

Natural disasters in Macedonia

Earthquakes in North Macedonia

1555 Skopje earthquake



The Skopje earthquake of 1555 was the strongest between 518 and 1963 and caused devastation.

A significant part of Skopje was collapsed and the [Old Bazaar, Skopje](#) was severely damaged, as was the [Stone Bridge \(Skopje\)](#), on which four columns were either destroyed or seriously damaged. The earthquake also destroyed the murals in the upper parts of the [Church of Saint Panteleimon, Gorno Nerezi](#).

Consequences[\[edit\]](#)

As a result of the earthquake, Skopje has been almost completely renovated. Participants in [its burning in 1689](#) described it as the most important [Ottoman](#) city in the Balkans, comparable to [Prague](#) at the time. After being burned in 1689, for security reasons, it rose

up as his remake - [Moscopole](#), which was burned in 1769 because of complicity with the instigators of the [Orlov revolt](#).

1963 Skopje earthquake

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1963 Skopje earthquake



UTC time 1963-07-26 04:17:17

ISC event [872813](#)

USGS-ANSS [ComCat](#)

Local date July 26, 1963

Local time 5:17

Magnitude 6.1 M_w

Depth 6 kilometres (4 mi)^[a]

Epicenter	 42.10°N 21.40°E ^{[1][2]}
Casualties	<p>1,000–1,100 killed^{[1][3]}</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3,000–4,000 injured^{[4][5]} • 200,000 left homeless^[3] • 75–80% of city destroyed^{[6][7]}

The **1963 Skopje earthquake** ([Macedonian](#): Скопски земјотрес од 1963 година, [romanized](#): *Skopski zemjotres od 1963 godina*) was a 6.1 [moment magnitude](#) earthquake which occurred in [Skopje, SR Macedonia](#) (present-day [North Macedonia](#)), then part of the [SFR Yugoslavia](#), on July 26, 1963, which killed over 1,070 people, injured between 3,000^[4] and 4,000^[5] and left more than 200,000 people homeless.^[3] About 80 percent of the city was destroyed.^[3]



Facts

The earthquake, which measured 6.1 on the [moment magnitude scale](#), occurred on July 26, 1963, at 04:17 [UTC](#) (5:17 am [local time](#))^{[3][6]} in [Skopje, Socialist Republic of Macedonia](#), then part of [SFR Yugoslavia](#) (present-day [North Macedonia](#)). The tremor lasted for 20 seconds and was felt mostly along the [Vardar River Valley](#).[‡] There were also smaller aftershocks until 5:43.



First hours after the earthquake



Destroyed apartment in downtown [Skopje](#).



Members of the [US Army](#) 8th Evacuation Hospital in Skopje, Yugoslavia, following the earthquake in 1963. The unit was flown to the disaster site to provide medical care to the victims.



[Josip Tito](#) and [Nikita Khrushchev](#) in [Skopje](#) on 22 August 1963, one month after the earthquake.

Within a few days after the earthquake took place, 35 nations requested that the [United Nations General Assembly](#) place relief for Skopje on their list of agendas. The effort led to the implementation of a major urban and architectural reconstruction plan [urban master-plan of Skopje 1963](#). Relief, in the form of money, medical, and building teams and supplies was offered from 78 countries throughout the world. United States president [John F. Kennedy](#) ordered the [Department of Defense](#) and the [Agency for International Development](#) (USAID) to take actions for disaster assistance in Skopje by sending personnel, [prefabricated houses](#), [tent cities](#) and other forms of relief. Substantial relief also arrived from the [Soviet Union](#). Its leader, [Nikita Khrushchev](#), visited Skopje personally. As the [SFR Yugoslavia](#) was a member of the [Non Aligned Movement](#) during the [Cold War](#), the American and Soviet troops stationed in Skopje could freely shake hands for the first time since their [encounter on Elbe in 1945](#).

The first foreign journalist who arrived in Skopje to report on the earthquake was [David Binder](#) of [The New York Times](#). As he watched Skopje from the plane, he commented that the city looked like it was [bombed](#).

The United Kingdom-based charity [War on Want](#) organised a public appeal and contracted with UK engineer [Demetrius Comino](#) to provide Dexion building frame materials and personnel under Barto Stuart to enable the building of 1560 dwellings, enough for two complete villages, one of which was nicknamed Dexiongrad.^{[\[4\]\[15\]](#)} Dexion

belongs to the Skopje's [Municipality of Giorče Petrov](#).^[16] At the same time, the UK Government made a gift of 44 x 24 feet wide Nissen huts which the Yugoslav authorities used as six schools to be used in satellite suburbs until permanent schools could be established. The construction of these huts was under the supervision of a small detachment of nine Royal Engineers led by Lt Charles Brodley RE. Later, "War on Want" purchased sufficient huts to provide accommodation for 2,000 workmen engaged in the reconstruction of the city and the Engineer detachment was increased to 49 under the command of Captain SL Rooth RE.

In 1965, the Japanese architect [Kenzo Tange](#) was asked by the United Nations to enter a limited competition for the [redevelopment of Skopje](#), after which Tange won 60% of the prize while the Yugoslav team won the remaining 40%. However, Tange's plan for Skopje (one of his major works) remains partly implemented, specifically concerning the New Skopje Railway Station and the so-called City Wall.



