

Central Italy earthquake case study

Information

What?

A 6.2 magnitude earthquake hit a mountainous region in central Italy.

Where?

The epicentre of the earthquake was close to the small town of Accumoli in central Italy. The town of Amatrice, 50km from the epicentre, suffered much damage. The tremors were felt all over Italy.



When?

The earthquake hit on Wednesday 24th August 2016, at 3.36am.

Why?

This area of Italy sits near to a plate boundary between two tectonic plates, the African and Eurasian Plates.



What were the short-term effects?

- Two-thirds of the buildings in the town of Amatrice collapsed, including religious buildings, homes, shops and schools.
- Roads and bridges were destroyed.
- 297 people were killed and 386 were injured.
- Rescue workers searched for survivors in the rubble.
- 4800 people were made homeless.

What were the long-term effects?

- Rebuilding was promised by the Italian prime minister, Matteo Renzi.
- Architect, Renzo Piano, was employed to lead a project called the 'Casa Italia' to rebuild buildings that would withstand any future earthquakes.
- Renzo Piano told Dezeen architecture and style magazine that the laws needed to change. *'We have to act quickly, with the utmost urgency. Anti-seismic [anti-earthquake] requirements must be inserted in the laws of the country to make our homes safe, just as it's compulsory for a car to have brakes that work.'*
- In 2018, two years after the earthquake, residents who had been affected by the earthquake were angry that very little rebuilding had been done, there was still rubble in the streets and people were living in temporary accommodation. The government said it would take at least 10 years to rebuild the devastated towns.



Accounts

Sophia Romano, resident of Amatrice

'I was woken by the noise of my wardrobe rattling against the wall. Then, my bedroom ceiling started cracking, lumps of plaster started to fall onto my bed and the floor started to shake. I knew immediately that it was an earthquake because I had experienced one a few years before but this seemed much worse. I grabbed my children and we ran out of the house onto the street. People were screaming and I was very frightened.'

Francesco Greco, rescue worker

'Inside the town, we saw complete devastation. Whole streets were filled with rubble and the buildings that were still standing were so badly damaged they would have to be pulled down. We worked on a large pile of rubble next to a house that had been almost cut in half by the tremor. We could hear shouting coming from under the rubble so we dug down. Eventually, we reached a ten-year-old girl. We pulled her out alive. Other survivors cheered. It gave us a small glimmer of hope.'

Elena Alfonsi, earthquake survivor

'My family have been living in temporary accommodation since the earthquake happened in 2016. We feel very angry that the government have not rebuilt our homes yet. We all went to Rome to protest about the slow pace of reconstruction. We are worried that young people will give up and move away, so our towns will never recover.'





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Amatrice before the earthquake





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Amatrice before the earthquake





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Amatrice after the earthquake





Amatrice after the earthquake

