's ventilator.

The other three deaths were in Chiapas state, in San Cristobal de las Casas.

The governor of Chiapas says that at least three people have been killed in his region.

Gov. Manuel Velasco told Milenio TV that the deaths occurred in San Cristobal de las Casas.

He also said that the quake damaged hospitals and schools:

"There are damages in hospitals that have lost energy. Homes, schools and hospitals have been affected."

7:30am

At least two dead

The government has said at least two people have died in southern Mexico, AFP reports.

The two fatalities came in the southern state of Chiapas, Interior Minister Miguel Angel Osorio Chong said.

7:27am

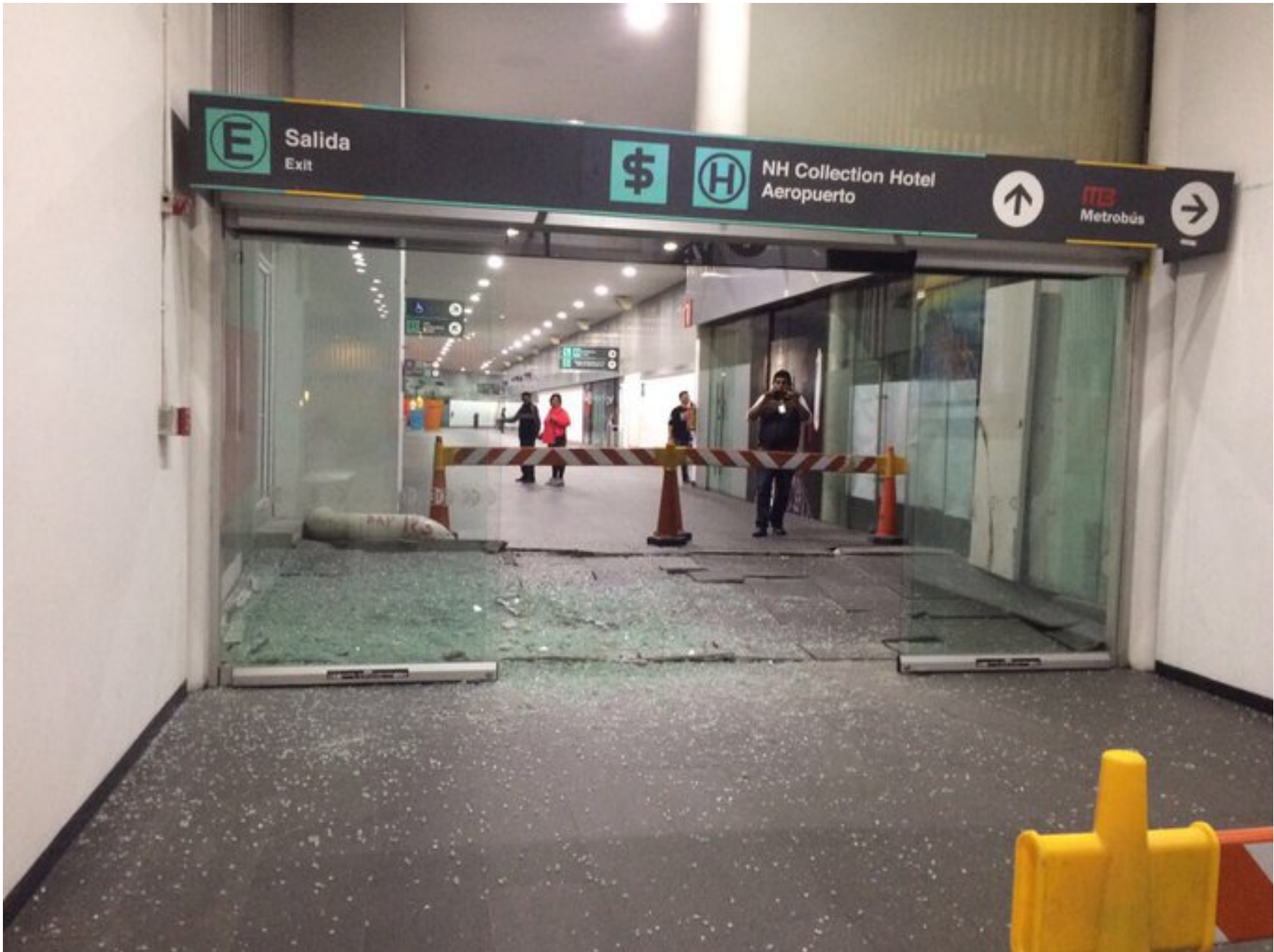
Tsunami reported

The Pacific Tsunami Warning Centre has confirmed there is a tsunami, with the largest wave being 0.7 metres – or 2.3 feet.

7:20am

Some damage at Mexico City airport

[View image on Twitter](#)



resident calls for calm

In neighbouring Guatemala, President Jimmy Morales spoke on national television to call for calm while emergency crews checked for damage. Local radio in the Central American country reported one death, but it could not be confirmed.

