

Mystery Unfolds: Ongoing Earthquake Swarm Shakes Greek Island

Description

For the past three weeks, Dionysia Kobaiou has been grappling with the mounting anxiety and stress experienced by her students on the Greek island of Amorgos, which has tremored under the strain of thousands of earthquakes. Following a directive from Greek authorities, she has transitioned to remote teaching after schools on Amorgos, its more renowned neighbor Santorini, and several adjacent islands were closed until at least February 21.

Some of her pupils have expressed uncertainty about whether they should seek refuge under their beds during tremors. "It mirrors the experience we endured during the COVID-19 pandemic," Kobaiou remarked to AFP. However, she noted that during the crisis of 2020-2021, "we could remain indoors and shield ourselves from the virus, whereas now we are constantly apprehensive about the next aftershock."

Seismic Swarm

From January 26 to February 14, over 19,200 quakes were documented in the vicinity of the Cyclades archipelago, as reported by the University of Athens seismology laboratory. Amorgos and three other neighboring islands have entered a state of emergency pending resolution by March 11. Just recently, a 5.1-magnitude quake was recorded off Amorgos.

An aerial view of the port of Katapola, Amorgos

An aerial view of the port of Katapola on the Greek island of Amorgos, Aegean Sea, February 14, 2025. (Angelos Tzortzinis/AFP)

Despite the absence of casualties or significant structural damage, the persistent tremors, while diminishing in frequency and severity, continue to confound scientists. The island, accessible only by a lengthy winter ferry ride from Piraeus, has seen its 1,900 permanent residents largely remain, with only a few departing for professional or health-related reasons, as stated by Mayor Lefteris Karaiskos. Meanwhile, thousands have evacuated Santorini.

The island's cafes and taverns remain shuttered during winter, and amidst the picturesque whitewashed chapels, life in the tranquil alleys is now characterized primarily by the chirping of frogs and the antics of kittens. Many tremors have been too weak to perceive, yet a notable 5.3-magnitude quake on February 10 sent residents into a frenzy, even being felt as far away as Athens.

With fatigue beginning to set in, one resident remarked on the anxious atmosphere while expressing relief regarding the recent decrease in tremor strength. As precautionary measures in the state of emergency, additional rescue personnel have been deployed from the mainland.

A woman steps out of a house in Amorgos

A woman emerges from her residence in Amorgos, Aegean Sea, February 15, 2025. (Angelos Tzortzinis/AFP)



Reflecting on past earthquakes, locals reminisced about the catastrophic tremor of 1956, which registered between 7.5 and 7.7 on the Richter scale and was followed by a devastating tsunami. The memory evokes a shared apprehension among residents, with one elder recalling, "There was no information to guide us back then; we were utterly terrified. We do not wish to experience such devastation again."

As seismic activity persists, Amorgos, surrounded by six fault lines, is enhancing its monitoring systems to deepen understanding of this occurrence. In the serene countryside, livestock amble as usual, although shepherds note that their flocks appear more skittish amidst the constant tremors.

At the Chozoviotissa Monastery, perched on a cliffside, only the rumbles of the earth disrupt the tranquility of the two monks and a volunteer who have embraced a solitary existence through winter. "If we must evacuate, this is the optimal spot for a swift exit to the tranquility of the heavens," mused volunteer Constantin Papakonstantinou, gesturing toward the expanse of the Aegean below. However, a burgeoning concern looms over the islands, which rely heavily on the influx of tourists during the summer months, as one local cautioned, "Let us not dissuade visitors; we need them to return this summer!"

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Vocabulary List:

1. **Tremor** /'trem.ə/ (noun): A small or minor earthquake.
2. **Apprehensive** /,æp.rɪ'hɛn.sɪv/ (adjective): Feeling anxious or fearful about the future.
3. **Evacuate** /ɪ'væk.ju.eɪt/ (verb): To remove people from a place for safety.
4. **Seismic** /'saɪz.mɪk/ (adjective): Relating to earthquakes or other vibrations of the earth.
5. **Catastrophic** /,kæt.ə'strɒf.ɪk/ (adjective): Involving or causing sudden great damage or suffering.
6. **Tranquility** /træŋ'kwɪl.ɪ.ti/ (noun): The state of being calm and peaceful.

Comprehension Questions

Multiple Choice

1. How many earthquakes were documented in the vicinity of the Cyclades archipelago from January 26 to February 14?

- Option: Over 15,000
- Option: Over 18,000
- Option: Over 19,000
- Option: Over 20,000



2. What magnitude quake was recently recorded off Amorgos?

- Option: 4.5
- Option: 5.1
- Option: 5.5
- Option: 6.0

3. How did locals describe life in the tranquil alleys amidst the tremors?

- Option: Vibrant
- Option: Serene
- Option: Chaotic
- Option: Irritated

4. How many fault lines surround Amorgos?

- Option: Three
- Option: Four
- Option: Five
- Option: Six

5. What Richter scale magnitude was the catastrophic tremor of 1956?

- Option: 6.0 - 6.5
- Option: 6.5 - 7.0
- Option: 7.0 - 7.5
- Option: 7.5 - 7.7

6. What disrupts the tranquility at the Chozoviotissa Monastery?

- Option: Loud birds
- Option: Chiming bells
- Option: Rumbles of the earth
- Option: Tourist chatter

True-False

7. Dionysia Kobaiou transitioned to remote teaching due to volcanic eruptions.

8. Amorgos is accessible only by a lengthy winter ferry ride from Santorini.

9. There have been casualties as a result of the recent earthquakes on Amorgos.



10. The taverns on Amorgos are open and bustling during the winter season.
11. Shepherds have noticed their livestock acting normally amidst the constant tremors.
12. The volunteer at the Chozoviotissa Monastery believes it is a swift exit to the tranquility of the heavens.

