

Beat: Travel

Magnitude-6.8 quake strikes off Antarctica, no tsunami threat

-, 16.11.2013, 22:56 Time

USPA News - A strong earthquake struck near an uninhabited island off Antarctica on early Saturday morning, seismologists said, but neither damage nor casualties were likely. A small chance of a regional tsunami did not materialize as no unusual sea level changes were recorded.

The 6.8-magnitude earthquake at 12:34 a.m. local time (03:34 GMT) was centered about 73 kilometers (45 miles) northwest of Coronation Island, an uninhabited island that is part of the South Orkney Islands in the Scotia Sea. It struck about 10 kilometers (6.2 miles) deep, making it a shallow earthquake, according to the United States Geological Survey (USGS). The Pacific Tsunami Warning Center, which initially measured the magnitude at 7.4, noted a small possibility of a local or regional tsunami that could affect nearby coastlines within a few hundred kilometers. But no tsunami alerts were issued, and no unusual sea level changes were recorded in the hours after the earthquake. Computer models showed it was unlikely the tremors were felt in any populated areas, and as such neither damage nor casualties were likely. Base personnel on scientific stations in the region, which is administered under the Antarctic Treaty System, may have felt tremors from Saturday's earthquake. In August 2003, a powerful 7.6-magnitude earthquake struck the Scotia Sea, about 113 kilometers (70 miles) northeast of Coronation Island. That earthquake damaged instruments in the magnetic recording hut at the Argentine scientific station Orcadas Base, which is located on Laurie Island, also part of the South Orkney Islands. There were no injuries.

Article online:

<https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-1586/magnitude-68-quake-strikes-off-antarctica-no-tsunami-threat.html>

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Editorial program service of General News Agency:

United Press Association, Inc.
3651 Lindell Road, Suite D168
Las Vegas, NV 89103, USA
(702) 943.0321 Local
(702) 943.0233 Facsimile
info@unitedpressassociation.org
info@gna24.com
www.gna24.com