"We have reports of some damage and the death of one person, even though we still don't have exact details," Morales said.

He said the possible death occurred in San Marcos state near the border with Mexico.

7:14am

'The house moved like chewing gum'

Rodrigo Soberanes, who lives near San Cristobal de las Casas in Chiapas, a poor largely indigenous state popular with tourists, described the moment the quake struck.

"The house moved like chewing gum and the light and internet went out momentarily."

Civil Defence in Chiapas said on its Twitter account that its personnel were in the streets aiding people and warned residents to prepare for aftershocks. But it made no immediate comment about damage.

7:10am

Scenes in Mexico City



People gather on a street in downtown Mexico City during an earthquake CREDIT: AFP



Patients and doctors of a hospital of Mexico City, CREDIT: EPA
7:00am

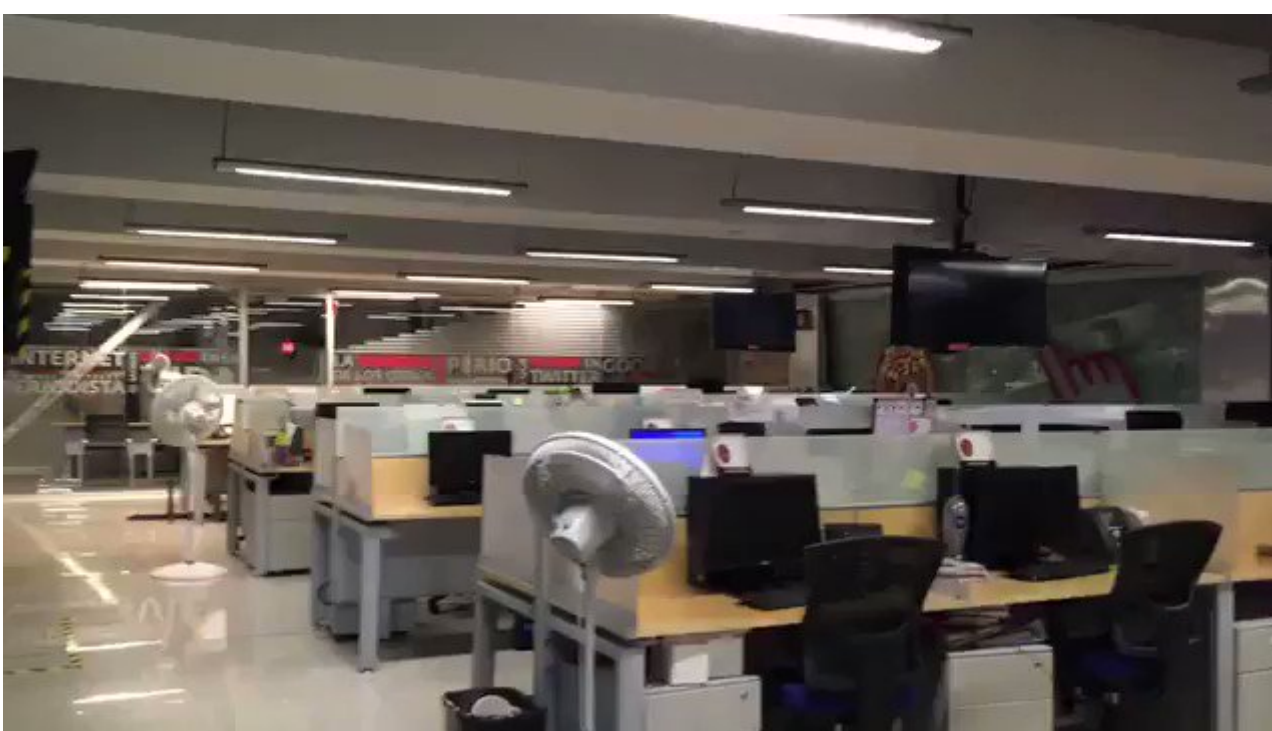
'It felt horrible'

