

SITREP No. 3 – COLOMBIA EARTHQUAKE (Magnitude 7.4)

Date and time of issue: 11 August 2026 (9:00 p.m.)

SITUATION REPORT No.:	03
EVENT:	EARTHQUAKE IN COLOMBIA
LOCATION (COUNTRY, REGION, AFFECTED AREA):	Colombia, central Pacific region. Chocó. Epicentre: San José del Palmar
REPORT DATE	11/08/2026

Context

On 10 August 2026 at 7:34 a.m., an earthquake was recorded with its epicentre in the municipality of San José del Palmar, department of Chocó. The Colombian Geological Survey (SGC) reported that the magnitude 7.4 event was the strongest earthquake recorded in the country over the past decade.¹ On 11 August 2026, the SGC reported a new magnitude 3.8 seismic event, again with its epicentre in San José del Palmar at 10:43 a.m., while response, monitoring and damage assessment activities continued following the previous day's event.



The earthquake has left at least 224 people dead in Colombia. In addition, the National Government reported more than 1,500 homes affected and 61 buildings completely collapsed.

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Following the event, the National Unit for Disaster Risk Management (UNGRD) activated the Crisis Room to coordinate monitoring. Through the National Committee for Disaster Management, a national disaster declaration was issued, allowing emergency resources to be mobilised.

UNGRD and the Minister of the Interior announced the deployment of four USAR teams from Bogotá, Envigado, Medellín and Yopal to respond to the worst-affected areas.

At the Unified Command Post (PMU), it was agreed that search and rescue operations using machinery and personnel would be prioritised throughout 10 August.

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New magnitude 3.8 earthquake in the municipality of San José del Palmar.

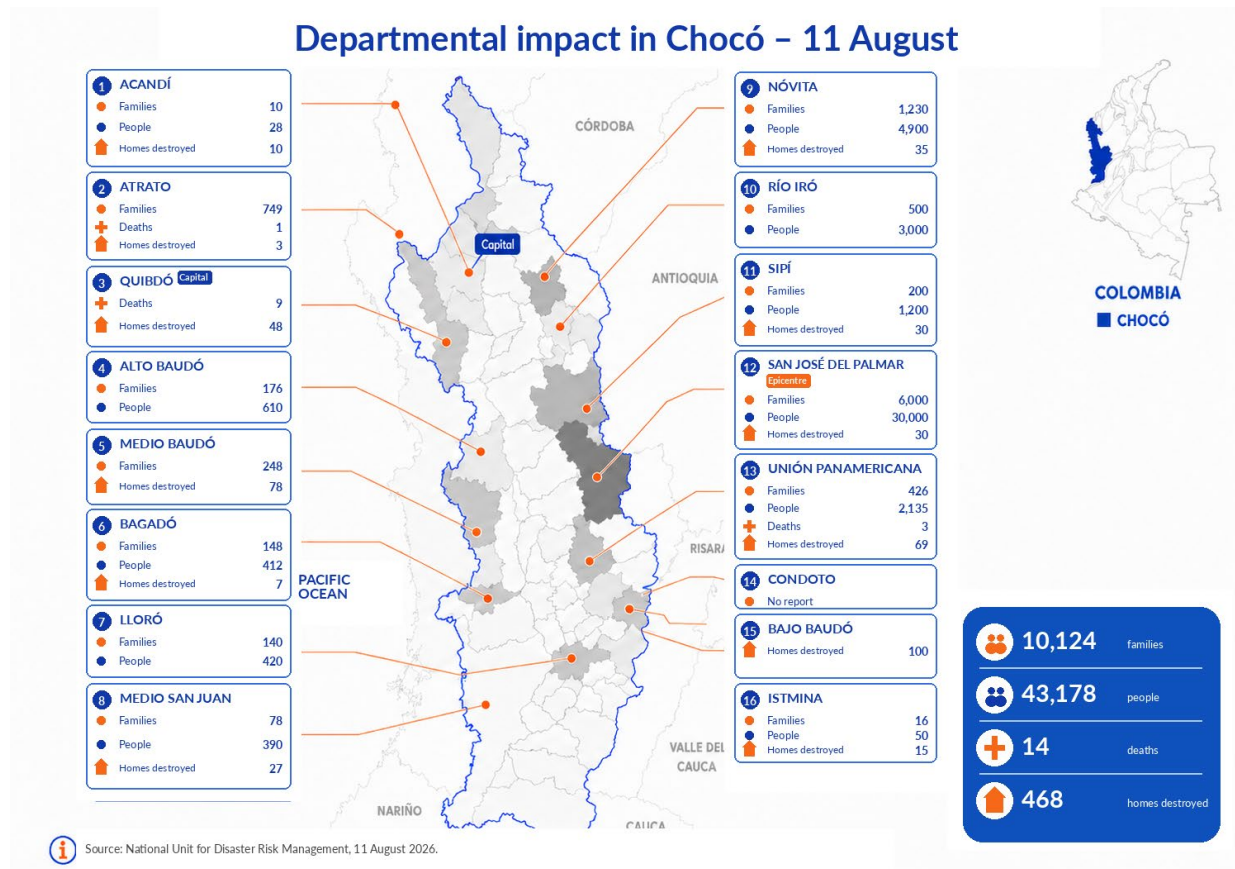
UNGRD maintains the readiness and deployment of Damage Assessment and Needs Analysis (EDAN) teams, in coordination with territorial authorities, to guide the response and humanitarian assistance to affected populations.

