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## Ceremonies mark 20 years since the Boxing Day tsunami

**S**ir Keir Starmer has said that his thoughts are with the “millions of people who were affected” by the Boxing Day tsunami 20 years ago, as ceremonies were held in countries across Asia to remember those who died (Tom Ball writes).

Just before 8am on

December 26, 2004, a 9.1-magnitude earthquake struck just off the coast of the Indonesian island of Sumatra, causing waves up to 30 metres high.

The tsunami — the deadliest in history — killed 227,899 people, including 149 Britons, across 14 countries. Indonesia, where



about 130,000 people were killed, was worst hit, with Sri Lanka and Thailand also badly affected.

Nearly 300 people were killed as far away

as Somalia, east Africa, and more than 100 in the Maldives.

“Today marks 20 years since the devastating Indian Ocean tsunami that

took the lives of so many,” the prime minister said. “My thoughts are with those who lost loved ones and the millions of people who were affected by the

disaster, as well as all those who helped with the recovery.”

A series of memorials were held yesterday in Indonesia’s Aceh province around the

Tributes were held in Bengal Bay, India, left, and among bereaved relatives in Thailand, far left

mass graves where many of the victims were buried. In the village of Ulee Lheue, where more than 14,000 unidentified tsunami victims were buried, mourners prayed and laid flowers.

In Sri Lanka, where more than 35,000 people died, survivors and relatives gathered to remember 1,000 victims killed when waves derailed a passenger train. The mourners boarded the restored Ocean Queen Express and travelled to Peraliya, where the train was ripped from the tracks.

Many foreign tourists were holidaying over the Christmas period on the region’s white-gold beaches when the tsunami struck. Among them was Graham Bromilow, a retired architect from Devon, who survived by clinging to a palm tree in a Thai resort.

“When you’ve experienced something like this, there are no words for it afterwards, Bromilow, 77, said. “It’s like a quiet scream inside.”