

The July 17, 2006 Tsunami Earthquake in West Java, Indonesia

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A tsunami earthquake ($M_w = 7.7$) occurred south of Java on July 17, 2006. The event produced relatively low levels of high-frequency radiation and local felt reports indicated only weak shaking in Java. There was no ground motion damage from the earthquake but there was extensive damage and loss of life from the tsunami along 250 km of the south coasts of Western and Central Java. An inspection of the area a few days after the earthquake showed extensive damage to wooden and unreinforced masonry buildings that were located within several hundred meters of the coast. Since there was no tsunami warning system in place, efforts to escape the large waves depended on the reaction of people to the earthquake shaking, which was only weakly felt in the coastal areas. This experience emphasizes the need for adequate tsunami warning systems for regions around the Indian Ocean.