¹ Colombian Geological Survey

- Given the difficulties in accessing municipalities near the epicentre and the lack of information, air transport to affected municipalities began in order to assess the extent of the impacts.
- Finance Minister Miguel Gómez confirmed that the Government will declare an economic and social emergency to address the earthquake contingency.

Territorial impacts

The department of Chocó, where the epicentre was located, remains one of the priority areas for the response. At least 29 municipalities have documented impacts associated with the earthquake, including direct damage and disruptions to essential services. **UNGRD reported 14 deaths, 43,178 affected people (equivalent to 10,124 families), 468 homes destroyed and 3,199 damaged.**



Based on ACF participation in the Departmental Risk Management Coordination mechanism, the municipalities of San José del Palmar, Nóvita and Río Iró are estimated to account for 80% of the documented impacts (cut-off: 11 August, 5:00 p.m.).

San José del Palmar: Located in the epicentral area, the municipality reports significant impacts in both the urban centre and rural areas. The estimated balance is 30,000 people (equivalent to 6,000 families), and current information mentions 500 affected homes². Response operations are constrained by access restrictions, as the only road connecting the municipality with Cartago (Valle del Cauca) remains blocked by landslides, hampering the entry of machinery, emergency personnel and humanitarian assistance.

Quibdó: the departmental capital has some of the most severe structural impacts. More than 1,198 damaged homes have been reported. To date, affected families have relied on family support networks, as no temporary shelters have yet been opened. According to the Mayor's Office, the spaces assessed as possible shelters do not meet the safety standards required for activation.

Nóvita: The number of affected people increased to 4,900 (equivalent to 1,230 families). According to the municipal Secretary of Government, the earthquake caused the total collapse of the health centre, five educational institutions and 35 homes.³

Istmina: initial reports show impacts on both road infrastructure and Indigenous territories. Significant cracks were observed along sections of paved roads in the municipality, and the collapse of a structure in an Indigenous community was reported. Territorial reports identify impacts specifically in the Unión Chocó Indigenous community, part of the Unión Chocó-San Cristóbal Indigenous Reserve.⁷ An estimated 15 homes were destroyed, 12 people were injured and 3 educational institutions were affected.

Municipality	Families	People	Homes destroyed	Homes damaged
SAN JOSÉ DEL PALMAR	6,000	30,000	30	100
NÓVITA	1,230	4,900	35	-
RÍO IRÓ	500	3,000	-	-
UNIÓN PANAMERICANA	426	2,135	69	-
SIPÍ	200	1,200	30	170
ATRATO	749	-	3	661
QUIBDÓ	-	-	48	1,198
ALTO BAUDÓ	176	610	-	0
MEDIO BAUDÓ	248	0	78	255
BAGADÓ	148	412	7	-

Source: Departmental Risk Management Coordination. 11 August

² Noticias Caracol. This is what the earthquake was like in San José del Palmar, the epicentre of the quake: "The ground roared very loudly." Retrieved 11 August 2026

³ Departmental Risk Management Coordination. Departmental situational awareness. 11 August

Needs arising from the emergency

The scale of the damage and humanitarian needs remains under assessment due to access constraints, deficiencies in electricity supply across the department, and UNGRD damage assessment and needs analysis processes.

