

Injury Toll Mounts in Mexico Quake

Rescue Teams Use Vehicle Headlights to Search for Victims

BY LEONARD GREENWOOD
Times Staff Writer

MEXICO CITY—Additional Red Cross units and the first army rescue teams arrived Saturday in the small Mexican town of Huajuapán de León where 30 people died and more than 700 were injured in an earthquake Friday. Estimates of the national death toll ranged from 49 to 65, officials said.

Thirteen Red Cross rescue teams using ambulance headlights for illumination worked throughout the night to dig victims out of the debris of this shattered town of 20,000 in the southern state of Oaxaca. Estimates of the number injured rose from Friday night's total of more than 400 to about 700, officials said.

"About 470 of them are seriously injured," a Red Cross spokesman in the city of Puebla, the nearest large city to Huajuapán de León, said.

Buildings Destroyed

Red Cross teams from Puebla arrived in Huajuapán de León on Friday afternoon and found about 90% of the buildings in the town de-

stroyed.

The government sent helicopters carrying medics and food to Huajuapán de León and other stricken towns in Oaxaca. Armed troops patrolled the town to prevent looting and urged survivors, some of whom spent the night in the streets, not to try to retrieve their possessions until order was restored.

"We have 350 injured lying out in rows in a park and we are keeping them as warm as we can with blankets," the Red Cross spokesman said. "There are another 60 seriously injured in the little clinic and 60 more in another center. During the night we treated 250 people for lighter injuries."

The force of Friday's quake was measured at 6.5 on the Richter scale. Huajuapán de León, 150 miles southeast of Mexico City, was close to the epicenter. The tremor shook large areas of Mexico, including the capital, where seven buildings collapsed, and was felt as far away as Guatemala City—600 miles south of Mexico City.

At least 6,000 people were left homeless throughout the quake zone. One report said 300 villages were destroyed or damaged by the quake but additional details were sketchy.

The quake triggered dozens of landslides in Oaxaca, blocking all major roads, toppling utility poles and cutting off most telephone service.

President Jose Lopez Portillo visited the stricken area briefly Saturday to survey the damage.

Rattled survivors recall moment

by Vicente Morales
Associated Press

Huajuapán de León, Mexico — "When the quake struck, the bells started ringing," the Rev. Julian Gonzalez, parish priest of Huajuapán's El Sagrario Church said Saturday. "We went out into the atrium, and from there we saw El Sagrario's bell tower fall, and become silent forever."

When the earth stopped moving a minute later, 10 of this town's 17

churches, some dating from the 17th century, had been destroyed or damaged beyond repair by Friday's severe quake.

Twelve of the 20,000 residents of this mountain town in Oaxaca State were known killed by the quake and another 500 were injured, about 80 of them critically. More than a hundred people have not been accounted for, and it is feared some are buried under the debris.

Residents of surrounding villages said they saw a cloud of debris and

dust rise above the town soon after the tremors stopped.

"I thought the town had collapsed," Nicolas Ramirez, 53, recalled when he saw the cloud rise over Huajuapán de León.

Ramirez said he walked eight hours from neighboring Nochistlan to Huajuapán de León in search of food and help for his village. "Thank God nothing happened to our family," he said. "The earthquake only damaged two doors of my house. One stayed closed and would not open, and the other would not close."

Isidro Rodriguez, 13, sat in the main plaza cradling his bandaged arm, watching Red Cross workers, troops and ambulances go by.

He said he suffered a slight injury, but there was panic at the Lazaro Cardenas high school he attended. "There were many injured in the schoolhouse. The doors and windows shook and exploded. Glass shattered and we all screamed," he said.

October 26, 1980, The Anchorage Times

Mexican government sends aid to cities stricken by temblor

Associated Press

Guajuapán de León, Mexico — Thousands of dazed and homeless re-

sidents wandered in the streets of this town Saturday searching for food, water or friends in the rubble of buildings toppled by a powerful earthquake.

At least 12 people were killed and 500 were injured here in Friday's quake, police said. The death toll across the quake belt in central and southern Mexico was placed at 40

and officials said it probably would go higher as search teams probed the ruins of demolished buildings.

About 80 percent of the buildings in this town 150 miles southeast of Mexico City were destroyed. The collapse of a social security office, a medical clinic, the central market, 10 of the town's 15 churches and the town's movie theatre trapped hundreds of people, witnesses said. More than 80 injured in the social security building were said to be in critical condition.

The government sent helicopters carrying medics and food to this town of 20,000 and other stricken areas in the southern state of Oaxaca. Many people spent the night in the streets and rescue workers struggled around the clock to free people trapped in the rubble.

Armed troops patrolled the town to prevent looting and urged survivors not to try to retrieve their possessions until order was restored.

Officials said the quake destroyed the homes of about 50,000 of the 180,000 residents in an estimated 300 small villages in the this remote mountain region 150 miles south of Mexico City.

The quake triggered dozens of landslides in Oaxaca, blocking all major roads, toppling utility poles and cutting off most telephone services.

