

# India not part of global warning system

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Thousands of lives could possibly have been saved if India and Sri Lanka had been part of a 26-nation group that operates an international tsunami warning system, say scientists of the US Geological Survey.

The US has its own warning centres in Hawaii and Alaska, but these are geared to monitoring occurrences of large seismic waves in the Pacific Ocean -- and not in the Indian Ocean, where Sunday's catastrophic tsunamis originated.

The international warning system can alert nations of potentially destructive waves some three to 14 hours before they hit the coast -- sufficient time to make people flee inland. But without wave sensors in the Indian Ocean region, there was no way to determine the

path of tsunamis.

Staffers at the US centres were aware of the grim possibility of tsunamis on Sunday following the massive earthquake, but they did not have a warning mechanism in this case.

"They were able to make contact, but they did not have the proper government officials to notify. They will be working on this in the future," Laura Kong, director of the International Tsunami Information Centre in Honolulu, has been quoted as saying in the American media.

According to Waverly Person of the US Geological Survey, most of the hapless victims could have been saved if only a tsunami warning system was in place

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