 Food Security	• Food assistance is required for evacuated families and households whose homes were destroyed or severely damaged. Although community kitchens have been established in some municipalities as an immediate response mechanism, needs related to regular access to food persist, especially among households that have lost their means of food preparation, storage or supply. • There is a need to prepare and distribute hot meals for both the affected population and the rescue, response and assistance personnel who remain deployed.
 Shelter	• As of the cut-off for this report, no temporary shelters have been opened for the affected population. According to information reported by local authorities, the spaces initially identified would not meet the required safety and habitability conditions. • There is an anticipated need to establish safe temporary shelters and provide shelter kits, while ensuring adequate water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) conditions at the sites designated to assist the affected population.
 Health	• During the PMU, high pressure on the hospital network was reported, with requirements for medicines and medical supplies and the activation of referral pathways to other cities for injured patients requiring higher-complexity care. • Personal protective equipment is required for response and rescue teams, including masks, gloves and other biosafety supplies to enable operations to be carried out safely.
 Water, Sanitation and Hygiene	• Hygiene kits are needed, particularly at evacuation points and future shelters. • Although no widespread impact on water supply systems has been reported so far, pre-existing intermittent service and dependence on purchased water in some areas make it necessary to anticipate safe water supply mechanisms for evacuated people or those in temporary shelters.



Information Management

- The consolidation and dissemination of the results of the Damage Assessment and Needs Analysis (EDAN) exercises carried out in affected departments and municipalities are still pending.
- There remains a need to strengthen population counts and identification of affected people, especially in rural areas, in order to guide response prioritisation and coverage.

ACTION AGAINST HUNGER RESPONSE CAPACITIES AND ACTIONS

Based on the information presented, ACF continues operational readiness, pre-positioning of supplies and inter-institutional coordination, with the aim of enabling a priority response in Quibdó from 12 August, in line with documented impacts and priorities confirmed by the authorities and coordination mechanisms.

The organisation currently has the following capacities available for the response:

Humanitarian personnel:

15 professionals located in the intervention area, complemented by a mobile team of 5 people with deployment capacity, in addition to support functions.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH):

160 baby hygiene kits, 260 menstrual hygiene management kits, 352 family hygiene kits—with the possibility of scaling up according to needs—and 470 water filtration systems. In addition, capacity is available for rehabilitation of WASH infrastructure and a water treatment plant with an estimated capacity to serve 2,000 people.

Food Security and Livelihoods (FSL):

320 family food packages and 4 community food packages.

Multipurpose Cash Assistance (MPCA):

Capacity to provide 550 multipurpose cash transfers.

Shelter and infrastructure:

200 shelter kits available.

Needs assessment and information management:

The first deployment for rapid needs assessments is planned for 12 August in Quibdó, Bajo Baudó, Río Iró, Nóvita and Tadó, in order to identify priority impacts in urban and rural areas and guide humanitarian response actions.

In terms of coordination, the organisation has contributed to joint mapping exercises of response capacities, operational presence and contact points, in order to facilitate coordination and complementarity of actions.

Planned humanitarian response for 12 August

In coordination with the Local Coordination Team (ELC), the following humanitarian response actions have been defined for the prioritised municipalities of Chocó. In addition, the first deployment for rapid needs assessments is planned for 12 August in Quibdó, Bajo Baudó, Río Iró, Nóvita and Tadó, in order to expand understanding of impacts in urban and rural areas and identify additional needs among the affected population.

Tadó: the delivery of 147 safe environment kits is planned with support from COSUDE, with distribution to be prioritised and expedited. In addition, a rapid review of damage and the general conditions of the affected population will be conducted.

Nóvita: the planned response includes 30 shelter kits, 20 family hygiene kits, 30 dignity kits and 30 baby kits. It is also necessary to confirm the availability and operational capacity of financial service providers in the municipality to facilitate possible cash assistance mechanisms.

Quibdó: the planned response includes the delivery of 70 shelter kits to households affected by the earthquake.

Publication date: 11 August 2026, 9:00 p.m.

