

Earthquake in LEDCs Sichuan earthquake in 2008

To have more informations and photographs, you can check this website

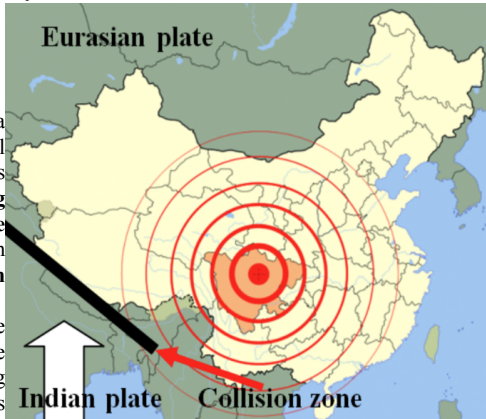
[BBC News - Sichuan 2008: A disaster on an immense scale](#)

The Sichuan Earthquake - an example of an Earthquake disaster in an LEDC

The Sichuan earthquake was a catastrophic earthquake that full demonstrated the power that earthquakes have. It also showed how **poor building design and construction**, **large earthquake strength**, high population density and **shallow earthquake depth** can all combine to create a disaster.

The earthquake occurred because the pressure resulting from the Indian plate colliding with the Eurasian plate sent along the Longmenshan fault line that runs through Sichuan. It occurred at 2.28pm on the 12th of **May 2008**. The earthquake lasted 120seconds and reached 7.9 on the Richter scale.

The area is more rural (but still has a population of 43million people!) and is less developed than the highly prosperous areas located along China's Eastern coastline. A map of the affected area

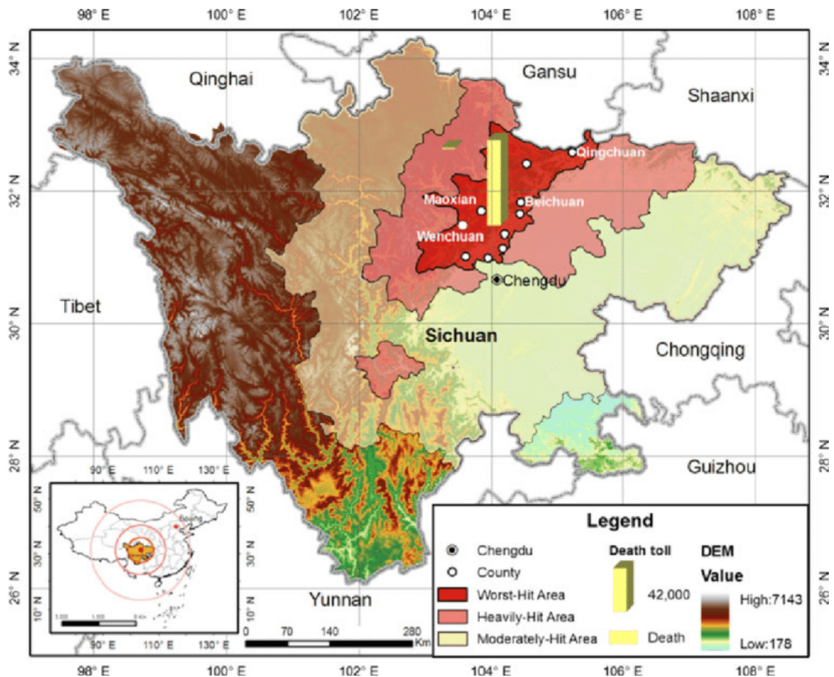


Initial **death tolls** ran at 8,700 but this eventually **rose to 69,000 with 18,000 people missing two months after the quake**. 374,000 people were injured and between **5 million and 11 million people were made homeless**. A total of **5 million buildings collapsed**; including a number of schools (Juyuan middle school in Dujiangyan city collapsed killing 900 pupils). Other impacts included that communications were brought to a halt and the cost of restoring infrastructure was put at \$75 million. Some areas were cut off by landslides and building collapses left rubble everywhere. In Shifang, chemical plants collapsed killing hundreds and releasing toxic ammonia.

Power and water supplies were cut and flooding occurred because landslides had blocked rivers. Indeed, some areas in Wenchuan had not been reached within 30 hours of the earthquake.

20 helicopters were assigned to rescue and relief efforts immediately after the quake. Troops were parachuted in to assess the situation, and others hiked in on foot. The army coordinated most of the relief effort. Big efforts were made to free people trapped in buildings, and land was flattened so that tents could be erected. One million small temporary homes will be built to house the homeless. The Vice governor of Sichuan hopes that the rebuilding will be complete in 3 years. The Chinese government pledged a \$10million rebuilding fund and banks wrote off debts of survivors who did not have insurance.

China requested international help 2 days after the quake. Teams from Japan, Russia and South Korea joined the rescue effort and over £100 million had been donated to the Red Cross in the fortnight after the quake. Much of this went into running the camps.



Map of the Sichuan Province: disaster loss levels and the death toll of the Wenchuan Earthquake. The Wenchuan County is the epicenter. The death toll in the worst-hit area accounted for 97% of the total number of deaths. At least 44% of the direct economic losses were from the heavily hit area, and nearly 40% were from the worst-hit area [source data: the National Commission for Disaster Reduction and the Ministry of Science and Technology of China (NCDR and MOST 2008)]