

Thousands homeless after Solomon quakes

by UPI

HONIARA - Three earthquakes in the space of three days have struck the Solomon Islands, leaving several dead and thousands homeless.

The first two earthquakes, which struck Monday, caused a 30-foot tsunami that completely flooded the towns of Gizo and Noro, Novosti reported Wednesday. The death toll currently stands at 32, with scores of others reported missing.

A spokesman for the Solomon Islands government said up to 5,400 people have been left homeless and in urgent need of food, water and shelter by the quakes and tsunami, the BBC reported. However, he said rescuers may not be able to reach them until Friday.

Kevin McCue, director of the Australian Seismological Center, told Australia Radio that quakes of a magnitude of up to 7.5 are likely to continue to hit the islands in the upcoming days.

"This region typically has double earthquakes -- (there have been) six sets of them since 1907," he said.

Australian Defense Minister Brendan Nelson said the islands would receive all the assistance Australia can give, the BBC reported.

"It seems at the moment that supplies are required and we will fly those out: these are medical, food, water, and other forms of necessary supplies and equipment to support the Solomon Islanders," he said.

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