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10 Years after the Indonesian Tsunami

On December 26, 2004 a megathrust earthquake and subsequent tsunami off the coast of Sumatra, Indonesia resulted in the deaths of ~230,000 people in fourteen countries surrounding the Indian Ocean. The 9.1 magnitude (M_w) earthquake is the third largest seismic event recorded using modern seismology and one of the most deadly natural disasters in human history. The Sumatra-Andaman event or Boxing Day Tsunami as it would become known highlighted the clear and present danger coastal communities along major seismic zones worldwide face on a day to day basis.

In the past decade, new advancements in the science and the hazard policy related to tsunami generating earthquakes have been made in order to try and prevent another such tragedy in the future. There has been an increase in instrumentation, in international cooperation, and in data sharing to improve detection and warning capabilities (NOAA, 2014). Additionally in Puerto Rico, the 2004 tragedy has led to improved tsunami inundation maps, improved local education through programs such as Tsunami Ready, and improved preparedness of the government and other monitoring agencies to respond to similar seismic events in our region.

Despite these improvements it is important for both locals and visitors to understand how to respond to a tsunami alert. When visiting coastal regions know whether you are in a tsunami zone by consulting the maps available on various agency websites (e.g. PRSN_Tsunami_Maps) and/or by looking for tsunami zone signs. Also be aware of the signs of an impending tsunami and move to higher ground if you observe these signs. For more information on these signs and how to respond to them see the Tsunami Ready Program website.

Tsunami... go to high ground, don't hang around!

For More Information on the Sumatra-Andaman Event:

<http://earthquake.usgs.gov/earthquakes/eqarchives/poster/2004/20041226.php>

For More Information on Tsunamis and Tsunami Ready:

Tsunami Ready - <http://redsismica.uprm.edu/English/tsunami/index.php>

PRSN Tsunami Maps - <http://redsismica.uprm.edu/English/tsunami/mapas.php>

NTWC - <http://wcatwc.arh.noaa.gov/>

NOAA (2014), NOAA Tsunami Program: Advancements on Future Plans

http://www.nws.noaa.gov/com/weatherreadynation/files/tsunamis_nowandthen.pdf