

Jamaica Earthquake, May 2011

Event Briefing

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1 INTRODUCTION

A magnitude 4.7 earthquake struck the southwestern parts of Jamaica at 15:07:07 UTC on 16 May 2011. Initial estimates from the US Geological Survey locate the epicentre of the event at 17.897°N, 77.895°W and the provisional depth assigned to the event is 31.6 km. This location puts the event 62km south of Montego Bay and 117km west of the capital, Kingston.

The event was reportedly felt most strongly in Santa Cruz (at V on the Modified Mercalli Index, MMI) but also widely through western Jamaica at MMI IV (see Figure 1). This event was the latest tremor in a series of earthquakes to affect the island. Reports indicate that although the ground shook for several seconds, no extensive damage, injuries or deaths have been recorded.

In terms of damage, reports indicate that several buildings in New Kingston and downtown Kingston were evacuated and that several cracks were observed in buildings in the downtown Kingston area along the waterfront. The waterfront area in downtown Kingston is built on reclaimed land thereby making it particularly vulnerable to earthquake shaking.

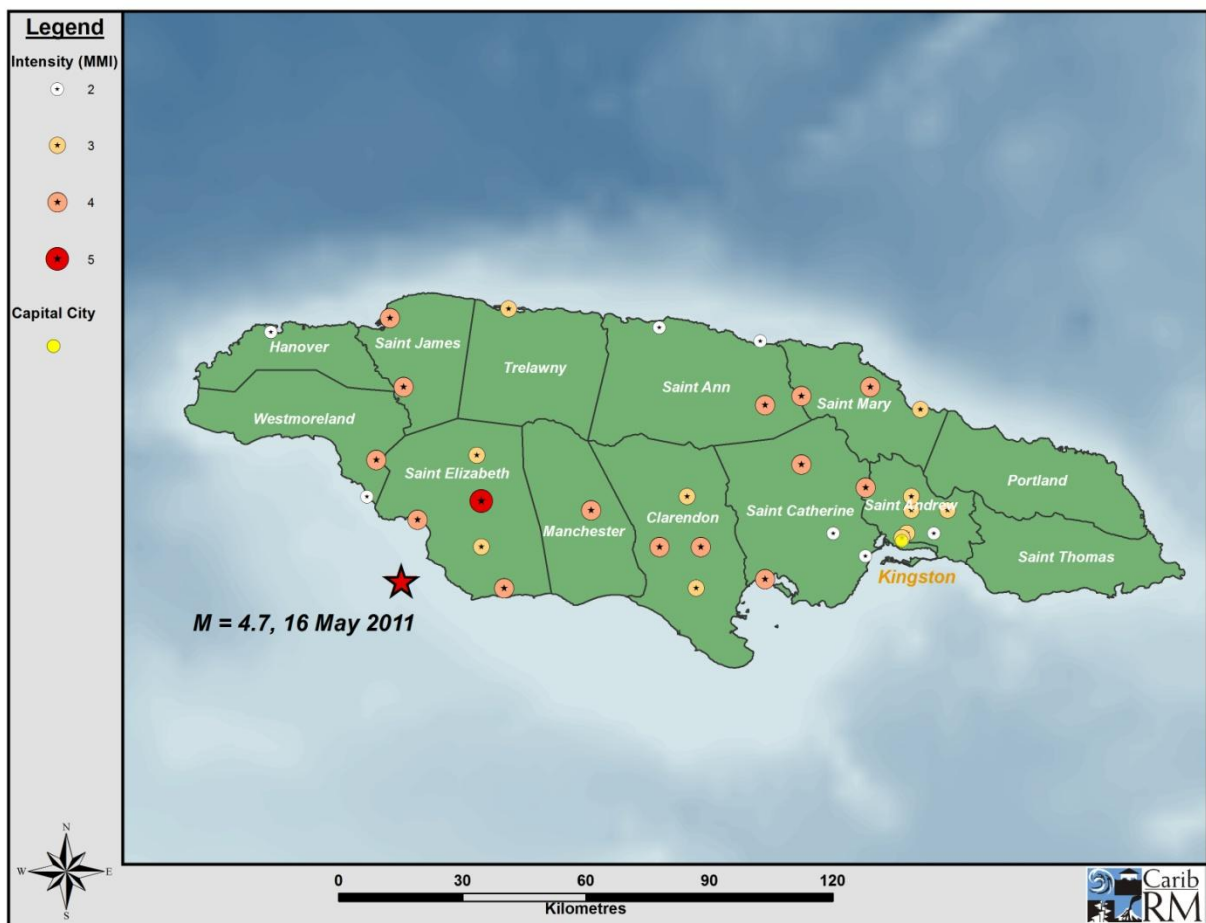


Figure 1

2 CCRIF COVERAGE

Although the magnitude 4.7 earthquake generated some government losses in the CCRIF model it did not trigger a payment from CCRIF. The loss generated was significantly below the attachment point on the policy.