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## **8 EARTHQUAKES STRIKE ALONG IRAN-IRAQ BORDER**

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A series of eight earthquakes hit the Iran-Iraq border area and rattled Baghdad on Thursday, apparent aftershocks of a temblor that struck the mountainous region in November and killed over 530 people. Four people suffered minor injuries in Iran, state television reported.

The U.S. Geological Survey said seven of the quakes struck near the Iraqi city of Mandali, 120 kilometers (75 miles) northeast of the Iraqi capital. Mandali is right on the border between the two nations. The eighth hit near Mehran in western Iran, about 90 kilometers (55 miles) southeast of Mandali along the sparsely populated Zagros Mountains that divide Iran and Iraq.

All the earthquakes struck within an hour of each other, beginning at 0659 GMT. Six had a preliminary magnitude of at least 5, while two registered at magnitude 4. Scientists consider earthquakes of magnitude 5 as moderate.

Iranian authorities offered similar figures for the earthquakes on state television. All the information could change as scientists examine the data.

Iranian state television said online that people rushed into the streets as the temblors hit. In Baghdad, people felt a quake shake the Iraqi capital, followed by what felt like aftershocks.

All the earthquakes struck at a depth of 10 kilometers (6 miles), according to the USGS. Earthquakes at magnitude 5 can cause considerable damage. The temblors also all were very shallow, which causes more ground shaking and potential damage, particularly in places without strict building codes.

In November, a major 7.3 magnitude earthquake struck the same region, killing over 530 people and injuring thousands in Iran alone. In Iraq, nine people were killed and 550 were injured, all in the countrys northern Kurdish region, according to the United Nations.

Randy Baldwin, a geophysicist with the USGS National Earthquake Information Center in Golden, Colorado, said the earthquakes all appeared to be aftershocks from the November temblor.

That area is home to many shallow faults, he said.

Its ongoing activity there, Baldwin told The Associated Press. If there was a stressed fault thats ready to move, they happen like that until the stresses are relieved, so its not too unusual.

The November earthquake hit hardest in the Kurdish town of Sarpol-e-Zahab in the western Iranian province of Kermanshah, which is only 80 kilometers (50 miles) from where most of Thursdays

earthquakes struck.

The region, largely rebuilt in recent decades after Iran and Iraq's ruinous 1980s war, saw many buildings collapse or sustain major damage in the November quake. While Iranian government has offered loans for those affected to rebuild their homes, many still live in tents or temporary shipping containers-style homes and face the rains and cold of winter.

Iran sits on major fault lines and is prone to near-daily earthquakes. In 2003, a 6.6 magnitude quake flattened the historic city of Bam, killing 26,000 people.

Earlier on Thursday, the USGS said a magnitude 4.9 quake hit Iran's southern province of Kerman before dawn, while another 4.6 magnitude temblor struck Wednesday night in Kermanshah province. No injuries or damage were reported.

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Kaynak/Source: