

- Natural disaster (volcanic eruption / earthquake)

Hawaii's Kilauea volcano jolts with lava, quakes, gas

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Multiple new vents, from which lava is spurting out of the ground, formed in the same residential neighborhood where molten rock first emerged Thursday. At midday, a magnitude 6.9 earthquake struck — the biggest of hundreds of quakes this week and the largest to strike the state in 43 years. Residents were also warned to watch out for dangerous levels of sulfuric gas.

Hawaiian Volcano Observatory spokeswoman Janet Babb said the earthquakes reflected the volcano adjusting to the shifting magma.

“The magma moving down the rift zones, it causes stress on the south flank of the volcano,” Babb said. “We’re just getting a series of earthquakes.”

She said scientists were studying whether the quakes would affect the eruption.

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The lava lake at Kilauea’s summit crater dropped significantly, suggesting the magma was moving eastward toward Puna, a mostly rural district of forests, papaya farms and lava

fields left by past eruptions.

Officials ordered more than 1,700 people out of Big Island communities near the lava, warning of the dangers of spattering hot rock and high levels of sulfuric gas that could threaten the elderly and people with breathing problems. Two homes have burned.

Julie Woolsey evacuated her home late Thursday as a volcanic vent, or an opening in the Earth's surface where lava emerges, sprouted up on her street in the Leilani Estates neighborhood.

Lava was about 1,000 yards from her home, which Woolsey built on a lot purchased for \$35,000 11 years ago after living in Maui became too expensive.

"We knew we were building on an active volcano," she said, but added that she thought the danger from lava was a remote possibility.

She said she thought it was remote even days ago when she began packing and preparing to evacuate.

"You can't really predict what Pele is going to do," Woolsey said, referring to the Hawaiian volcano goddess. "It's hard to keep up. We're hoping our house doesn't burn down."

She let her chickens loose, loaded her dogs into her truck and evacuated with her daughter and grandson. She's staying at a cabin with her daughter's in-laws.