

Massive Earthquake Strikes Japan, Rescue Crews Rush to Collapsed Mall

A powerful earthquake struck Japan's southern island of Kyushu on Tuesday, damaging buildings, disrupting transportation and injuring dozens of people as rescue crews searched for victims and officials warned residents to prepare for possible aftershocks.

According to the Associated Press, the earthquake initially measured magnitude 7.1 before the U.S. Geological Survey later revised it to 6.8.

One of the most serious incidents occurred at the Aeon Mall in Kashima Town, where "the second floor ... collapsed, trapping an unknown number of people," the AP reported. Rescue operations remained underway as emergency crews worked to reach those inside.

Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi said the government immediately established a task force to gather information, assess the damage and coordinate rescue efforts.

"There have been reports of a number of injuries and damages to roads, bridges and buildings, as well as blackouts and fire, though details are still unclear," Takaichi told reporters, according to the AP. She also urged residents to exercise caution around fire hazards and broken glass.



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A tsunami advisory was briefly issued for nearby coastal waters before being lifted about two hours later after officials confirmed no tsunami had developed.

Shinji Kiyomoto, planning officer for the Japan Meteorological Agency's Earthquake and Tsunami Countermeasures office, said the shallow earthquake was "triggering active seismic activity in the area," urging residents "to especially be cautious over the next two to three days." He also confirmed that "no tsunami was observed from the inland quake," according to the AP.

The earthquake also suspended Shinkansen bullet train service and local rail lines while inspections were conducted, and the runway at Aso Kumamoto Airport was closed. Japan's Nuclear Regulation Authority said no abnormalities were found at three nearby nuclear power plants.

As we continue to watch developments in southern Japan, let us pray for God's protection over those affected, for healing for the injured, for wisdom and endurance for first responders, and for peace to replace fear in communities shaken by this disaster. Let us also pray that no destructive aftershocks or tsunamis follow in the days ahead and that those recovering from this earthquake experience God's comfort and provision.

James Lasher, a seasoned writer and editor at Charisma Media, combines faith and storytelling with a journalism background from Otterbein University and ministry experience in Guatemala and at the LA Dream Center. A Marine Corps and Air Force veteran, he is the author of *The Revelation of Jesus: A Common Man's Commentary* and a contributor to Charisma magazine. For interviews and media inquiries, please contact media@.