



Colombia Earthquake

Situation Report #3

August 17, 2026

Project HOPE's Emergency Response Team is on the ground in earthquake-affected communities across Colombia. The team is distributing hygiene supplies and identifying urgent needs in hard-to-reach and remote areas after last week's 7.4-magnitude earthquake.

Situational Context

One week after the 7.4-magnitude earthquake struck near San José del Palmar in Chocó Department, response efforts continue nationwide. The National Unit for Disaster Risk Management's latest count stands at 294 dead, 4,187 injured, and 143 missing. As aftershocks have continued to rock the region, Cali, Pereira, Quibdó, Manizales, and Armenia remain under red alert.

Colombian officials report that 448 municipalities have been impacted across 15 departments, at least 57,516 families are affected, an estimated 80,744 homes are damaged, and at least 12,504 homes have been destroyed. Current government estimates show damage to 260 health centers, 2,595 educational centers, and 2,116 community centers. Dozens of buildings have collapsed and over 250 aftershocks have been recorded, with 17 above magnitude 3.0 and two above magnitude 4.0.

Today, government officials noted additional strains in the health system, reporting that Buenaventura's hospital network is overwhelmed and Distrital Hospital Luis Ablanque de la Plata has collapsed entirely. Health workers are treating patients,

Key Statistics

-  Nearly 300 people have died and over 4,000 are injured
-  Five department capitals remain under red alert

Project HOPE Updates

- **Project HOPE continues assessments and distributions** of essential non-food items (NFIs) across the affected area.
- In Manizales (Caldas), **Hospital Santa Sofía was severely affected**, with its emergency department, sterilization, and vaccination services areas completely collapsed.
- **Tomorrow, Project HOPE will travel to remote communities** outside of Quibdó, visit Hospital San Isidro in Manizales, and continue coordination in Chocó Department for additional hygiene kit distributions and health needs assessments.

including critical, elderly, and infant cases, under ad hoc street tents with limited medications and no access to functioning sanitation. Across affected communities, health workers and local health systems are being put in impossible situations and caring for patients without the necessary resources.

Project HOPE's Response & Assessment Findings

Project HOPE's Emergency Response Team responded immediately, with staff in Cali assessing a major health facility just hours after the earthquake. Since last Monday, the team has completed an assessment across several affected departments including Chocó, Caldas, Risaralda, and Valle de Cauca. In each of these departments, the team not only visited the highest population areas but also isolated communities where we have focused most of our distributions of essential hygiene items.

In Chocó, local organizations in the capital, Quibdó, are providing substantial support and the district Secretary of Health reports **the city is overwhelmed with the scale of support needed**. Difficult terrain and security concerns are limiting access to more remote communities north along the river from Quibdó. **Most of these areas lack road access entirely and are reachable only by river, requiring the Project HOPE team to use river barges to deliver hygiene items in these rural communities.**



Project HOPE's team in Colombia distributes hygiene items in Chocó Department, reaching a community that is only accessible via boat. Photo by Project HOPE staff, 2026.

Project HOPE's team has conducted assessments of nearly a dozen hospitals within four departments. While several facilities within Chocó only suffered minor damage and remained operational, other hospitals in El Águila (Caldas) and Manizales (Valle de Cauca) were completely destroyed. Hospital Santa Sofía in Manizales was severely affected, with the entire emergency department and other service wards completely collapsing. This public hospital serves approximately 200 people per day, largely from lower-income communities outside the city center. In El Águila, Hospital San Rafael — a Level 1 facility that serves approximately 8,000 people — completely collapsed and is reachable only on foot as the town itself remains cut off to cars due to mudslides. Healthcare at this facility has moved to an inadequate temporary space and staff are in substantial need of pharmaceuticals, equipment, and supplies. **Project HOPE's remains one of the few international organizations assessing and providing support in the city.**

A significant number of people remain displaced in Pereira (Risaralda), with informal shelters being established in parks and five or six shelters housing people for the last

“Healthcare access is extremely compromised due to the earthquake damage, and health workers are working around the clock with limited supplies.”

– Chessa Latifi, Project HOPE Deputy Director of Emergency Preparedness & Response

week. Project HOPE provided family hygiene kits to one those shelters at Estadio Alberto Mora Mora, a sports stadium, and Parque Industrial. Damage severity increases closer to Pereira's city center, where the commercial district remains shut down and cordoned off under government control as the city has shifted to rubble clearing. Seven health facilities citywide are confirmed damaged, with no single facility fully functional. At one of the largest hospitals in the area, Hospital San Joaquín, the outpatient clinic and pharmacy were destroyed, and officials report significant equipment needs, medicine and supply shortages, and staff absences.

Within two days of the earthquake, Project HOPE reached Roldanillo (Valle del Cauca) to deliver hygiene items — including diapers, antibacterial wipes, dental hygiene supplies, and more — to the Ministry of Health for further distribution to the municipal elderly care facility. In Roldanillo, Hospital Departamental San Antonio suffered major damage to most of the facility. At time of assessment, only emergency services were operating and patients were being housed in the auditorium. There was no water access for the hospital and an estimated 60% of communities in Roldanillo did not have access to clean water. Chronic disease and mental health medication, elderly care support, and psychosocial support have been requested by local officials.

Project HOPE's current Emergency Response Team consists of multiple health programming specialists, a mental health advisor, supply chain managers, and security team members. Project HOPE continues to scale up the team with additional local and regional staff to support the ongoing response.

Project HOPE has had a continued presence in Colombia since 2018, strengthening the health system and responding to urgent needs facing host communities, Venezuelan migrants, and refugees living along the Colombia-Venezuela border in the Norte de Santander Department. In coordination with local health officials and national partners, Project HOPE has improved access to healthcare by providing primary and maternal health consultations, distributing hygiene kits, operating mental health and psychosocial support programs, conducting health brigades, providing social work and support services to displaced families, repairing water and hygiene infrastructure, and training health workers.

Project HOPE has responded to multiple earthquakes in recent years, including the June 2026 Venezuela earthquake — where our teams continue to respond to long-term needs — as well as the 2025 Myanmar earthquake, the 2023 Türkiye-Syria earthquakes, the 2023 Morocco earthquake, the 2022 West Java earthquake, and the 2021 Haiti earthquake.

“There are a lot of people traumatized by seeing their houses going down and having to rescue some of their family members, pets, and children among the rubble. It has a significant psychological impact.”

*— Pamela Londoño Salazar,
Project HOPE Global Mental
Health Advisor*