

Alert note

Colombia Earthquake
August 10th, 2026.

Completed by: Florian Stodolny, Jessica Nipp Hacker

Date completed: 14/08/2026

Forum: Colombia

Type of emergency: Large: Earthquake 7.4 Magnitude (Mw) intra-slab earthquake

Date of emergency (if rapid onset): 10/08/2026 – 7:34COT.

Funding Survey

If the forum indicates a plan to launch an appeal, we request funding members to please fill out this [survey form](#) which will help the **Emergency Steering Committee** assess the funding environment for this response. Please respond to this survey *within 24 hours of Alert publication*.

1. The nature of the emergency:

Massive 7.4 Magnitude (Mw) intra-slab earthquake. A sudden tectonic rupture within the subducting Nazca Plate at an intermediate depth of approximately 110 kilometres beneath the South American Plate. The earthquake struck on August 10, 2026, at 07:34 COT. Subsequent severe aftershocks (up to 5.0 magnitude) have continued through August 12, 13, 2026, causing further structural degradation.

2. The impact and scale of the emergency (please include your source of information with links if possible).

Based on initial assessments by HEKS/EPER and LWF field teams and information from OCHA, the Shelter and WASH Clusters, and the National Unit for Disaster Risk Management (UNGRD), the earthquake is classified as a **large-scale emergency requiring immediate national and international intervention**.

- The **epicentre** was located in Chocó, approximately 20 km from San José del Palmar, with impacts extending across western and central Colombia, particularly **Chocó, Caldas, Risaralda and Valle del Cauca**. The epicentre area is characterized by dense jungle, river-based transport, high poverty, limited state presence and complex security dynamics involving armed groups.
- **At least 284 people have been confirmed dead and more than 3,977 injured**. An estimated **10.5 million people experienced strong to very strong shaking**, with approximately **360,000 people affected nationwide**. Indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities are among those particularly vulnerable.
- **Structural damage is significant**, with approximately **12,584 buildings destroyed and 74,873 partially damaged** as of 14 August. Continued aftershocks and housing damage are expected to cause further displacement.
- Impacts are particularly severe in **Chocó**, with significant damage also reported across **Caldas, Risaralda and Valle del Cauca**, affecting housing, health facilities, schools, roads and other critical infrastructure. **Rural and hard-to-reach communities** face additional challenges due to limited access, damaged infrastructure and reduced availability of essential services.
- **Short-term consequences** include unsafe living conditions, limited access to water and sanitation, untreated health needs, livelihood losses and disease risks. **Longer-term impacts** include displacement, disrupted livelihoods and education, reduced healthcare access and heightened protection risks, particularly in conflict-affected and remote areas.

Sources: 3is Dashboard and its referenced sources https://3is.org/emergenciaslatam/terremoto_choco/

i. Local and national capacity

Communities have activated informal search-and-rescue efforts and local support networks, but coping capacities remain particularly limited in remote and rural areas, with many households sheltering outdoors or with relatives. Health facilities are under significant pressure, with over 100 reportedly affected by structural damage, while transport and airport disruptions constrain the movement of people, supplies and humanitarian personnel. The Government has declared a **National Disaster Emergency**, mobilized military, police, engineering and search-and-rescue capacities, and formally requested international assistance. UN agencies, NGOs and other international actors are supporting the response, particularly in **health, shelter, WASH, emergency relief and logistics**. National coordination is led by **UNGRD**, complemented by UN sectoral mechanisms and OCHA-supported local coordination forums.

ii. Key needs and gaps

Urgent needs include **food security, shelter, basic household items and protection from the elements** for households whose homes are destroyed or unsafe, as well as support to the **temporary IDP camps emerging in affected areas**, including shelter materials, hygiene supplies, basic WASH infrastructure and other essential items as well as interventions in **Protection**, especially child-based and VBG. **Health and critical infrastructure** require immediate support to maintain essential services, with around **215 health facilities and more than 2,100 schools reportedly damaged**, alongside needs for rehabilitation of health centres, schools and other community infrastructure. **Access and logistics** remain major constraints, particularly in rural areas affected by landslides, damaged roads and disrupted communications, making riverine and alternative transport essential. Immediate **primary healthcare and MHPSS** are also needed, particularly for children, women and older persons. While urban areas are receiving assistance, especially in central areas, **significant gaps persist in remote communities and emerging IDP sites**.

Please indicate whether you are considering:

	Indicate your intention with an X below
Rapid Response Fund (<i>intended for small and medium scale emergencies</i>)	
Appeal (<i>intended for large scale emergencies</i>)	X

If you indicate an intention to launch an appeal, the secretariat will activate an Emergency Steering Committee meeting within two working days on receipt of this alert.

iii. Forum Capacity and members intention to respond (*Please refer to your EPRP and Contingency Plan, you can add rows if needed*)

ACT Member	Geographical focus	Sectors of expertise and experience
HEKS/EPER	Urban and rural areas in Chocó	WASH, Shelter, Livelihood, Infrastructure, Food Security, MHPSS and Early Recovery.
	Urban and rural areas in Risaralda	WASH, Shelter, Livelihood, Infrastructure, Food Security, MHPSS and Early Recovery.
LWF Colombia	Quibdó , Nóvita, Istmina and surrounding hard-to-reach municipalities in Chocó	WASH, Shelter, Food Security, MHPSS and Protection and Early Recovery.

iv. Potential responses (*please refer to your EPRP*)

During the first phase, HEKS/EPER will focus on life-saving assistance to the most affected and underserved communities, **including WASH, food security, NFIs, emergency shelter and MHPSS**. The response will also support the rehabilitation of critical community infrastructure, including health facilities, schools and other essential services, based on the findings of the ongoing needs assessments. Implementation will prioritize communities that remain difficult to reach through conventional humanitarian channels. As the emergency phase progresses, HEKS/EPER will gradually shift towards **early recovery, livelihoods and rehabilitation of community infrastructure**, including schools, community centres and other essential facilities. **Livelihood** support will be implemented through a **Support Community-Led Response (SCLR)** approach, based on a more detailed assessment of needs and community priorities.

During the first phase, **LWF** will provide life-saving assistance through **integrated WASH, shelter, food security, protection and MHPSS interventions**, prioritizing vulnerable households, including women-headed households, older persons, persons with disabilities, separated children, and families in hard-to-reach and riverine communities. Community-based protection and MHPSS activities will include child-friendly spaces, recreational and educational activities for children, individual and group psychosocial support for children, caregivers and adults, and safe referral pathways. Shelter assistance will include **Owner-Driven Repairs (ODR)**, enabling families to repair damaged homes using their own labour while receiving materials, technical guidance and social accompaniment. WASH interventions will help households regain safe access to drinking water through household water treatment, safe storage, hygiene promotion and community engagement. As the response evolves, LWF will support **early recovery and resilience**, restoring safer living conditions and strengthening community support systems. Building on more than a decade of presence in Chocó, LWF will work with local organizations, faith-based partners, authorities and affected communities to promote community-led recovery, accountability to affected populations, and local ownership.