

7.1 'Megaquake' Triggers Panic Across the Pacific

With the memory of the tsunami that sparked the Fukushima nuclear disaster in 2011 still in the back of minds across Japan, a warning was sounded as the region was hit with another large earthquake.

This time, the 7.1 magnitude quake's epicenter was located at the southern portion of mainland Japan near the Miyazaki Prefecture and tsunami advisory was sounded. Thankfully, no reports of significant damage have been reported at this time.

According to Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi, there have been reports of some injuries attributed to the earthquake, but all major social services and utilities are fully functional in the area.

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As reported by NBC News, "Seismologists held an emergency meeting to analyze whether the quake had affected the nearby Nankai Trough—the source of past devastating earthquakes. The meteorological agency ultimately issued what it called a 'mega earthquake caution,' assessing that the possibility of a large quake was relatively higher than usual but not that one would definitely occur in the near future."

In the hours since the tremors first hit, there have been no reports of any immediate tsunami danger or aftershocks that could cause damage, yet the region is staying on high alert.

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University of Tokyo seismologist Naoshi Hirata says that while the threat may not be imminent, there is a “70-80%” chance that a magnitude 8 or 9 earthquake could form out of the Nankai Trough in the next 30 years. The Japan Meteorological Agency assessed the quake to have taken place 19 miles beneath the ocean’s surface.

Seeing as the nation of Japan sits on a fault line within the notorious “Ring of Fire,” it is one of the nations most susceptible to earthquakes.

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