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From: Abedin, Huma <AbedinH@state.gov>
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To: H
Subject: Fw: Unconfirmed reports of fatalities after NZ quake (AP)

From: OpsNewsTicker@state.gov <OpsNewsTicker@state.gov>
To: NEWS-Mahogany
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Sent: Mon Feb 21 21:25:04 2011
Subject: Unconfirmed reports of fatalities after NZ quake (AP)

WELLINGTON, New Zealand - (AP) New Zealand's prime minister says details are "extremely sketchy" following a strong 6.3-magnitude earthquake that rocked Christchurch today.

Police say there are reports of multiple fatalities, but Prime Minister John Key told Parliament those reports haven't been confirmed.

Key says the quake struck at a time when people were at work and children were in school. He says he's aware of significant damage to buildings that had people in them at the time. He told lawmakers: "Sadly, I cannot rule out that there have been fatalities."

Live video footage shows collapsed buildings, including a church near the center of the city. Police say there's a report that two buses have been crushed by falling buildings, and that people are trapped in buildings.

NewsTickers alert senior Department officials to breaking news. This item appears as it did in its original publication and does not contain analysis or commentary by Department sources.