

## **7 dead, hundreds rescued and injured as quake rattles Taiwan**

06/02/2016 18:13 by admin

**Tainan:** Rescuers raced to find survivors after a powerful, shallow earthquake struck southern Taiwan, collapsing a high-rise residential complex and killing at least seven people, sending scores to hospital and leaving about a couple dozen missing.

Rescuers pulled 247 survivors from the rubble in the worst-hit Tainan city. More than 1,200 firefighters scrambled with ladders, cranes and other equipment to the ruins of a 17-floor residential building that folded like an accordion in a pile of rubble and twisted metal.

Local media said the building included a care center for newborns and mothers, and a newborn was among the dead in the disaster, which came two days ahead of the Lunar New Year celebrations that are the most important family holiday in the Chinese calendar.

Most people were caught asleep when the 6.4-magnitude temblor struck about 4 am local time (2000 GMT Friday). It hit some 22 miles (35 kilometers) southeast of Yujing, and struck about 6 miles (10 kilometers) underground, according to the US Geological Survey.

"If first starting shaking horizontally, then up and down, then a big shake right to left," said Tainan resident Lin Bao-gui, a second-hand car salesman whose cars were smashed when the residential complex across the street from him collapsed.

"I stayed in my bed but jumped up when I heard the big 'bang' that was the sound of the building falling," he said.

The emergency response center said seven people were killed, including a 10-day-old infant, a small child and at least two other residents inside the high-rise. One death was caused by falling objects. No details were immediately available for the two additional deaths.

Rescuers pulled out 247 survivors, the emergency center said. Seventy-three people were sent to hospitals, the center said.

The Wei Guan residential tower was home to 256 people living in 96 units. According to the disaster response center, 230 of them were rescued and 26 unaccounted for, although it was unclear how many people were inside the building at the time of the fall.

The Taiwanese news website ET Today reported that a mother and a daughter were among the survivors from the Wei Guan building, and that the girl drank her urine while waiting for rescue, which came sooner than expected.

Dozens more people have been rescued or safely evacuated from a market and a seven-floor building that was badly damaged, the official China Central News Agency reported.

A bank building also careened, but no injuries were reported, it said.