



01 / TODAY'S EVENTS & THE SCIENCE

Why Freetown shook today

Residents around Youyi Building, Waterloo Street and Wellington Street reported light shaking following an offshore earthquake around midday. According to GDACS, a separate earthquake had occurred earlier that morning.

THE DAYTIME EVENT

12:23 p.m.**Magnitude 6.9**

About 1,200 km southwest of Freetown

EARLIER THAT MORNING

5:44 a.m.**Magnitude 6.7**

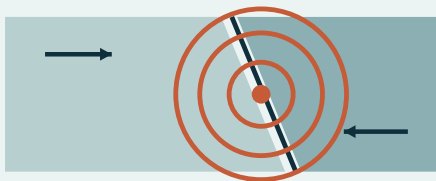
About 1,180 km southwest

There were in fact two events. Both events were on the Central Mid-Atlantic Ridge. Times are Freetown time (UTC); magnitudes and locations use USGS-linked GDACS records. Other agencies report different estimates, which may be revised.

What is an earthquake?

An earthquake is the sudden shaking of the ground when rock slips along a break called a fault. Stored energy is released as vibrations, or seismic waves, that spread through the Earth.

ROCK SLIPS; WAVES SPREAD



Illustration, not a view of today's fault

What causes the rock to slip?

The Earth's outer shell consists of slowly moving tectonic plates. Rock can get stuck while pressure builds; when it gives way, an earthquake occurs. Most earthquakes occur near plate boundaries, but some occur within plates.

Magnitude describes the event's size. How strongly you feel it depends on distance, depth and local ground conditions.

How are earthquakes linked to volcanoes?

01 A shared setting

Plate movement can produce earthquakes and create conditions for volcanoes.

02 Magma can cause shaking

Moving magma (molten rock underground) can crack rock and trigger earthquakes.

03 An eruption is not automatic

A quake can sometimes help trigger a volcano already close to erupting.

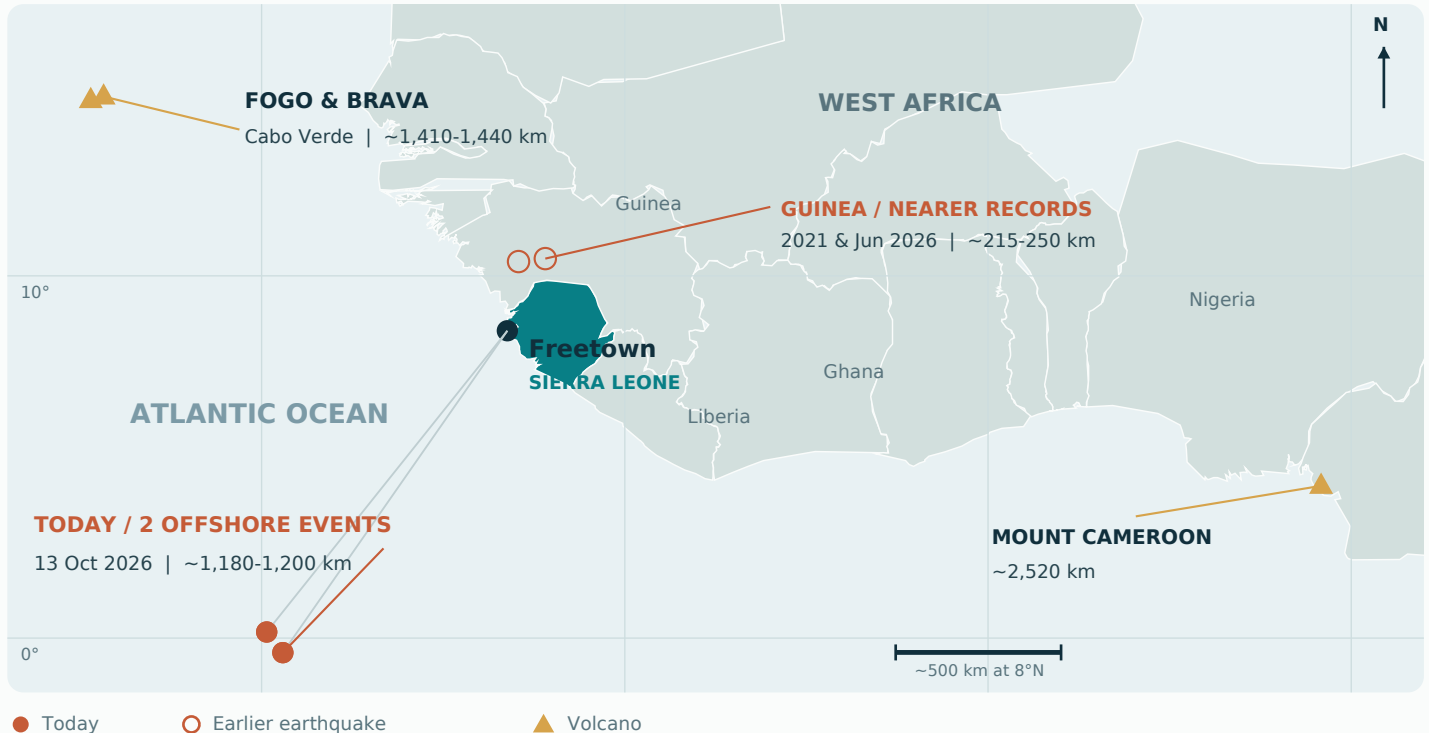
Today's earthquake records alone do not establish a volcanic eruption or a link to Fogo or Brava.



02 / NEARBY ACTIVITY, RISKS & CITIZEN ACTION

Sierra Leone in its regional setting

Selected earthquake records and active or potentially active volcanoes



Distances are from Freetown. Selected records, not a hazard map. Outlines: Wolfram; event and volcano locations: GDACS, EMSC and Smithsonian.

Sierra Leone lies on the African tectonic plate, away from the Mid-Atlantic Ridge where today's earthquakes occurred. Earthquakes also occur within plates: the Guinea events shown here were much closer to Freetown, about 215-250 km away. Fogo and Brava in Cabo Verde are among the nearest active or potentially active volcanoes, roughly 1,400 km northwest. Mount Cameroon is farther east. These volcanoes have no established connection to today's tremors, and the earthquakes alone do not indicate an imminent eruption.

What risks should citizens understand?

THE INITIAL ASSESSMENT

GDACS assesses both events as likely to have low humanitarian impact. This is an initial model assessment, not confirmation that every building is safe.

TWO DIFFERENT RISKS

Ground shaking: weak buildings can be damaged and debris can fall.
Tsunami risk: an offshore quake can cause a tsunami if it suddenly moves enough seawater. Many offshore quakes do not.

What citizens can do

1 DURING SHAKING

Drop, cover your head and neck, and hold on. Indoors, stay inside; outdoors, avoid buildings and wires.

2 AFTER SHAKING

Check for injuries. Keep clear of damaged structures. Report hazards and follow NDMA guidance.

3 STAY PREPARED

Secure heavy items. Keep basic supplies. Share verified updates; exact earthquake predictions are unreliable.

At the coast: strong or prolonged shaking, sudden unusual sea movement or a loud ocean roar are warning signs. Once safe to move, go inland or to higher ground; do not wait for a message.