Beatriz Marquez, owner of a restaurant here, said the tremors hit shortly before 9 a.m.

"The cash register fell and went through the floor," she said. "It hit the boiler below and the boiler exploded."

Mexico Repairs Quake Damage

MEXICO CITY (UPI) — Mexico will spend \$36.3 million to repair 11,000 homes and 200 church buildings damaged in last month's earthquake that killed dozens of people, the Ministry of Human Settlements and Public Works said.

Pittsburgh Press, Sun., Nov. 9, 1980



October 26, 1980

Los Angeles Times

Earthquake in progress — Church tower crumbles in Huajuapán de León, Mexico, during tremor

Friday. Quake, felt 450 miles away, destroyed 90% of the town's buildings.

Associated Press

Two dead, 180 kids hurt as quake rocks Mexico

MEXICO CITY (AP)—A severe earthquake struck central Mexico today, killing at least two people in Puebla and rocking buildings in Mexico City for more than a minute.

The Red Cross reported a falling wall killed the two in Puebla, 70 miles east of here, and that at least 180 children were injured there when they packed at a sports event and ran. The Gulf Coast city of Pasa Roca suffered heavy damage, Red Cross officials said, but they had no other details.

The quake, felt in a broad path over the south-central part of the country, was centered about 150 miles southeast of Mexico City and registered about 6.5 on

BUILDINGS ROCKED FOR OVER A MINUTE

the Richter scale — a jolt capable of doing severe damage — according to the U.S. Earthquake Information Center at Golden, Colo. Electricity and telephone service were interrupted in some parts of this capital city of 14 million people.

The quake struck at 10:55 New York time at the end of the morning rush hour. The Red Cross in Tuxtla Gutierrez, about 600 miles southeast of here, said the quake also was felt strongly there but said it was not yet known if any damage was done.

Office buildings in the center of town rocked on

their foundations and seemed to twist at crazy angles. Windows shattered and fell from some buildings. Motorists stopped their cars and got out.

Traffic lights went out in much of the center of the city, and the shock set off burglar alarms. Pedestrians threw themselves to the ground for protection.

The last major quake to hit Mexico City was in March 1979. It measured 7.0, killed four people and destroyed 150 homes.

Earthquakes are common in Mexico. Most originate in the Valley of Mexico, where Mexico City is lo-

ated, or on the "Circum-Pacific Fault" off the Pacific coast of Mexico.

Much of Mexico City is built on a drained lakebed, which accounts for the instability of the foundation of the area.

The Richter scale is a measure of ground motion as recorded on seismographs. Every increase of one number means a tenfold increase in magnitude. Thus a reading of 7.5 reflects an earthquake 10 times stronger than one of 6.5.

An earthquake of 6 can cause severe damage in the local area. A 7 reading is a

major earthquake capable of widespread heavy damage. 8 is a "great" quake, capable of tremendous damage.

The San Francisco earthquake of 1906, which occurred before the Richter scale was devised, has been estimated at 8.3 on the Richter scale.

NEW YORK POST, FRIDAY, OCTOBER 24, 1980

Quake Kills 54, Injures 400 in South of Mexico

By LEONARD GREENWOOD, Times Staff Writer

MEXICO CITY—A powerful earthquake struck southern Mexico Friday morning and by nightfall

reported in San Pedro Veloztlahuaca, but the Red Cross had no details.

The quake was felt as far away as Guatemala City, the capital of Guatemala 600 miles southeast of Mexico City, and in the Mexican gulf port city of Veracruz.

In Mexico City, thousands of people ran out of buildings into streets and parks when the quake struck with a strong swaying and wobbling motion for about two minutes. At the top of some taller buildings the whiplash effect was so strong it was hard to stand up without holding on to fixed objects.

There was some building damage in the Zona Rosa (Pink Zone) area that contains many of the hotels frequented by American tourists, but there were no reports of injuries there. Two Zona Rosa hotels, the Montecassino and International, were evacuated because of gas leaks.

Roads trembled visibly, tall trees along Mexico City's

rescue authorities had reported at least 54 dead and more than 400 injured.

Hardest hit was Huajuapam de Leon, a town of 45,000 people in the state of Oaxaca, about 150 miles southeast of Mexico City. The Red Cross said at least 30 people perished in Huajuapam de Leon in the collapse of a crowded public market building, two hospitals, the city hall, schools and scores of homes.

"We fear there are many more victims lying under the rubble," Alberto Grande, a Red Cross rescue

director, said. Grande said radio reports reaching Puebla, the area's nearest big city about 70 miles south of Mexico City, "tell us that at least 90% of Huajuapam de Leon is destroyed."

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"Total Devastation"

Eulogio Garcia, a Red Cross ambulance dispatcher, described the town as "a scene of total devastation."

Huajuapam de Leon is near the epicenter of the quake, which struck at 8:54 a.m., registering 6.4

on the Richter scale. It was felt in a broad belt across south-central Mexico and northern Guatemala.

