

# *Mexico Earthquake Death Toll Rises to Over 300*

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Mexico City, September 23 (RHC)-- The death toll from Tuesday's earthquake that devastated central Mexico has now risen to over 300, according to Luis Felipe Puente, coordinator of the Interior Ministry's National Civil Protection service. On his official Twitter account, Puente said that at least 148 of the deaths occurred in Mexico City, 73 in Morelos, 45 in Puebla, 13 in the State of Mexico, six in Guerrero and one in Oaxaca.

The National Civil Protection has indicated that at least 200 people are still missing in Mexico City. Rescuers in the area are continuing to dig through rubble to find disappeared people, although hope of finding survivors is dwindling. "Our country can be assured that this is the number one priority (the rescue of people) and that it will not stop," Puente said at a press conference.

The magnitude 7.1 earthquake caused 44 buildings to collapse in the Mexican capital, but the APL Engineers Association estimates that about 3,000 more are at risk of collapsing because of severe fissures in walls, columns and girders.

Brigades from El Salvador, Nicaragua and other countries have been sent to Mexico to assist in relief efforts.

Early Saturday morning, a strong new earthquake shook southern Mexico, toppling already damaged homes and a highway bridge and causing new alarm in a country reeling from two even more powerful quakes this month that together have killed nearly 400 people.

The U.S. Geological Survey said the new, magnitude 6.1 temblor was centered in the state of Oaxaca, which was the region most battered by a magnitude 8.1 quake on September 7th.

It was among thousands of aftershocks recorded in the wake of that earlier quake, which was the most powerful to hit Mexico in 32 years.

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