In one central neighbourhood, dozens of people stood outside after the quake, some wrapped in blankets against the cool night air. Children were crying.

Liliana Villa, 35, was in her apartment when the earthquake struck and she fled to the street in her pyjamas.

"It felt horrible, and I thought, 'this is going to fall'."

6:58am





6:45am

Reports of hotel guests trapped

In Oaxaca, there are reports on social media of guests being trapped in a hotel.

[View image on Twitter](#)



6:46am

Pictures emerge of damage

[View image on Twitter](#)



[View image on Twitter](#)



[View image on Twitter](#)



‘I nearly fell over’

Residents in Mexico City are describing the moment when the quake struck.

Luis Carlos Briceno, an architect, 31, who was visiting Mexico City, said:

“I had never been anywhere where the earth moved so much. At first I laughed, but when the lights went out I didn't know what to do. I nearly fell over.”

6:39am

Strongest quake since 1985

Mexico’s civil protection agency said it was the strongest earthquake to hit the country since a devastating 1985 tremor that toppled buildings and killed thousands.

6:35am

Big aftershock hits Mexico

A 5,7 magnitude earthquake has hit near the coast of Oaxaca in Mexico.

Guatemala also hit by quake
The earthquake also rattled large parts of Guatemala. Residents in the city of Quetzaltenango say they are without electricity and firefighters are assessing the extent of the damage.

View image on Twitter



ESTIMATED TIMES OF ARRIVAL

* ESTIMATED TIMES OF ARRIVAL -ETA- OF THE INITIAL TSUNAMI WAVE FOR PLACES WITH A POTENTIAL TSUNAMI THREAT. ACTUAL ARRIVAL TIMES MAY DIFFER AND THE INITIAL WAVE MAY NOT BE THE LARGEST. A TSUNAMI IS A SERIES OF WAVES AND THE TIME BETWEEN WAVES CAN BE FIVE MINUTES TO ONE HOUR.

LOCATION	REGION	COORDINATES		ETA(UTC)
SALINA CRUZ	MEXICO	16.5N	95.2W	0540 09/08
PUERTO MADERO	MEXICO	14.8N	92.5W	0543 09/08
SIPICATE	GUATEMALA	13.9N	91.2W	0548 09/08
ACAPULCO	MEXICO	16.9N	99.9W	0552 09/08
LAZARO CARDENAS	MEXICO	17.9N	102.2W	0613 09/08
ACAJUTLA	EL SALVADOR	13.6N	89.8W	0618 09/08
CABO SAN ELENA	COSTA RICA	10.9N	86.0W	0618 09/08
CORINTO	NICARAGUA	12.5N	87.2W	0630 09/08
PUERTO SANDINO	NICARAGUA	12.2N	86.8W	0631 09/08
MANZANILLO	MEXICO	19.1N	104.3W	0635 09/08
SAN JUAN DL SUR	NICARAGUA	11.2N	85.9W	0640 09/08
PUERTO QUEPOS	COSTA RICA	9.4N	84.2W	0642 09/08
ISLA DEL COCO	COSTA RICA	5.5N	87.1W	0642 09/08
CABO MATAPALO	COSTA RICA	8.4N	83.3W	0646 09/08
PUNTA BURICA	PANAMA	8.0N	82.9W	0653 09/08
AMAPALA	HONDURAS	13.2N	87.6W	0704 09/08
PUERTO VALLARTA	MEXICO	20.6N	105.3W	0712 09/08
SOCORRO	MEXICO	18.8N	111.0W	0729 09/08
SAN BLAS	MEXICO	21.5N	105.3W	0732 09/08
MAZATLAN	MEXICO	23.2N	106.4W	0733 09/08
CABO SAN LUCAS	MEXICO	22.8N	110.0W	0735 09/08
PUNTA MALA	PANAMA	7.5N	80.0W	0745 09/08
BALTRA ISLAND	ECUADOR	0.5S	90.3W	0752 09/08

