

Flights continue as Morocco reels from earthquake

► Tourists fearful of aftershocks but UK Foreign Office steps back from warning against travel



Residents fled homes and rescuers were racing against the clock to find survivors after the earthquake. Photo: Jana Meerman



Nicky Harley

London

Sep 09, 2023



Listen In English



Listen in Arabic

Powered by automated translation

Follow the latest updates on the [Morocco earthquake](#)

Most airlines continued to fly to [Morocco](#) on Saturday, hours after [a powerful earthquake](#) struck the country.

Rescuers were racing against the clock to find survivors, as the death toll rose to more than 2,000 and at least 1,200 were reported injured.

It came as tourists, thousands from Britain, and residents were warned to expect days of aftershocks.

The magnitude 6.8 tremor, the most powerful in 120 years, happened late on Friday and damaged buildings – from villages in the Atlas Mountains to the historic city of Marrakesh.

READ MORE

[UAE Rulers offer condolences over deadly Morocco earthquake](#)

Marrakesh's Madina region, a Unesco world heritage site and the oldest part of the city, was particularly hit hard.

Flights were continuing to Marrakesh Airport on Saturday – with only two Ryanair flights cancelled.

The UK's Foreign Office refrained from warning against travel to the area.

“You should follow local media and safety instructions from local authorities,” it said.

The US Embassy took the same approach, but warned of aftershocks.

“Please exercise caution for the next 24 hours in case of additional earthquakes or aftershocks,” it said.



Homes damaged by the powerful earthquake in Amizmiz, Morocco. Reuters

British Airways sent a larger aircraft for its flight from Marrakesh on Saturday evening for tourists wishing to come home early.

It is also offering flexibility to passengers booked to travel in the next two weeks.

"The welfare of our customers is our priority, and we have contacted our British Airways Holidays customers in Morocco to check that they're safe," a BA representative said.

"We are continuing to monitor the situation closely, and customers due to travel to or from Marrakesh in the next two weeks can change their dates free of charge if they wish."



Residents flee their homes after the earthquake in Moulay Ibrahim village, near the epicentre. AP

Ryanair warned of the potential for further flight delays.

"There may be some potential delays and cancellations to/from Morocco today due the earthquake," it said.

"Affected passengers will be notified and passengers travelling to/from Morocco today should check their Ryanair app for flight updates before travelling to the airport.

"We apologise for any inconvenience caused to our passengers and offer out deepest sympathies to those affected."

EasyJet said it was continuing to operate as normal.

On Saturday, the UK joined the UAE and other nations in offering assistance to Morocco.

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said his thoughts were with everyone affected.

"The UK stands ready to support our Moroccan friends," the Prime Minister said, in a message that echoed that of Foreign Secretary James Cleverly.

Mr Cleverly pledged support in "whatever way we can".



A powerful earthquake struck Morocco late on Friday night, killing more than 1,000 people. AP

President Sheikh Mohamed said the people of the UAE stand "with the Kingdom of Morocco during this difficult time and wish a speedy recovery ahead to all those affected".

He ordered an "air bridge to deliver critical relief" to the country.

The epicentre of the earthquake was near the town of Ighil in Al Haouz province, about 70km south of Marrakesh.

French President Emmanuel Macron meanwhile said he was "devastated" by news of the quake and that "France stands ready to help with first aid".

Spain's Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez expressed his "solidarity and support to the people of Morocco in the wake of this terrible earthquake.

"Spain is with the victims of this tragedy," he said.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz sent a message of condolences.

"Our thoughts are with the victims of this devastating earthquake. Our sympathy goes out to all those affected," he said.

Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni said she "learnt with grief of the tragic toll" from the quake and emphasised "Italy's willingness to support Morocco in this emergency".