

COLOMBIA EARTHQUAKE RESPONSE

AUGUST 2026







EVENT BACKGROUND

On August 10, 2026, a magnitude 7.4 earthquake struck western Colombia, with its epicenter near San José del Palmar, Chocó. The earthquake was felt across Colombia and neighboring Panama, Venezuela, and Ecuador.

The most affected areas included Chocó, Valle del Cauca, Cauca, and the Coffee Region, with Pereira among the hardest-hit cities. Nearly 2 million people were estimated to live in affected areas.

In Pereira, approximately 120,000 people were affected, with 35,263 homes damaged. Essential infrastructure was also impacted, including health facilities, schools, fire stations, bridges, roads, and other public buildings. Across the wider affected region, 181 deaths, 195 missing people, and more than 2,595 injuries were initially reported.

The earthquake disrupted electricity, water services, and communications, while access to some affected communities, particularly in Chocó, remained challenging.

The main humanitarian needs included temporary shelter, medical assistance, humanitarian supplies, backup power, and access to safe drinking water. As the response moves toward recovery, communities will continue to need support to restore housing, schools, healthcare, transportation, and essential water services.

Planet Water Foundation

OUR RESPONSE

Following the earthquake, Planet Water Foundation identified an urgent need for safe drinking water in affected communities. The Disaster Response team arrived on August 21 and began field activities on August 23.

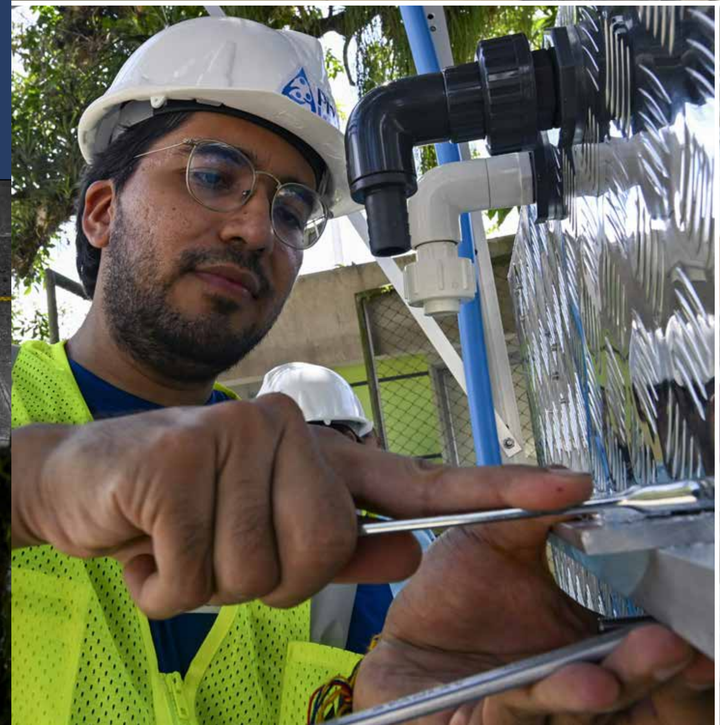
The team assessed communities around Pereira in coordination with local authorities and community leaders, visiting areas including Caimalito, Ansermanuevo, Arabia, Chinchiná, and Cartago. Potential sites were evaluated based on community needs, water availability, accessibility, security, power, storage, and local support. Water quality was also tested to ensure the systems could provide safe drinking water.

Following the assessments, the team selected the sites for deployment.

