

Government of Ecuador confirms at least 14 deaths after earthquake



The earthquake was felt in several provinces, although its effects were greater in El Oro, Azuay, Guayas and Chimborazo. | Photo: EFE?

Quito, March 19 (RHC)-- The president of Ecuador, Guillermo Lasso, has reported the deaths of at least 14 people in that country as a result of the 6.5 magnitude earthquake that affected areas in the south of the country on Saturday.

The president confirmed the death toll during a press conference to announce his government's actions to address the situation created by the earthquake. The number of victims was previously specified in a preliminary report of the National Secretariat of Risk Management (SNGR).

Lasso detailed that 11 people died in El Oro and one in Azuay. He added that there are injured people who are being treated in health centers. He explained that destroyed homes are registered in those provinces and that he will go to El Oro, an area he considered most affected. He said he would travel accompanied by the Minister of Government, Henry Cevallos, and the Secretary of Risk Management, Cristian Torres.

In addition to El Oro, significant damages were reported in Azuay, Guayas and Chimborazo. The earthquake was also felt in the provinces of Loja, Manabí and Zamora Chinchipe. The Ecuadorian president called an extraordinary meeting of the Emergency Operations Committee (COE), which was held in the city of Guayaquil, Guayas province.

In addition, he asked the SNGR to evaluate the situation in Balao canton, considered the epicenter of the earthquake, and called on the population to be informed through official channels.

According to a statement issued by the COE, several facilities of Petroecuador (Marítimo Balao, Chorrillos, Monteverde, La Libertad and Depósito La Toma Loja terminals) have not registered any news. The Esmeraldas-Quito pipeline stopped as a precaution, but resumed operations shortly thereafter. Guayaquil and Cuenca airports are also operating.

The Geophysical Institute reported that the earthquake occurred at 12H11 local time, at a depth of 44 kilometers and its center was located 29.12 kilometers from Balao (Guayas), with a population of about 30,000 inhabitants. Shortly after, another earthquake of magnitude 4.8 was registered at a depth of 24 kilometers.

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