Countries under tsunami threat

The U.S. Tsunami Warning System said the earthquake was a potential tsunami threat to several Central American countries, including the Pacific coastlines of Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, El Salvador and Costa Rica.

It said the threat was still being evaluated for Hawaii, Guam and other Pacific islands.

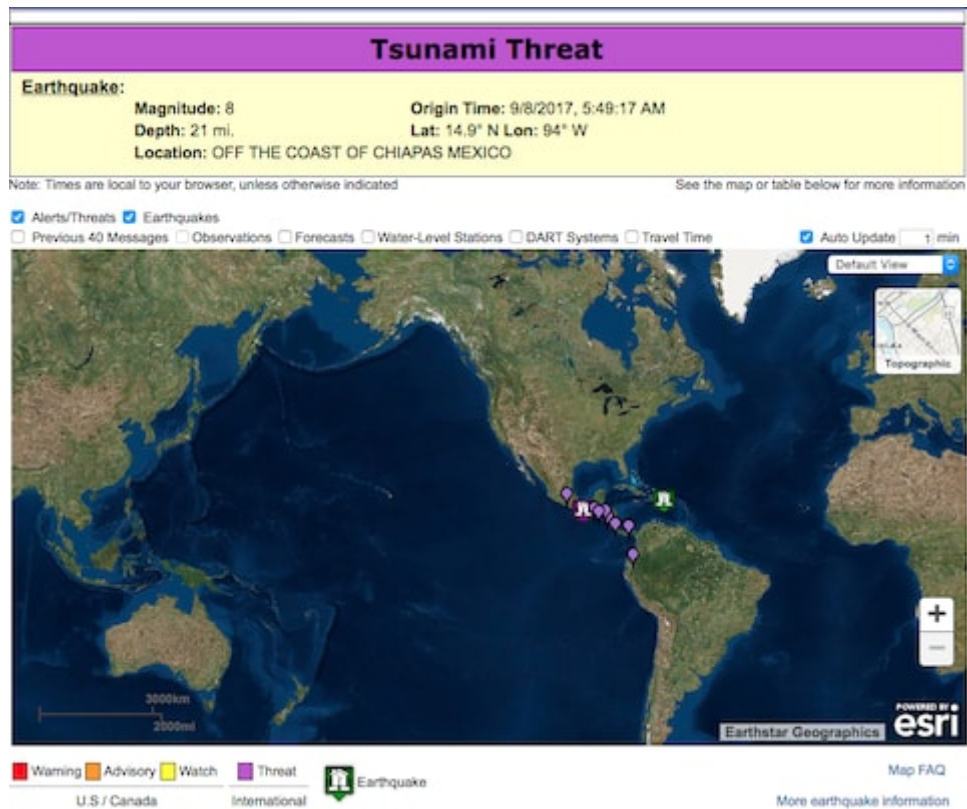
6:27am

Buildings without power in capital

Witnesses say the power has been knocked out in parts of the capital, Mexico City, after the quake. The quake struck at night and frightened residents are gathering in the streets.

Tsunami threat

The US tsunami warning system has issued a number of warnings for the region.



Tsunami warnings CREDIT: NOAA

6:12am

People fled to streets

People in Mexico City ran out into the streets after the quake struck, a Reuters witness said.

Its epicentre was 123 km (76 miles) southwest of the town of Pijijiapan, at a depth of 33 km (21 miles). Widespread, hazardous tsunami waves were possible, the Pacific Tsunami Warning Centre said.