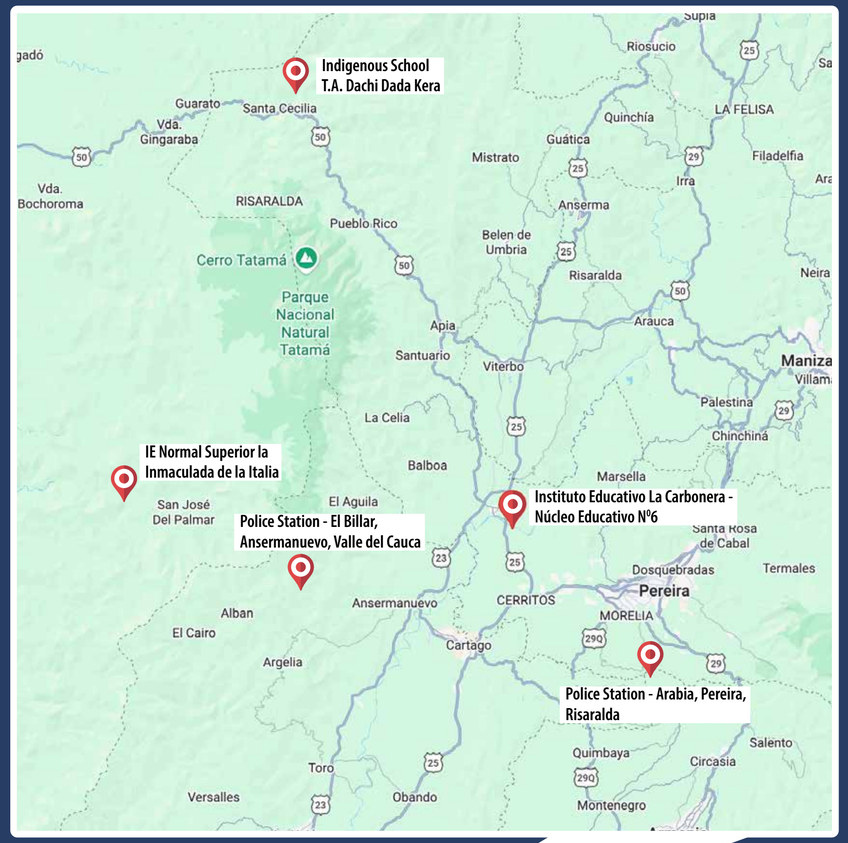














Colombia





Deployment Sites

Instituto Educativo La Carbonera – El Caimalito
El Caimalito is a vulnerable community of approximately 7,000 people, where residents relied on untreated water from a rural aqueduct. Our response now provides safe drinking water to a neighborhood of about 1,500 people, many of them children.

School Normal Superior La Inmaculada de La Italia – San José del Palmar
Located near the earthquake's epicenter, La Italia already lacked access to safe drinking water. Following the earthquake, landslides and communication disruptions made access even more.

Police Station – Arabia
Arabia has approximately 1,700 residents and relies on a rural aqueduct that does not adequately treat water for drinking. The earthquake also damaged several key community buildings and approximately 500 homes.

Police Station – El Billar
El Billar is a vulnerable community of approximately 1,200 people near the earthquake's epicenter, where many homes were severely damaged. Residents previously relied on untreated water, with waterborne illnesses frequently reported, particularly among children.

Indigenous School T.A. Dachi Dada Kera – Kemberde
Kemberde is an Indigenous community where the school serves as the main water source for local families. The earthquake damaged the school and nearby homes, while untreated water contributed to frequent stomach-related illnesses among children.

Planet Water Foundation

AquaTower

WATER FILTRATION SYSTEM





In the immediate aftermath of an earthquake, rapid intervention through the deployment of water filtration systems is essential to help prevent a health crisis and support recovery.

The AquaTower solution has a three-stage water filtration process incorporating ultrafiltration (UF) hollow fiber membrane technology and activated carbon for enhanced water quality. It produces up to 1,000 liters of safe drinking water per hour.



AquaBlock

EMERGENCY WATER SYSTEM





The life-threatening waterborne illnesses that are rampant during emergency situations can be prevented with the help of Planet Water Foundation's AquaBlock Emergency Water System. This advanced water filtration system has a four-stage water purification process and produces 700 liters of safe drinking water per hour with capacity to support the daily drinking needs of up to 6,000 people. Each system is setup on an existing non-potable water source and processes this water to produce microbiologically safe drinking water.

Deployment 1

Instituto Educativo La Carbonera - Núcleo Educativo N°6

Pereira, Risaralda

August 27, 2026

“For the 20 years I have lived here, the water has never been potable, and people in the community have become sick. This equipment will help us prevent illnesses and move forward. It is a beautiful gesture, especially for the children at the school.”



Aliris Andrea Montoya Meza











Deployment 2

IE Normal Superior la Inmaculada de la Italia

San José del Palmar, El Chocó

August 28, 2026

“The earthquake was something incredible. The trees were moving, and we could hear the mountain roaring. The children were very frightened, and the preschool teacher was injured when the children climbed onto her after the door closed. Thankfully, there were no major losses.”



Lorenza Moreno Leudo











Deployment 3

Police Station

Arabia, Pereira, Risaralda

August 29, 2026

“The earthquake was something we had never experienced before, and many families lost their homes. We are very grateful for this filtration system because it will be very beneficial to our community. Its location is strategic, near the police station and the park where families gather.”



Hilian Medina











Deployment 4

Police Station

El Billar, Ansermanuevo, Valle del Cauca

August 30, 2026

“We are very happy with this equipment because it means we will have potable water and will no longer need to boil it or worry about it arriving with contaminants. During the earthquake, I was alone with my grandmother and could not leave the house, which was moving and making terrible noises.”



Sara Restrepo









Deployment 5

Indigenous School T.A. Dachi Dada Kera

Kemberde, Pueblo Rico, Risaralda

September 6, 2026



“I’ve been the school principal for 15 years, and the earthquake destroyed so much of what we built. Water has always been a challenge. Many families rely on the river or untreated water. The AquaBlock is a true blessing for our community. Thank you to Planet Water Foundation and everyone who made this possible. You’re not just providing clean water-you’re improving lives.”

Angela Maya









Planet Water Foundation extends our gratitude to our partners for their invaluable support.

Through this response we were able to bring clean, safe drinking water to up to 14,000 people affected by the Colombia Earthquake.

Alsea Fundación

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Trébola Organización Ecológica

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