Gap-Fill

13. The state of emergency on Amorgos is pending resolution by _____ 11.
14. The memory of the 1956 tremor evokes _____ among residents.
15. The tranquility in the serene countryside is now disrupted by the constant _____.
16. Tourists influx to the islands heavily during the _____ months.
17. Residents are continually apprehensive about the next _____.
18. The island is surrounded by _____ fault lines.

Answer

Multiple Choice: 1. Over 19,000 2. 5.1 3. Serene 4. Six 5. 7.5 - 7.7 6. Rumbles of the earth

True-False: 7. False 8. False 9. False 10. False 11. False 12. True

Gap-Fill: 13. March 14. shared apprehension 15. tremors 16. summer 17. aftershock 18. six

Vocabulary quizzes

Multiple Choice (Select the Correct answer for each question.)

1. What is the primary goal of mitigation in disaster management?
Option: A. Increase the damage
Option: B. Reduce the impact
Option: C. Delay the response
Option: D. Intensify the situation
2. Which type of white blood cells are the most abundant in the human body?
Option: A. Monocytes



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- Option: B. Lymphocytes
Option: C. Basophils
Option: D. Neutrophils
3. What is a common symptom of Parkinson's disease?
Option: A. Fever
Option: B. Tremor
Option: C. Rash
Option: D. Headache
4. Which term best describes a natural disaster with severe consequences?
Option: A. Mild
Option: B. Catastrophic
Option: C. Average
Option: D. Insignificant
5. Which term is used to describe something that introduces new ideas or methods?
Option: A. Traditional
Option: B. Innovative
Option: C. Conventional
Option: D. Outdated
6. What does it mean to scrutinize something?
Option: A. Ignore
Option: B. Examine closely
Option: C. Jump to conclusions
Option: D. Disregard
7. Which term refers to the mental action or process of acquiring knowledge and understanding?
Option: A. Perception
Option: B. Cognition
Option: C. Emotion
Option: D. Intuition
8. What is the molten rock material beneath the Earth's surface called?
Option: A. Lava
Option: B. Granite
Option: C. Magma
Option: D. Sediment
9. If a soil is said to be enriched what does it contain in higher amounts?
Option: A. Nutrients
Option: B. Toxins



Option: C. Water

Option: D. Sand

10. What term is used to describe estimates or forecasts of future events?

Option: A. Reflections

Option: B. Projections

Option: C. Memories

Option: D. Revisions

Gap-Fill (Fill in the blanks with the correct word from the vocabulary list.)

11. _____ is the body's response to injury or infection often characterized by redness swelling heat and pain.

12. _____ of cells can result in altered behavior or function.

13. _____ waves are vibrations caused by earthquakes.

14. The sound of gentle waves and the sight of a peaceful landscape can evoke a sense of _____.

15. Being able to _____ potential risks can help in developing effective risk management strategies.

16. Each artist has unique _____ that can be identified in their works.

17. The _____ of a situation can change rapidly requiring adaptability.

18. Stock prices are subject to _____ in response to market conditions.

19. His _____ love for music has been evident since childhood.

20. Maintaining _____ during exams is crucial for good performance.

Matching Sentences (Match each definition to the correct word from the vocabulary list.)

21. During a hurricane residents may need to leave their homes and move to safer locations.



22. Feeling nervous or fearful about an upcoming test is common among students.
23. The robot functions without direct human control.
24. The ability to accept differences in opinions and beliefs is a sign of maturity.
25. Combining information from various sources is essential for effective decision-making.
26. After the company's losses a change in strategy led to a remarkable turnaround in profits.
27. An individual can accurately judge the quality of products or services.
28. The study of galaxies stars and other celestial bodies falls within the realm of science.
29. The process of water turning into ice is an example of
30. These white blood cells are the first responders to sites of infection or injury.

Answer

Multiple Choice: 1. B. Reduce the impact 2. D. Neutrophils 3. B. Tremor 4. B. Catastrophic 5. B. Innovative 6. B. Examine closely 7. B. Cognition 8. C. Magma 9. A. Nutrients 10. B. Projections

Gap-Fill: 11. Inflammation 12. Reprogramming 13. Seismic 14. Tranquility 15. Anticipate 16. Signatures 17. Dynamics 18. Fluctuations 19. Enduring 20. Concentration

Matching sentence: 1. Evacuate 2. Apprehensive 3. Autonomously 4. Tolerance 5. Synthesizing 6. Reversal 7. Discerning 8. Cosmic 9. Crystallization 10. Neutrophils

CATEGORY

1. Sci/Tech - LEVEL5

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