An earthquake shook Venezuela's capital and nearby states Saturday, injuring 14 people and causing damage to a few buildings. The quake, the strongest in the South American nation in years, hit at about 3:40 p.m. local time (2010 GMT), authorities said. It also knocked out power in several regions.

Almost two thirds of the urban population of Caracas live in the barrios which are built on unstable hillsides surrounding the seismically active Caracas Valley.
The earthquake offshore of Venezuela occurred at a shallow depth as a result of oblique right-lateral strike-slip faulting.

The tectonics of this area are dominated by the eastward motion of the Caribbean plate with respect to the South American plate, at a rate of approximately 20mm/yr. However, there is a small component of compression of this boundary.

The motion along a strike-slip fault is parallel to the strike of the fault surface, and the fault blocks move sideways past each other.
Puerto Cabello is a coastal town just south of the earthquake location. It is the closest town to the earthquake (35 km / 25 miles from epicenter).

Witness: "I was not sure at the beginning. The table started shaking and shaking, it was evident that it was an earthquake, the floor moved one side to the other, the lamps too, I heard people start to panic"
The earthquake epicenter was off Venezuela's Caribbean coast 65 miles (110 kilometers) west of the capital city of Caracas. Over two million people live in Caracas. There was only minor damage, but the damage was compounded by significant rains that the region had received recently.
The region surrounding the September 12th event is known to be seismically active, and has hosted strong earthquakes in the past; previous damaging earthquakes include an M6.5 quake in July 1967 that caused approximately 240 fatalities, and an M5.4 quake in May 1989 which made more than 2000 people homeless near Puerto Cabello.

There have been close to 29 aftershocks (smaller than magnitude 4) following this earthquake.
Magnitude 6.4 OFFSHORE VENEZUELA
Saturday, September 12, 2009 at 20:06:25 UTC

Seismogram recorded at UPOR (Portland, Oregon)

Distance:
~ 58 degrees
(6400 km / 4000 miles)

It took the P wave approximately 10 minutes to travel to the recording station

The S wave arrived to Portland 8 minutes later

The surface waves arrived about 6 minutes after the S waves

Wave Path Animation
An animation of the wave paths from the earthquake epicenter off the northern coast of South America to UPOR in Portland, Oregon