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 Huajapan de Leon 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 Huajapan de Leon, said.

Buildings Destroyed

Red Cross teams from Puebla arrived in Huajapan de Leon on Friday afternoon and found about 90% of the buildings in the town destroyed.

The force of Friday's quake was measured at 8.5 on the Richter scale. Huajapan de Leon, 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 state. 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 roads, toppled 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

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

When the earth stopped moving a minute later, 10 of this town's 14 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 had 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, 33, recalled when he saw the cloud rise over Huajapan de Leon.

Ramirez said he walked eight hours from neighboring Nochistlan to Huajapan de Leon 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." He said he lost his house and said he probably would go higher as search teams probed the ruins of demolished buildings.

About 80% 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 small 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 medical 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 this remote mountain region 120 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 service.

Beatriz Elizalde, owner of a restaurant here, said the tremor came swiftly, "It hit the boiler and the boiler exploded." The cash register fell and went through the floor," she said. "It hit the boiler and the boiler exploded.

Mexican government sends aid to cities stricken by temblor

by Victoria Morales
Associated Press

Guadalupe de Leon, Mexico— Thousands of dazed and homeless refugees wandered 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.
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 injuring buildings in Mexico City. It was the second major earthquake in a week, and officials said it was the strongest in recent memory.

The Richter scale — a tool used to measure earthquake magnitude — was set at 7.5 on the scale, indicating a strong tremor. The tremors were felt as far as 200 miles away, shaking homes and causing panic in the streets.

The quake struck at 10:55 a.m. local time, and was centered about 150 miles southeast of Mexico City. It was the second major quake in a week, and officials said it was the strongest in recent memory.

The quake was felt as far as 200 miles away, shaking homes and causing panic in the streets.

Buildings were damaged, power was knocked out, and people were injured. The official death toll in Mexico City is 30, with 180 injured.

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The San Francisco earthquake of 1906, which occurred before the Richter scale was devised, had been estimated at 8.6 on the scale.

The New York Post
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 24, 1990

**Quake Kills 54, Injures 400 in South of Mexico**

By LEONARD GREENWOOD

**Los Angeles Times**

A powerful earthquake struck southern Mexico today, killing 54 people and injuring 400. The quake was felt as far as 200 miles away, shaking homes and causing panic in the streets.

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Mexico City, the capital of Mexico, was the most affected, with 30 deaths and 180 injuries reported. The city's buildings were damaged, power was knocked out, and people were injured.

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