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At least two dozen feared dead in Samoan islands

Wednesday, September 30, 2009

Update: 12:16PM AT least two dozen people were feared dead in Samoa and American Samoa with many more injured after an 8.3 magnitude quake and tsunami hit the island group, TVNZ reported.

It said more than a dozen people were feared dead in Samoa, including at least three children, while at least 14 people were reported killed in American Samoa.

This report from TVNZ:

Officials on Samoa said an undetermined number of people had been killed or injured.

Samoa police have confirmed that villages on the country's southern coast had been hardest hit.

Worst affected was the island of Upolu, where at least two villages were flattened.

A resident of one of the villages, Theresa Falele Dussey, told Radio New Zealand her house has been destroyed by the tsunami, as were houses and cars in a neighbouring village.

She has been evacuated to Mt Vaea near Apia. "We just thanking God that we're alive," she said.

New Zealand tourist Graeme Ansell said the beach village of Faofao on Upolu Island was levelled.

"It was very quick. The whole village has been wiped out," Ansell told National Radio from a hill near Samoa's capital, Apia.

"There's not a building standing. We've all clambered up hills, and one of our party has a broken leg. There will be people in a great lot of need 'round here."

The powerful quake jolted people awake.

In Apia, families reported shaking that lasted for up to three minutes.

"It was pretty strong; it was long and lasted at least two minutes," one resident told local radio.

"It's the strongest I have felt, and we ran outside. You could see all the trees and houses were shaking," he said.

TVNZ said the Red Cross and media reports put the death toll at at least 28, while the ABC said it could be as high as 40.