

# HAITI EARTHQUAKE

On January 12, 2010 a 7.0 Magnitude earthquake struck Haiti at 4:53am local time. The focus of the earthquake occurred on the boundary region between the Caribbean and North American tectonic plates at approximately 8 miles below the surface. This earthquake is reportedly the most devastating in this region in over a century. Though actual numbers associated with the destruction of infrastructure and loss of life have yet to be declared, much of the country and its capital, including the National Palace, are literally in ruins and “the international Red Cross estimated 45,000 to 50,000 people were killed in Tuesday’s cataclysmic earthquake, based on information from the Haitian Red Cross and government officials” (*J. Katz and T. Lush, Associated Press*).

A paper presented during the 18th Caribbean Geological Conference in March 2008 in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic warned that an earthquake of this magnitude could occur in the region. Due to the proximity to plate boundaries, this is seismically a very active location.

In fact, this is not the first time a major earthquake has struck the Caribbean. According to the United States Geological Survey, a dozen major earthquakes measuring Magnitude 7.0 or greater have struck the Caribbean in the past 500 years.

The last major earthquake near the island of Hispaniola (where Haiti is located) was a Magnitude 8.0 in 1946 which triggered a tsunami that left 20,000 people homeless.

The United States Geological Survey provides information concerning the geology of the earthquake including details, a summary, maps, scientific and technical data, and additional information. USGS also provides excellent educational material on the geological mechanisms behind earthquakes.

I encourage you to support relief efforts in the Haitian region by donating to a reputable organization such as the Red Cross.

Source: <http://adventuresingeology.com/2010/01/14/haiti-earthquake/>