



Colombia Earthquake

Delivering Lifesaving Relief, Protecting Communities

On August 10, 2026, a powerful magnitude 7.4 earthquake struck western Colombia, killing more than 250 people, injuring hundreds more, and damaging thousands of homes, schools, and health facilities. Flexible support is urgently needed to help affected families access emergency relief and a path to recovery.



The Situation

On August 10, 2026, a magnitude 7.4 earthquake struck western Colombia, with an epicenter near San José del Palmar in Chocó Department. The quake was felt across Colombia and into neighboring countries, and continued aftershocks have raised concerns about further structural instability. The most severe impacts were reported across Risaralda, Caldas, Valle del Cauca, and Chocó, with widespread damage in cities including Pereira and Cali. More than 250 people have been confirmed dead and thousands injured, with the toll expected to rise. Tens of thousands of homes and other buildings have been damaged or destroyed, including hospitals, schools, and critical infrastructure, leaving communities facing urgent humanitarian needs.

- **The earthquake comes amid an already severe humanitarian crisis.** Prior to the earthquake, 9.1 million people in Colombia already required humanitarian assistance due to protracted armed conflict, internal displacement, and natural disasters. Several of the hardest-hit areas already faced chronic poverty and limited access to essential services.
- **Access and structural safety remain major constraints.** Landslides have disrupted road access and continued aftershocks could cause further structural damage and complicate relief efforts.
- **Indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities face compounded vulnerability.** The epicenter lies in Chocó, one of Colombia's poorest and most isolated areas, where predominantly Afro-Colombian and Indigenous communities already face poverty, conflict, displacement, and limited essential services.
- **Women and girls face heightened protection risks.** As families are displaced into temporary shelters, women and girls face increased risks of violence, sexual exploitation and abuse, and family separation. Older people and those with disabilities may also face barriers to accessing assistance. Damage to health facilities may further reduce access to essential health services, including maternal care.

CARE is seeking \$2 million to rapidly scale our emergency response. Investments of \$500,000–\$1 million would enable CARE and our local partners to expand assistance in the hardest-hit communities, reaching thousands of people with urgent support, with a particular focus on women, girls, and vulnerable groups.

CARE's Response

CARE's history in Colombia dates back to 1954, and our current operational capacity has expanded significantly through our response to the Venezuela crisis. CARE Colombia is closely monitoring the evolving situation in coordination with national and local authorities, humanitarian partners, and civil society organizations. CARE's response will initially focus on Chocó, Valle del Cauca, Risaralda, and Caldas.

Response Activities Include:

- **Cash and Voucher Assistance**, so families can buy food and necessities to survive the coming days.
- **Non-food items**, including hygiene kits, dignity kits, and CARE PACKAGES® for Emergencies (our innovative disaster response backpack that includes 40 essential items).
- **Health and Psychosocial Support Services**, such as primary health services, sexual and reproductive health, and mental health support.
- **Protection**, incorporating safe space and support for survivors of violence against women and girls.

With \$500,000, CARE can respond across six priority municipalities in Risaralda and Valle del Cauca, providing an integrated package of health, protection, and cash assistance. This includes reaching 5,000 people with protection services and information; distributing CARE PACKAGES® to 1,500 households (6,000



people); supporting 3,375 people through five safe spaces; providing health care to 840 people, including maternal and postpartum care; and providing multipurpose cash assistance to 360 households.

With \$1 million, CARE can expand our work to nine municipalities across Chocó, Risaralda, and Valle del Cauca, roughly doubling the response. This includes reaching 10,000 people with protection services and information; distributing CARE PACKAGES® to 3,000 households (12,000 people); supporting 6,750 people through nine safe spaces; providing health care to 1,680 people; and cash assistance to 720 households.

At either level, funding enables CARE and our local partners to deliver lifesaving health, protection, and cash assistance to the hardest hit communities, with a focus on women, girls, and other vulnerable groups.

Why Support CARE?

- **CARE has the operational presence to respond quickly.** CARE draws on its extensive humanitarian experience in Colombia and the operational capacity strengthened through its ongoing response to the Venezuela crisis, positioning it to move quickly in the departments most affected by the earthquake.
- **CARE centers women and girls in its response from the start.** CARE's response is being developed with a Gender in Emergencies lens from the outset, prioritizing partnerships with women-led organizations so that assistance reflects the differentiated needs of women and girls.
- **CARE works in close coordination with government and humanitarian actors.** CARE is aligning its response with the Colombian Government, and integrating into coordination mechanisms, including cash and voucher assistance and Protection and Violence against Women and Girls.
- **CARE combines local partnerships with strong operational systems.** CARE's own teams bring strong standards, technical know-how, and oversight, while local partners bring community trust and the ability to reach places that are hard to access. Together, this lets CARE respond quickly, even in remote or conflict-affected areas, while also building up local partners so they're stronger for the future.

How Your Gift Could Help

CARE Colombia's initial funding target is **\$2 million** to support emergency response and early recovery efforts. Flexible support will allow CARE to move quickly to respond to needs, including shelter, protection, mental health and psychosocial support, non-food items, and cash and voucher assistance.

- **\$111,000** could provide cash assistance for 500 families (2,000 people) to help buy food, shelter repair materials, or other necessary items.
- **\$55,000** could provide 1,000 hygiene kits with items like soap, detergent, shampoo, toothbrushes and toothpaste.
- **\$25,000** could provide CARE PACKAGES® for Emergencies for 125 families (500 people) with necessary aid items (water purification, hygiene items, shelter, cooking supplies, and solar charging capabilities).

Thank You

This earthquake struck a country already facing one of the most complex humanitarian situations in Latin America. CARE is mobilizing quickly to reach affected communities as search and rescue operations continue and needs assessments get underway. With flexible support now, we can help meet urgent needs while ensuring women, girls, and the most vulnerable communities are at the center of the response.

Thank you for considering this urgent opportunity to stand with the people of Colombia.

CARE Contact: Drew Foxman | drew.foxman@care.org

