



Community members sort through damage caused by the 7.4-magnitude quake. Source: Imago via ZUMA Press

On Monday, August 10, at 7:34 a.m. local time, a 7.4-magnitude earthquake struck western Colombia—the strongest earthquake recorded in the country in the last decade. The epicenter of the earthquake was located near San José del Palmar, a community with a population of 5,000 people located in the Chocó Department. Other nearby cities, including Cali, Manizales and Pereira, were impacted, and neighboring countries—including Ecuador, Panama and Venezuela—also felt the quake. The earthquake has further strained humanitarian conditions in the region, which was already facing substantial needs following the earthquakes that affected neighboring Venezuela in June.

Initial reports have indicated more than 200 deaths and many more injuries, but these figures are expected to increase as search-and-rescue operations continue.¹ More than 1,500 homes have been damaged, 37 of which were completely destroyed. Eighteen health centers and 52 educational facilities have also been damaged.² Some hospitals have lost inpatient capacity, while others are reporting disruptions to water supply and storage, and damage to clinical areas.

Access to healthcare services remains a key concern. Damage to transportation infrastructure, as well as landslides and road closures, has disrupted patient referrals and emergency response efforts. Assessments are ongoing to determine the full extent of damage to health facilities, roads, bridges, water systems, electric and telecommunications infrastructure.

A humanitarian corridor has been established to transport food and essential supplies to affected families. Aid will be directed toward displaced families, people sheltering at temporary sites, health facilities and vulnerable communities near the affected area. Priority humanitarian needs include healthcare services, adequate shelter, non-food items, food assistance, and access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services.

FAST FACTS

- On Monday, August 10, a 7.4-magnitude earthquake struck western Colombia—the strongest earthquake recorded in the country in the last decade.
- Initial reports have indicated more than 200 deaths and many more injuries, but these figures are expected to increase as search-and-rescue operations continue.
- Life-threatening gaps in access to healthcare services, shelter, food and basic essentials have been reported. A humanitarian corridor has been established to transport food and essential supplies to affected communities.

OUR RESPONSE

- International Medical Corps established a presence in Colombia in 2020 to support regional humanitarian operations in La Guajira.
- In the aftermath of the earthquake, International Medical Corps is coordinating closely with national authorities and our local partner on the ground to determine priority needs.
- We are assessing our response readiness, including the availability of supplies and assets at our logistics hubs in Panama, Memphis and Dubai.
- Government-led assessments are ongoing, and a clearer picture of humanitarian needs and potential international support requirements is expected in the coming days.

¹ <https://www.cnn.com/2026/08/11/world/live-news/colombia-earthquake-latest>

² <https://news.un.org/en/story/2026/08/1168106>

International Medical Corps Response

International Medical Corps first deployed to Colombia in 2020 to conduct a needs assessment, meet with partners and key stakeholders, finalize our regional strategic plan to implement programmatic activities in Venezuela and Colombia, and position ourselves on both sides of the border. In response to the needs identified in border areas, International Medical Corps implemented emergency response activities in La Guajira, including health services, case management, water trucking and the installation of water tanks.

International Medical Corps is closely monitoring the impact of the earthquake and coordinating with our local partner on the ground to identify priority needs. They have reported major gaps in safe drinking water and WASH essentials, such as soap, diapers, toothpaste and toothbrushes. Nutritional support is also needed, including food for children, canned goods and ready-to-eat meals.

Access to healthcare services and inpatient capacity in the affected areas have been severely limited. For example, one hospital reportedly lost 40 beds in the earthquake. Other health facilities are reporting disruptions to water supply and storage, disrupting their abilities to maintain proper WASH and infection-prevention and control measures. Damage to clinical areas across multiple health facilities has further restricted their ability to provide healthcare services. Access constraints are emerging as a key operational concern, with reported landslides and road damage potentially hindering patient referrals, medical evacuations, supply movements and the deployment of response teams to affected areas.

In response to the reported gaps in services and essential supplies, our teams are reviewing the availability of prepositioned commodities and assets across our logistics hubs in Panama, Memphis and Dubai to support potential emergency response activities.