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Paper Abstract

On 26 December 2004, one of the largest earthquakes of the last 100 years occurred off the Indonesian coast, causing ground shaking over a wide region, and triggering a massive and destructive tsunami, which devastated the coasts bordering the Indian Ocean causing huge loss of life. Many parts of this coastline are popular holiday destinations and a large number of European tourists were in the region at the time, and as many as 4000 of these tourists may have been UK citizens. To find out more about the experiences of these tsunami eyewitnesses, supplementing data on the event assembled by reconnaissance teams, a study was carried out to locate and interview eyewitnesses. During the course of the research some 87 eyewitness accounts were obtained, and these have been assembled into a database from which some preliminary analysis has been made. This paper contains a summary of the project. It describes the methods used, gives extracts from the eyewitness accounts, provides some cross-regional analysis of the database and discusses the findings and their significance.