

30 June 2026

# VENEZUELA EARTHQUAKE

## Acute and Compounding Risks to Children



### 1. Situation at a Glance

On 24 June 2026, two successive earthquakes of 7.2 and 7.5 magnitude struck north-central Venezuela – the strongest seismic event in Venezuela in over 100 years. Five days into the response, the scale of destruction continues to grow, and only now are we beginning to understand the true magnitude of the devastation.

At least 1,430 people have been killed, more than 3,238 injured, and over 68,900 reported missing. According to the President of the National Assembly, Jorge Rodríguez, 774 buildings collapsed (189 were completely destroyed) and 2,501 buildings were damaged, including hospitals, shopping centers, bridges and roads. In La Guaira alone, more than 1,400 buildings were destroyed and more than 11,200 people are missing. A magnitude 4.7 aftershock on 26 June caused additional building damage in Caracas and collapsed the bridge connecting Caraballeda to the rest of La Guaira, further disrupting relief efforts. A damaged runway at Simon Bolivar International Airport delayed the arrival of rescue teams; however, as of June 28, 30 international search and rescue teams with more than 1,600 personnel and over 100 dogs are on the ground. More than 400 aftershocks have been recorded in total.

The UNDP estimated direct physical damage of between USD 4.7 and 8.7 billion – approximately 6% of Venezuela's GDP – not including infrastructure loss, long-term economic disruption or reconstruction costs.

This emergency is compounding an already fragile humanitarian situation: prior to the earthquakes, nearly 8 million people in Venezuela were already in need of humanitarian assistance.

### 2. Child Protection Risks

UNICEF estimates that 3.9 million children live in the impacted areas, of which 680,000 children are in need of humanitarian assistance specifically due to the earthquakes. As in most crisis situations, children face acute and compounding protection risks:

- **Family separation:** The situation of unaccompanied and separated children (UASCs) is a critical reality in the wake of the emergency. Although state child protection authorities have not yet established a comprehensive and standardized protocol to address UASC cases, independent data highlight the magnitude of the crisis: in the first 24 hours alone, at least 22 unaccompanied minors were admitted to Domingo Luciani Hospital. Although unverified lists of pediatric patients without caregivers are circulating on social media, official responses remain limited; the National System for the Protection of Children and Adolescents (SPNNA) reports that, to date, only three formal shelter orders and nine hospital admission orders have been issued for unaccompanied and separated minors.
- **Health system collapse:** Hospitals across La Guaira, Caracas, Carabobo, Aragua and Falcon are operating beyond capacity, disrupting care for children and pregnant women. Venezuela's pre-existing maternal mortality rate of 227 deaths per 100,000 live births makes emergency maternal health support especially critical.
- **Education disruption:** In Distrito Capital alone, 432 schools – more than a third of all schools in the district – have been damaged. Authorities are using undamaged schools as temporary shelters, with the

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toll expected to be higher in other states.

- **WASH crisis:** Thousands of children lack reliable access to safe water. Damaged infrastructure and overcrowded temporary shelters create conditions highly conducive to waterborne disease outbreaks.
- **GBV and exploitation:** Essential maternal health services, emergency obstetric care, and GBV prevention and response must remain available from the earliest stages of the emergency. Women and girls face heightened risks of violence, neglect and exploitation in displacement settings.
- **Displacement:** People remain terrified to re-enter their homes. IOM has warned that displacement will continue to increase as families seek safety.
- **Psychological trauma:** Children and caregivers are experiencing acute distress from the earthquake impact and continuous aftershocks.
- **Pre-existing vulnerability:** Before the earthquakes, UNICEF's 2026 Humanitarian Action for Children appeal for Venezuela stood at USD 137.6 million, with only 35 percent funded.

### 3. Current Child Protection Efforts

ChildFund and its partners were on the ground from day one. On 28 June, ChildFund representatives were in La Guaira with other national and international NGOs to coordinate the child protection response, reflecting our immediate presence and active engagement in addressing the enormous protection needs children face across the affected states.

