

## THE INSTITUTION OF ENGINEERS, MALAYSIA

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# PRESS STATEMENT

23 February 2026

## 6.8 MAGNITUDE EARTHQUAKE NEAR SABAH



In the early hours of 23 February 2026, a 6.8-magnitude earthquake struck offshore near Sabah, less than 100 km northeast of Kota Kinabalu. Despite the strong magnitude, the quake occurred over 600 km below the surface, so most areas along the west coast felt only mild shaking.

Experts stress that magnitude alone does not determine damage.

Modern buildings were found to absorb the amount of movement experienced in this earthquake. Slight swaying in high-rises is normal and indicates that structures are performing as intended.

Tsunami fears are unfounded. Destructive tsunamis are typically triggered by shallow earthquakes that cause vertical displacement of the seabed; however, that mechanism does not apply in this case. Landslides on slopes after heavy rain are a more realistic secondary risk.

The Institution of Engineers Malaysia (IEM) advises:

*“An earthquake occurring at such a depth may pose minimal risk to well-constructed buildings. It serves as a reminder to uphold engineering standards, maintain building safety, and stay prepared and not to panic”.*

In addition to constructing earthquake-resilient buildings, simple measures such as securing furniture, maintaining an emergency kit, and establishing a family safety plan can significantly enhance overall preparedness and safety. Sabah’s 23 February quake is a reminder that understanding risk, sound engineering, and informed communities are the foundation of resilience.

**Ir. Prof. Dr. Jeffrey Chiang Choong Luin**  
President  
The Institution of Engineers, Malaysia (IEM)

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***For further information on this Press Release or  
The Institution of Engineers, Malaysia, kindly call the IEM Secretariat Office  
at 03-78900130 or email to [sec@iem.org.my](mailto:sec@iem.org.my).***

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### **About the IEM**

*The Institution of Engineers of Malaysia (IEM) is a civil society organisation established to promote the science and profession of engineering in any of its disciplines and to facilitate the exchange of information and ideas related to engineering. Founded in 1959 and with a membership of over 40,000 today, IEM constitutes one of the largest professional organisations in the country. Amongst its many roles, the Institution plays an active part in supporting various sustainable socio-economic development of the country and in nation building. It represents the aspirations of its members, acts in the best interests of the public of whom its members serve whilst upholding the standing and image of the profession.*