



Colombia Emergency Response

SitRep. #1

Reporting period: 10 – 17 August 2026

Country of reference: Colombia

2026

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1. KEY FIGURESⁱ

The following figures represent developments recorded following the 10 August 2026 earthquake, and are updated as of 14 August 2026:



287
Fatalities



3,975
People injured



378
Missing persons



13,077
Homes destroyed

2. OPERATIONAL CONTEXT

Colombia is facing a **large-scale humanitarian emergency** following the **7.4 magnitude earthquake** that struck San José del Palmar, Chocó, on 10 August. The earthquake and subsequent aftershocks have affected hundreds of municipalities across western Colombia. Damage to infrastructure is extensive, as 2,486 educational facilities, 238 health centres and 16 water systems have been affected.ⁱⁱ

The most severe impacts are concentrated in Valle del Cauca, Chocó, Risaralda and Caldas, although damage extends across a much wider area of the country. **Thousands of homes have been damaged or destroyed**, leaving affected households in need of shelter and basic assistance. Disruptions to electricity, water supply, healthcare and connectivity are restricting access to essential services, while damage to transport infrastructure is **compounding the isolation of remote communities and complicating the delivery of assistance**.

The full scale of humanitarian needs is **still emerging**, particularly in harder-to-reach communities, as significant information gaps persist.ⁱⁱⁱ CESVI's ongoing rapid needs assessment is providing an increasingly comprehensive picture of the scale and severity of needs across the communities assessed,^{iv} with findings highlighting **significant and overlapping impacts on housing, livelihoods, protection and psychosocial wellbeing**:



100% Households reporting **housing damage**, of which **56% severe**, 33% moderate and 11% minor.

41% Households reporting their home as uninhabitable.

80% Households reporting that at least one member requires **emotional or psychological support**; **68%** identified remaining in damaged or unsafe housing as a **protection risk**.

56% Households reporting loss of furniture or household items; **32%** lost work tools or equipment and **23%** food.

81% Households whose income-generating capacity was partially or completely affected; **77%** reported at least one member stopping work or reducing working hours.

82% Households that would use cash assistance for minor housing repairs; **49%** need capital to restart an income-generating activity and **47%** need work inputs or materials.

3. CESVI RESPONSE STRATEGY

CESVI, under the coordination and support of the Emergency Unit at HQ level, has **activated its emergency response capacity in Colombia**, with initial operations focused in **Quibdó, San José del Palmar, Sipí** and **Litoral del San Juan**, in Chocó and **Buenaventura**, in Valle del Cauca.

The response builds on CESVI's established presence in the country since 2019 and operational experience across Santa Marta, Barranquilla and Buenaventura, where CESVI has worked with vulnerable and conflict-affected communities through humanitarian and development interventions covering protection, WASH, shelter, food security, CVA and livelihoods. This experience has built **strong territorial networks, knowledge of local communities and operational capacity**, enabling the immediate mobilisation of an experienced emergency team and the rapid deployment of needs assessments in earthquake-affected communities.

CESVI's response will be **targeted, time-bound and focused on the most vulnerable and remote communities**, with **Chocó as the primary geographic focus**, given the more limited presence of humanitarian actors and the compounded effects of the **earthquake, armed conflict and multidimensional poverty**. Targeted interventions will also be considered in Buenaventura, Valle del Cauca. Rather than concentrating assistance in major urban centres, where a significant mobilisation of humanitarian actors is expected, CESVI will prioritise **harder-to-reach areas** where existing vulnerabilities and access constraints risk leaving affected households with fewer opportunities to receive timely assistance.

The table below outlines CESVI's main sectors of intervention:

Sector	Objective	Response timeline & Key activities
 MPCA	Ensure vulnerable households can meet immediate food and essential needs while supporting local market recovery where feasible.	<i>Immediate (months 0-3):</i> Three monthly cycles of MPCA or in-kind assistance, according to market functionality and access.
 Shelter & Housing Recovery	Restore minimum safe and dignified living conditions for earthquake-affected households.	<i>Immediate (months 0-3):</i> Distribution of hygiene and shelter items to improve conditions and dignity in temporary and informal shelters, alongside the adaptation of suitable community spaces for emergency shelter. One-off cash transfers for minor repairs and basic household recovery, for homes verified as safe and repairable.
 Protection & PSS	Support the psychosocial wellbeing and protection of affected households and strengthen coping and resilience.	<i>Integrated throughout the response:</i> Psychosocial support addressing grief and stress, referral pathways where required, with protection, AAP and PSEA mainstreamed across activities.
 Livelihoods & Economic Recovery	Restore sources of income and reduce the risk of prolonged dependence on humanitarian assistance.	<i>Early Recovery (months 2-6)</i> Restart capital, business planning and mentoring, financial education and inclusion, market linkages and, at a later stage where viable, access to microcredit.

4. CESVI IMMEDIATE RESPONSE CAPACITY

1. **Rapidly deploy an experienced emergency team**, leveraging CESVI's **existing operational base and strong territorial network** to conduct immediate needs assessments and reach affected communities.
2. **Identify and prioritise underserved communities**, leveraging CESVI's experience with vulnerable and conflict-affected populations to target remote areas of Chocó and Buenaventura where humanitarian coverage is expected to be more limited and needs risk being unmet.
3. Mobilise **internal emergency funds** to launch immediate life-saving assistance while leveraging CESVI's institutional partnerships and donor coordination to **scale up towards larger humanitarian interventions**.