To date, coordinated efforts led by the government include the following:

- **Temporary Child Protection Centre (CPNNA)** is active at the PROAL building in Maiquetía, staffed by three Child Protection Advisors.
- A **One-stop Child Protection Centre** at Centro Guacamburo is operational, integrating the child protection system under one roof: Child Protection Courts, Ombudsman's Office, Public Defender, Public Prosecutor and IDENNA, which is being referred to as the "Global Protection Team."
- **Eleven (11) shelters have been established** and are operational across La Guaira.
- A **Child Case Management Protocol** has been developed by state authorities and will be shared with OCHA, the Protection Cluster and AoRs for technical review and strengthening.
- **Viviana González** (Representative of the Vice President for Social Sector) has been designated as the official focal point for the humanitarian community on child protection, and will serve as coordination interface between authorities and humanitarian actors.

Identified needs and gaps on the ground include:

- **Identification and census of Unaccompanied and Separated Children (UASC):** Starting June 29, authorities are conducting a census of UASC across all 11 shelters; numbers remain unknown.
- **Training of community mobilizers:** Community Mobile Brigades (volunteers from the Somos Venezuela Movement) have been deployed to communities, hospitals and shelters to identify child protection risks and make referrals. Training is needed to support these efforts effectively.
- **Multidisciplinary technical staff:** Humanitarian organizations have been requested to provide specialized staff to form multidisciplinary teams operating across the 11 shelters and the Temporary Child Protection Centre.
- **Technical strengthening for first-line responders:** The following basic package has been requested from humanitarian actors:
  - Psychological First Aid (PFA)
  - Safe Referrals
  - Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)
  - Prevention and mitigation of child protection and GBV risks in temporary protection centers

### 4. ChildFund's Response

ChildFund International has partnered with local organizations Fundana, Hogar Bambi Venezuela and CECODAP to deliver activities for the protection of children. Rapid assessments are underway, unaccompanied and separated minors are being identified, and emergency child protection services are being activated across the priority states of La Guaira, Distrito Capital and Miranda.



photo by Rodolfo Churion

ChildFund International is coordinating this response, working closely with Alliance member **EDUCO (Spain)** to ensure a coherent and complementary response. ChildFund is actively engaged with OCHA-led humanitarian coordination mechanisms, including the Foros Locales de Coordinacion and Grupos de Coordinacion.

In response to the needs on the ground, ChildFund is planning to support in the following areas:

- Psychological First Aid training for community mobilizers and first-line responders across shelters.
- Supporting the mapping and strengthening of safe

referral linkages between Community Mobilizers, shelters, and specialized services.

- Identifying and protecting UASC, providing emergency PSS and expanding temporary care and shelter services (Fundana).
- Managing temporary safe spaces and shelters for vulnerable children and supporting family reunification (Hogar Bambi Venezuela).
- Implementing MHPSS; addressing protection risks through specialized case management; coordinating with national systems and humanitarian actors (CECODAP).

## OUR LOCAL PARTNERS

Partner	Sector Expertise	Role in the Response
Fundana	Child Protection, PSS, Family Reunification, Temporary Safe Care	Identifying and protecting UASC, providing emergency PSS and expanding temporary care and shelter services
Casa Hogar Bambi Venezuela	Child Protection, Temporary Shelter, Family Reunification	Managing temporary safe spaces and shelters for vulnerable children and supporting family reunification
CECODAP	MHPSS, Child Protection, Community Capacity Building	Implementing MHPSS; addressing protection risks through specialized case management; coordinating with national systems and humanitarian actors

## WHY CHILDFUND?

Humanitarian action focuses on supporting children's safety and well-being during emergencies. We partner with communities to establish systems that reduce risks to children and support families during crises.

- **Local emergency preparedness and early action:** We collaborate with local community organizations and leaders to develop emergency preparedness plans to protect children when crises strike or escalate.
- **Community-based child protection mechanisms:** We engage community leaders, civil society, and frontline responders to identify protection risks and develop prevention, mitigation, and response plans for children experiencing violence, abuse, exploitation, or neglect.
- **Immediate lifesaving relief in acute emergencies:** We plan with local organizations to preposition non-food items (NFIs) and deliver immediate response activities such as child-friendly spaces and cash for protection.
- **Integration of local, national, and global systems:** We align community-driven interventions with local governments, national policies, and global standards to ensure long-term protection and resilience.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

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