Beat: Miscellaneous

Strong quake hits off New Zealand`s Kermadec Islands, no tsunami

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USPA News - A strong earthquake struck off the uninhabited Kermadec Islands in the South Pacific Ocean on late Sunday evening, seismologists said, but no tsunami warnings were issued. Damage or casualties in the New Zealand-governed region were not expected.

The 6.4-magnitude earthquake at 10:26 p.m. local time (0926 GMT) was centered about 188 kilometers (116 miles) southeast of L`Esperance Rock, which is located halfway between New Zealand`s North Island and Tonga. It struck about 33 kilometers (20.5 miles) deep, making it a shallow earthquake, according to New Zealand`s seismological agency GeoNet. The United States Geological Survey (USGS) put the magnitude of Sunday`s earthquake at a stronger 6.5, but determined the depth to be slightly deeper at 40.4 kilometers (25.1 miles). It said it was unlikely to have been felt on Raoul Island, which is home to a government-run station. Both the New Zealand government and the Joint Australian Tsunami Warning Center determined there was no tsunami threat to their coastlines. The Pacific Tsunami Warning Center also said there was no threat of a destructive widespread tsunami, although it initially cautioned about a very small risk of local tsunamis. New Zealand`s Kermadec Islands and the surrounding region as a whole are part of the so-called `Pacific Ring of Fire,` an arc of fault lines circling the Pacific Basin that is prone to frequent and large earthquakes. Volcanic eruptions also occur frequently in the region. In October 2011, a powerful 7.4-magnitude earthquake struck about 169 kilometers (105 miles) east of Raoul Island, generating a small tsunami but causing no damage. The largest tsunami wave, approximately 0.17 meter (0.6 feet) above normal sea levels, was recorded at Fishing Rock on Raoul Island. Three months earlier, in July 2011, a 7.6-magnitude earthquake struck about 163 kilometers (101 miles) east of Raoul Island. The powerful earthquake generated a 1-meter (3.2 feet) tsunami that hit the island, but no damage or casualties were reported.

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