

Powerful 7.1 earthquake hits U.S. state of California



Los Angeles, July 6 (RHC)-- A powerful magnitude 7.1 earthquake hit the U.S. state of California Friday evening, one day after the strongest quake in the region in 25 years.

The quake hit the town of Ridgecrest on the edge of Death Valley National Park 202 km (125 miles) northeast of Los Angeles, according to the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS). It was also measured at 7.1 by the European-Mediterranean Seismological Agency.

Authorities say the earthquake has caused injuries, sparked fires, shut roads and shaken ball games and theme parks. Kern County Fire Chief David Witt says there have been no reported fatalities.

A swarm of strong aftershocks have jolted Southern California since a 6.4 quake on Thursday. That tremor, which hit during America's Independence Day celebrations, was the largest in Southern California since the 1994 magnitude 6.6 Northridge earthquake, according to the USGS.

That quake, which was centered in a heavily populated area of Los Angeles, killed 57 people and caused billions of dollars of damage. It comes as California was bracing for the much feared "big one" earthquake which has been predicted for decades.

Seismologists have said California is due for another massive earthquake that would cause significant damage, but just when such a quake would strike is unpredictable.

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