

Greek Orthodox Church leaders express their condolences for victims of the earthquake that rattled the island of Samos and the Aegean



Archbishop Hieronymos of Athens and All Greece expressed his deep sorrow for the two young victims of the earthquake that rattled the island of Samos and the Aegean on Friday, in a statement to Athens-Macedonian News Agency (ANA-MPA).

The archbishop said that he has spoken with Samos Metropolitan Evsevios to express his full support and to offer the metropolitan the social services of the archdiocese's charity "Apostoli".

In a related development, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew said the patriarchate “during these trying times for the two neighboring peoples of Turkey and Greece is praying for the souls of our fellow beings who lost their lives and for the return to health of those injured” at the earthquake that struck both Samos and Izmir. The patriarch said he had also communicated with Samos Metropolitan Evsevios and Izmir Metropolitan Bartholomew.

Archbishop Elpidophoros of America wrote on Twitter in English, Turkish and Greek: “Our prayers are with all those affected by the earthquake that struck both Greece & Turkey, especially Samos and Izmir. Natural disasters remind us that we’re all human beings, and the suffering of one is the suffering of us all. May God grant mercy, comfort, and relief to all.”

Two children died when a wall fell on them on the island of Samos on Thursday, the first reported Greek casualties of an earthquake that registered 6.7 on the Richter scale midday on Friday.

The earthquake, that killed at least 12 people in the Izmir area of Turkey, injured over 400 (as of early evening) and caused extensive damage to buildings, struck at 13:51 in the sea region 16 km north-northwest of Samos, the Geodynamic Institute of the National Observatory of Athens said.

A girl and a boy were returning from school in Vathy when the earthquake struck, causing the collapse of the first floor of a building they were walking by.

The Fire Brigade pulled the children out of the rubble.

The strong quake recorded in the sea northwest of the island of Samos earlier on Friday was felt in all the islands of the Dodecanese and especially the more northern islands, where many of the residents of Patmos, Kos, Kalymnos, Agathonissi fled from their homes.

It was a very shallow earthquake close to the surface (latest estimate at 2 km) and was felt throughout Greece, the president of Greece’s Earthquake Planning and Protection Organisation Professor Efthymios Lekkas said on Friday, after the strong tremor near Samos, adding that there was a warning for a small tsunami.

He advised people not to panic, noting at the same time that “earthquakes as a event always worry us.”

Health Minister Vassilis Kikilias said that all hospitals, health centres and emergency aid centres on Samos and Ikaria have been put on full alert in the wake

of the strong earthquake that shook the region. In a tweet on Friday, he said that special search and rescue teams are on their way to Samos.

Deputy Civil Protection Minister Nikos Hardalias is on Samos, being briefed on the impact of the strong earthquake in the region and coordinating the actions of the state to assess the damages and take measures against the possibility of major aftershocks.

The airport of Samos reopened earlier than originally announced on Friday afternoon and the general secretary of the Infrastructure and Transport Ministry, Giorgos Karagiannis, and a team of civil engineers were on the island to assess the damage to the island's infrastructure.

A teenager and an adult living on Samos who were injured during Friday's earthquake are being airlifted to Athens hospitals, the Ministry of Health said.

A boy, 14, with compound fractures and a woman, 63, with cheekbone fracture and a partially ruptured spleen, were injured when an earthquake measuring 6.7 on the Richter scale shook the eastern Aegean.

In an update on Friday evening, authorities said that another 7 people hospitalized at Samos General Hospital were out of danger, while 10 people were treated at the Health Center in Karlovasi and discharged.

All health centers on the island remain on high alert.

PM's condolences to children's families

Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis expressed his sadness over the death of two children on Samos during the earthquake on Friday.

In a tweet, the premier said, "Words are not enough to describe what one feels at the loss of children. During such tough times, our thoughts are with their families and their unbearable pain on the suffering island of Samos. I express my most sincere condolences."

EU, NATO, WHO and several countries express solidarity & offer help

The European Union, NATO and WHO expressed their support to Greece and Turkey

following the earthquake

The heads of the European Commission, its chief of Foreign Affairs, the European Council, the European Parliament, and the Council of Europe, along with the NATO secretary general, all expressed their condolences to the families of victims and said they were prepared to help in any way needed.

Several European and Balkan countries also expressed their condolences and offered their help, while the World Health Organization said it was following developments in both countries closely. WHO's chief said that the organization will work with Greece and Turkey to ensure that emergency medical help is provided to all who need it.

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