Three deaths were reported in Mexico City, two of them from heart attacks. Five people died in Puebla and eight more were reported in two small towns not far from there.

Four students and a teacher were reported killed in the town of Tehuiztzingo, southeast of Mexico City, where a school building collapsed. Seventy other children escaped unhurt.

To the south, three deaths were

ground went up and down, then side to side." L. D. Edmanson of Giddings, Tex. said, "We were out here on Reforma hunting out a guide when all the buildings started shaking and cracking. We could hear the groans and were hoping no windows would fall on us. None did. I was watching two buildings side by side. They were about two feet apart normally but as they began to sway they got closer, then farther, but didn't touch."

Most modern construction in Mexico City is designed to withstand earthquakes, which are common here. Seismologists say small quakes are almost a daily happening but are too light to be felt.

The last major quake to hit Mexico City was in March 1979. It measured 7 on the Richter scale, killed four persons and destroyed 150 houses.

Los Angeles Times, October 25, 1980

Buildings Fall — Thousands Flee in Panic

Mexico City

A long and powerful earthquake rocked poverty-stricken south central Mexico yesterday, shattering buildings as far away as Mexico City and killing at least 55 people.

The quake was felt as far south as Guatemala City, but there were no injuries reported in the Guatemalan capital.

In Mexico City, where 700 persons were killed, buildings swayed, ceilings fell and fire hoses ruptured, spreading fire. Thousands of tourists and residents fled their hotels and offices in panic.

Marie Gomez of Hayward said she was sitting in her 11th-floor room of a Mexico City hotel when the chair began to sway. I remembered that people told me to get into a doorway in case of an

earthquake, so I did and prayed to God it would stop shaking.

Most of the casualties, including at least 200 injured, were in the state of Oaxaca.

The hardest-hit town appeared to be Huajuapam de Leon, near the quake's epicenter — 150 miles southwest of Mexico City — where officials said a market, a church, a hotel and part of the town hall had collapsed. Huajuapam — a town of 45,000 in Oaxaca — said 90 bodies were recovered from the rubble before they stopped work Friday night, and that 41 more bodies may be found.

A spokesman for the National Indian Institute, the public contact with Huajuapam said, the city's government hospital collapsed, while patients were in the building, causing an undetermined number of casualties.

Because roads in the town were blocked by landslides, helicopters were used to ferry the gravely injured to Oaxaca. The quake struck at 8:54 a.m. in the eastern city of Puebla for the state of intercollegiate athletic competitions. There were no injuries, but

Red Cross officials said 60 children were treated for injuries.

Local officials in the neighboring state of Puebla reported five deaths, including 30 children who were killed in the village of Tehuiztzingo, where the quake flattened 40 percent of the houses, and another three died in the hamlet of San Pedro Veloztlahuaca.

Red Cross officials said the quake destroyed about 70 percent of the village of San Mateo Coicaco, killing two people in the town 60 miles north west of Huajuapam.

They crushed to death when buildings collapsed in Puebla, officials said. Two others were injured.

The Tacubaya Earthquake Center said the quake, the second fatal tremor to rock Mexico in two years, measured 6.5 on the Richter scale. The U.S. Geological Survey in Golden, Colo., computed the quake's strength at 6.7 on the Richter scale while the Swedish Seismological Institute in Uppsala, Sweden, said its needles hit 7.1.

In Mexico City, three buildings collapsed, and others were damaged. The quake also ruptured

natural gas lines that triggered at least three fires, burst several water and sewage pipes and

dropped dozens of electricity and telephone lines.

Buildings swayed violently, sending people across rooms, as the quake struck at 8:52 a.m. It lasted three minutes and 17 seconds, making it one of the longest quakes in recent history, the Tacubaya Center said.

"You should have seen the things. They were moving from one side to the other, and I felt the floor was going to disappear from under my feet," said Cristian Socarras, a Miami tourist staying at a Mexico City luxury hotel.

A professor at the Metropolitan University in the eastern part of the city was seriously injured by a collapsing wall, and a student was trampled under stampeding students fleeing the building, school authorities said.

"Everybody was running out of the offices," said one American living in Mexico City. "Some women were praying, and one tourist hotel in the downtown area had a lot of people out on the street corner." San Francisco Chronicle Oct 25 1980

Police reported several collapsed ceilings, balconies and stairways in tall buildings in the downtown sector of the capital, which sits over a dry lake bed.

The walls are all cracked. Things were falling down, and the closest door was banging and banging," said Robert Harris, a Briton who lives in an apartment building in the heart of the capital.

The United Press International notes on the top floors of an 11-story building in downtown Mexico City swayed almost one foot on either side of the vertical line at the height of the tremor, one of the strongest felt in the city since July of 1979.

The quake also was felt in the tourist resort city of Acapulco on the Pacific Coast, but as a gentle tremor that caused no casualties or damage.

It was the second fatal quake in Mexico in two years. On March 13, 1979, nine people were killed in another quake in Mexico City. The worst quake in recent Mexican history occurred on Aug. 25, 1977, when more than 500 persons were killed.