

Chile Recovering: What Was and Wasn't Hit

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Corporate Meetings and Incentives

http://meetingsnet.com/corporatemeetingsincentives/news/chile_earthquake_0201/

Following a massive earthquake February 27 that measured 8.8 on the Richter scale and killed more than 700 people, many Chileans are slowly recovering basic essential services such as water and electricity. Relief supplies from the United Nations began arriving on March 1. On March 2, the government imposed a 9 p.m. to 6 a.m. curfew because of looting.

Turismo Chile, the country's tourist organization, issued a press release March 1 offering detailed information on how Chile's tourism infrastructure was affected.

According to the release, the cities closest to the quake's epicenter were Concepcion, Talcahuano, and Temuco. Many small towns along Chile's central coast also were most affected.

Here are specific updates from the five tourism regions promoted by Turismo Chile:

Santiago and Central Region The Santiago International Airport suffered structural damage to the passenger terminal; however, no damage was reported to the runways. The airport is expected to return to its full operating schedule by March 6. Electricity and phone lines have been restored in Santiago, and the city's public transportation, including its metro, is fully operational.

Valparaiso and Viña del Mar have also reported damage. The annual Viña del Mar International Music festival, which was under way, has been suspended.

Lakes and Volcanoes: The northern part of the Lakes and Volcanoes region, around the city of Concepcion and the Bio Bio River, was most affected by the quake. Authorities are still working on assessing the full damage. Basic essential services including water, electricity, and telecommunications are gradually being restored.

The southern part of the Lakes and Volcanoes region was not affected by the quake. Operations in popular tourist towns, including Pucon, Puerto Varas, and Puerto Montt, are normal.

Desert: The north of Chile was not affected by the quake and has not reported any damage.

Easter Island: Easter Island, which lies 2,300 miles off the coast of mainland Chile, a 5.5-hour flight from Santiago, was not affected by the quake. Initial tsunami warnings have been lifted and all operations are normal.

Patagonia: The far south of the country was not affected by the quake and has not reported any damage.

Chile is a country with a history of seismic activity, the press release stated. "The country's preparedness, including its strict anti-seismic building codes, the rapid emergency response from the government, as well as the help from a number of organizations can be credited for managing the situation and minimizing the damage. The country's tourism infrastructure has, overall, fared well, reporting little damage."

Pablo Moll, executive director of Turismo Chile, said, "Our thoughts and sentiments go out to the families who have lost loved ones. Chileans are a resilient people and we are hard at work to get the country back on its feet quickly. We look forward to continuing to welcome travelers and are making every effort to making them feel safe and secure."

For more information see:

<http://www.travelpulse.com/Resources/Editorial.aspx?n=68085>