IN DETAILS:

- **Geographic reach and immediate access:** In Colombia, CESVI maintains an **operational base, an experienced emergency team and strong territorial networks** and is establishing **Quibdó as the main field base for the response**. CESVI will leverage experience built through several years of operations in the region to **fast-track the response**, enabling teams to be rapidly deployed and affected communities to be reached, particularly in remote and underserved areas.
- **Rapid needs assessment capacity:** Within the **first 48–72 hours of the emergency**, CESVI initiated a **mixed-method rapid needs assessment** in Buenaventura (Valle del Cauca) and four locations in Chocó (Quibdó, San José del Palmar, Sipí, and Litoral del San Juan). The assessment has since progressively expanded, helping to **identify priority locations and appropriate response modalities**, while continuing to **generate critical information from remote and hard-to-reach communities** where visibility remains limited.
- **Direct, immediate implementation of life-saving assistance:** CESVI has already **mobilised internal emergency funds** for the initial response, enabling the rapid expansion of needs assessments between 15 and 17 August and the **launch of distributions** from 17 August.
- **Flexible and context-adapted response capacity:** CESVI can **adapt assistance according to market functionality, access and needs** in each location, combining MPCA where markets and payment mechanisms remain functional with in-kind or mixed assistance where supply constraints make cash less effective. This flexibility enables assistance to remain effective across locations with significantly different market and access conditions.
- **Humanitarian coordination and partnership capacity:** CESVI is coordinating with **sectoral clusters and working groups, national and international NGOs and Alliance2015 partners^v**

to ensure a complementary response, avoid duplication, and maintain a specific focus on remote and underserved communities.

- **Collaboration with the government and local authorities:** CESVI is coordinating with government, local authorities and community structures across the areas of intervention, including:
 - **Quibdó** - *Gestora Social* and *Primera Dama*; *Defensa Civil Colombiana*; ICBF (*Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar*).
 - **San Jose de Palmar** – Mayor; Community Council; President of the Local Council; Fire Department Commander.
 - **Litoral de San Juan** – Association of Community Councils; *Enlace de Víctimas*.
 - **Buenaventura** – Mayor's Office; *Secretaría de Despacho*; *Secretaría de la Mujer*; Presidents of the Community Action Boards (*Juntas de Acción Comunal* – JAC) in Comunas 1 and 12.

5. MAIN CHALLENGES AND OPERATIONAL CONSTRAINTS

- **Humanitarian access to remote communities:** In parts of Chocó, dense jungle and limited infrastructure make affected communities difficult to reach, potentially delaying needs assessments and the delivery of assistance. Damage to transport infrastructure, fuel shortages, and temporary disruptions to regional airports complicate the movement of humanitarian personnel and relief supplies.
- **Ongoing seismic activity and infrastructure instability:** Aftershocks continue to pose risks to affected communities and humanitarian responders. Further seismic activity may weaken already damaged structures, increase humanitarian needs and complicate ongoing response operations, requiring continued adaptation as conditions evolve.
- **Pre-existing vulnerabilities in priority response areas:** In priority areas, earthquake impacts are intersecting with pre-existing poverty, exclusion and exposure to armed conflict, while disruptions to household income are further reducing families' capacity to meet essential needs and recover independently.



6. CALLS FOR ACTION

Timely and flexible support will be critical to ensure that the most vulnerable and hard-to-reach communities are not left behind. Immediate assistance is needed to stabilise affected households, while early investment in housing and livelihoods will be essential to prevent earthquake impacts from further eroding already limited coping capacities. CESVI calls on all stakeholders to support a **rapid, targeted and scalable response**, capable of adapting as assessments progress and needs evolve.

■ Donors should:

- Provide **immediate and flexible funding to enable a rapid scale-up** of the humanitarian response in line with the evolving needs on the ground.
- Support a phased response linking immediate humanitarian assistance with early recovery.
- Enable **context-adapted assistance modalities**, including cash, in-kind and mixed approaches, so that support remains effective across areas with significantly different market and access conditions.

■ Private sector actors should:

- Mobilise **financial resources, technical expertise and market opportunities** to complement humanitarian assistance and support the recovery of households.
- Engage businesses, financial institutions and commercial networks in **restoring livelihoods and reconnecting affected entrepreneurs with markets**, helping households move from emergency assistance towards sustainable economic recovery.

■ National and local authorities should:

- Facilitate **safe, rapid, and unhindered humanitarian access** to affected communities.
- Support the **restoration of essential services, transport and connectivity** and strengthen information-sharing with humanitarian actors to facilitate timely assistance.

■ The international community should:

- Strengthen coordination efforts to ensure **underserved and hard-to-reach areas are reached** effectively.
- Support collective humanitarian efforts to address urgent unmet needs.

7. NOTES

ⁱ These figures were found on <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/colombia/colombia-flash-update-006-update-impact-earthquake-colombia-august-14-2026> as of 14/08/26.

ⁱⁱ <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/colombia/colombia-flash-update-006-update-impact-earthquake-colombia-august-14-2026>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://reliefweb.int/report/colombia/colombia-flash-update-003-actualizacion-afectaciones-por-terremoto-en-13-departamentos-de-colombia-11-agosto-de-2026>

^{iv} As of 16 August 2026, the assessment covered Quibdó, San José del Palmar, Sipí and Litoral del San Juan/Santa Genoveva de Docordó in Chocó, as well as Buenaventura in Valle del Cauca. In Quibdó, data collection included the areas of Santa Ana, Nuevo Sol, Las Palmas and Simón Bolívar. The assessment included **364 household surveys** conducted with informed consent and **23 structured field observations**, complemented by community consultations and triangulation with other sources.

^v CESVI is a member of Alliance2015, a strategic network of seven European NGOs collaborating on humanitarian and development action to enhance the reach and effectiveness of their interventions.



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