From [John F. Kennedy Library](#): National Security Action Memorandum No. 267 Disaster Assistance for Skopje – NARA – 193638, written and signed on October 18, 1963 by president Kennedy's [national security advisor McGeorge Bundy](#)

As the city gradually began to recover, the need for revival of cultural life arose. The artist [Pablo Picasso](#) donated his painting Head of a Woman (1963), which was exhibited in the new post-earthquake [Contemporary Art Museum of Macedonia](#).^{[17][18][19]} The museum building was a donation from [Poland](#) and was designed by several Polish architects.^[20] The concert hall "Univerzalna sala" was built with donations from around 35 countries and its [prefabricated building](#) was made in neighbouring [Bulgaria](#).^[21] After the request of the [Federal Executive Council of Yugoslavia](#) the [Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs Rab Butler](#) informed the [House of Commons](#) of the [Parliament of the United Kingdom](#) on February 19, 1964 that the [Government of the United Kingdom](#) has approved new 500,000 [GBP](#) loan for reconstruction of Skopje.^[22]

Several streets and objects in Skopje were named in honor of the countries which helped in their construction and/or donated housing. For example, the government

of [Romania](#) donated the [polyclinic](#) medical center, which was named after its capital, [Bucharest](#). In [Karposh Municipality](#), there are soviet-donated [apartment buildings](#) called in [Macedonian](#): „руски згради“ (*ruski zgradi*, meaning "Russian buildings") and [Swedish](#) and [Finnish prefabs](#) called „шведски / фински бараки“ (*švedski / finski baraki*).^[13]

One example is Skopje's Mexico Street (улица Мексичка, ulica Meksička). It was officially named in honor of the country [Mexico](#) and a [memorial plaque](#) from the Mexican president [Adolfo López Mateos](#) was unveiled at the location. In 2012, the street's well-known resident, the rock musician [Vlatko Stefanovski](#) and his brother, the playwright [Goran Stefanovski](#) protested against the mayor's decision to rename several city streets, including Mexico Street. The Stefanovski brothers reminded people that the street they grew up on and where the Macedonian rock group [Leb i sol](#) was formed was built with donations from Mexico and argued that this act of solidarity must never be forgotten.^[23] The old name *Meksička* was brought back in February 2021 by the Skopje City Council.^[24]

Being rebuilt from ruins thanks to the relief from all around the world, Skopje is often referred to as "The City of International Solidarity", which is its motto.^[25]

One year after the 1963 Skopje earthquake, the first Yugoslavian Code for Construction in Seismic Regions (temporary code 1964), was prepared by a committee consisting of international and national experts.^[26]

Following the earthquake, [Josip Broz Tito](#), then-president of SFR Yugoslavia, sent a message of condolences to the [Socialist Republic of Macedonia](#) before visiting the city personally:^[10]

Together with all the people of Yugoslavia we will endeavour to mitigate the misfortune that has befallen your republic.

[Alberto Moravia](#), the major Italian novelist:

Skopje must not remain merely a newspaper report of its first sufferings, but must be the responsibility of all of us, of all men who today or tomorrow, through some similar new catastrophe, may become Skopians.

The philosopher [Jean-Paul Sartre](#):

Skopje is not a film, not a thriller where we guess the chief event. It is a concentration of man's struggle for freedom, with a result which inspires further struggles and no acceptance of defeat.

Floods in Macedonia

2016 Macedonian floods

2016 Macedonian floods	
Date	6-10 August 2016
Location	Republic of Macedonia
Deaths	21+

In August 2016, several rainstorms hit the western and northwestern parts of the [Republic of Macedonia](#). On 6 August 2016, a storm with strong winds and flooding hit [Skopje](#) and the western parts of the country, leaving at least 21 people dead and dozens injured or missing. [□]

Events

In the afternoon of 6 August 2016 at 5:30 pm [CEST](#), a heavy rain began falling in the area of the country's capital [Skopje](#), resulting in strong winds and floods. The rain was reported to have stopped around 9:30 am CEST the next day, with the peak of the storm in the middle of the night, around 3:30 am CEST. Macedonia's weather service reported that 93 litres per square metre (1.9 imp gal/sq ft) fell in two hours on Skopje, which is equivalent to the average for an entire month of August. The water level of some of the areas affected reached a height of 1.5 metres (4 ft 11 in), which was being combed by Macedonia's police and army for survivors and other victims. Meteorologists reported that more than 800 lightning strikes were recorded in the first two hours of the storm, which went on for about five hours in total. At least 21 people died, with dozens of others injured or missing. The local media reported that the ambulances were called 65 times in the city, more than 20 people were treated and the army were called in to help. Three villages to the northeast of the city were cut off due to landslides.

Reactions

The deputy prime minister [Nikola Todorov](#) called the storm a "catastrophe of unprecedented proportion". Mayor of Skopje [Koce Trajanovski](#) said that the city never experienced such a disaster. The government declared [state of emergency](#) and 8 August was declared national day of mourning.

Source: Wikipedia