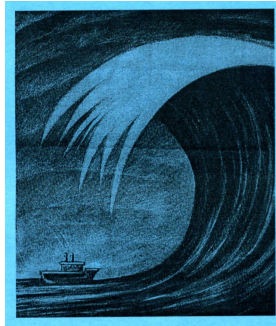


MASSIVE EARTHQUAKE & TSUNAMI HIT SOLOMONS ISLANDS



9 APRIL 07. Up to 7,000 people are homeless one week after a tsunami triggered by an 8.1 magnitude earthquake swept through the western Solomon Islands.

Many people have been afraid to return to their homes because of fears of another tsunami, the spokeswoman said. At least 39 people were killed when a wave several metres high hit the area.

Regular aftershocks have added to people's fears. Many people were still camping in the hills.

Many homes in the fishing and diving town of Gizo 45km from the epicentre of the quake, were destroyed or badly damaged by both the earthquake and the resulting wall of water. Many villages on outlying islands were badly damaged or entirely swept away by the tsunami.

QUAKE LIFTS SOLOMON ISLAND OUT OF THE SEA

The seismic jolt that unleashed the deadly Solomons tsunami lifted an entire island metres out of the sea, destroying some of the world's most pristine coral reefs. In an instant, the grinding of the Earth's tectonic plates in the 8.1 earthquake forced the island of Ranongga up three metres.

Submerged reefs that once attracted scuba divers from around the globe lie exposed and dying after the quake raised the mountainous landmass, which is 32-km long and 8-km wide. Corals that used to form an underwater wonderland of iridescent blues, greens and reds now bleach under the sun, transforming into a barren moonscape surrounding the island.

Locals on Ranongga said much of their harbour had disappeared. One said there were huge earthquake fissures which had almost split the island in half.

The damage to the coral reefs could dry up the region's major source of overseas money. The loss of the reefs was a huge blow for the fishing communities that are dotted along Ranongga's coast. The fish from the reefs are the major source of protein for the villagers.

PROPHECY

“And there will be ... upon earth despair among nations, with perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. Men's hearts will faint from terror, being apprehensive of what is coming upon the world; for the *very* powers of the heavens will be shaken.” (Luke 21:25-26)