



Reporting period : 9 to 10 October 2026

Panama Country Office Earthquake Situation Report No. 1

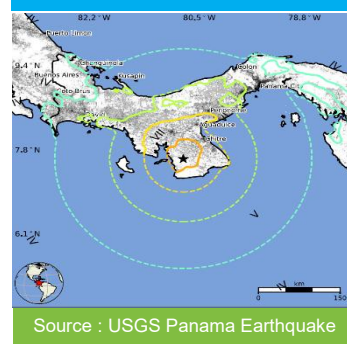
unicef 
for every child

Highlights

- On 9 October 2026, a magnitude 7.5 earthquake struck Panama, causing damage to homes, schools, health facilities, roads, bridges, and water supply infrastructure, particularly in Veraguas, Coclé, Los Santos and Herrera provinces. On 10 October, the government declared a state of emergency following the earthquake.
- According to the National Emergency Operations Centre (COE), 27 people sustained minor injuries, with no fatalities or missing persons reported as of 10 October. The number of affected children and families remains unknown.
- The Ministry of Education (MEDUCA) reported 419 affected educational facilities nationwide, raising concerns about school safety, access to water and sanitation, and continuity of learning.
- The Ministry of Health (MINSAL) reported 20 affected health facilities. Evacuations and temporary adjustments to patient care were reported, potentially affecting access to essential health services for children and families.
- Damage to roads and bridges restricted access to several rural communities. Although water production has reportedly been restored at major treatment facilities, the situation in affected rural areas remains under assessment. Approximately 300 people were preventively evacuated from Isla Caña, while eight families were accommodated in a temporary shelter in Penonomé.
- UNICEF is supporting the Government-led response and assessing priority needs affecting children and families. Initial efforts are focused on WASH, education, health and child protection, including assessing water and sanitation services in affected communities, schools, health facilities and temporary shelters. UNICEF is preparing to provide emergency supplies and support the rapid restoration of essential services, prioritizing isolated and displaced communities as needs are confirmed.

Situation in Numbers

	419 Educational facilities affected
	20 Health facilities affected
	27 People injured
	142 Homes damaged
	~300 People preventively evacuated



Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

On 9 October, a magnitude 7.5 earthquake struck Panama, with its epicentre located 39 km northwest of Tonosí, Los Santos province, according to the National Emergency Operations Centre (COE)¹. Preliminary assessments identified damage to homes, educational facilities, health infrastructure, public buildings, roads and bridges across several provinces, particularly Veraguas, Coclé, Los Santos and Herrera provinces. No

¹ Government of Panama, Official Gazette No. 30631, 10 October 2026, citing SINAPROC Official Communiqué No. 2, 9 October 2026. [Official source](#).

fatalities or missing persons were reported as of the evening of 9 October². On 10 October, the government declared a state of emergency following the earthquake.

According to the government, at least 142 homes were reported damaged, with the most significant impacts concentrated in the central provinces affected by the earthquake, including 50 affected homes and 17 people with minor injuries in the Province of Coclé, while Veraguas reported 18 affected homes and interruptions to electricity, water and internet services. Los Santos reported 14 affected homes and five damaged hotels, while Herrera recorded 30 partially damaged homes and two with total damage³. Additional infrastructure damage to homes was reported in Chiriquí, Colón, Panamá and Panamá Oeste.

Damage to roads and bridges restricted access to three communities in Veraguas, five communities in Los Santos and one community in Herrera. Approximately 300 people were preventively evacuated from Isla Caña, and eight families were accommodated in a temporary shelter in Penonomé. Disruptions to essential services and restricted access to rural communities raise concerns for children and families. The overall number of people affected, and the extent of humanitarian needs remain under assessment.

Education

According to MEDUCA's 10 October update, 419 educational facilities were affected nationwide, with the highest numbers reported in Herrera (48), Veraguas (35), Ngäbe-Buglé (21), Chiriquí (19) and Coclé (12).⁴ Reported damage includes cracked walls, damaged classrooms, fallen ceilings and affected water and sanitation facilities. MEDUCA also reported 16 students hospitalized in Ngäbe-Buglé and 11 students receiving medical attention for anxiety-related symptoms in Coclé. These figures have not yet been reconciled with the national injury count. The earthquake raises concerns about the safety of learning environments and the continuity of education, particularly for children in rural and difficult-to-access communities. Further assessments are required to determine the extent of learning disruptions and the support needed for safe school reopening.

WASH

According to local media, the earthquake caused damage to water supply infrastructure and disrupted water services in several affected provinces. Initial reports indicated that the Federico Guardia Conte water treatment plant in Chilibre operated at 20 per cent capacity following the earthquake, with subsequent reports indicating that full production capacity had been restored on 10 October⁵.

However, restoration of production at major water treatment facilities does not necessarily mean that water services have been fully restored in affected communities. Water supply disruptions were reported in Veraguas, while damage to water infrastructure was identified in Chiriquí. The current situation in rural and difficult-to-access communities remains to be verified, particularly where damaged roads, electricity interruptions and infrastructure constraints may delay service restoration.

Damage to water and sanitation facilities was also reported in affected schools. Further assessments are required to establish the number of children and families without reliable access to safe drinking water and sanitation, particularly in rural communities, schools and health facilities.

² COE Nacional/SINAPROC, Preliminary Situation Report, 9 October 2026.

³ COE Nacional/SINAPROC, Preliminary Situation Report, 10 October 2026.

⁴ TVN Noticias. "Temblor en Panamá: Al menos 188 centros educativos reportan diversos daños," 9 October 2026. Based on preliminary information from the Ministry of Education (MEDUCA).

⁵ Telemetro. "IDAAN informa | Potabilizadora de Chilibre vuelve a operar al 100 %: lo que deben saber los usuarios," 9 October 2026. Information based on updates from the Instituto de Acueductos y Alcantarillados Nacionales (IDAAN).

Health

According to local media, MINSA reported 19 health facilities affected nationwide, including six hospitals, ten health centres and three MINSA-CAPSI facilities⁶. Reported damage and preventive safety measures led to evacuations, temporary relocation of patient care and interruptions to selected health services.

In Chiriquí, damage to the emergency department and Central Equipment Unit at the Hospital del Oriente Chiricano in San Félix prompted evacuations. In Los Santos, the Anita Moreno and Tonosí hospitals reported damage and temporary adjustments to patient care. In Herrera, the Cecilio Castellero Hospital temporarily provided services in outdoor facilities.

Health authorities implemented contingency measures to maintain essential care while assessing infrastructure safety. Further information is needed to determine the duration and extent of service disruptions, particularly for maternal, newborn and child health services and for families in communities with restricted access.

Child Protection

Damage to homes, temporary evacuations, continued aftershocks and disruptions to essential services may increase psychosocial distress among children and caregivers, particularly in communities experiencing displacement or restricted access. SINAPROC reported eight families accommodated in a temporary shelter in Penonomé, Coclé, and approximately 300 people preventively evacuated from Isla Caña, Los Santos. The number of children among these groups has not yet been confirmed.

Further assessments are needed to identify child protection concerns, psychosocial support needs and potential risks affecting children and adolescents, including those in temporary shelters and rural communities with limited access to services.

UNICEF Response

UNICEF is supporting the Government-led response and has deployed emergency personnel together with partners to conduct an initial field visit to affected areas in Coclé, Veraguas, Herrera and Los Santos, gathering preliminary observations on the situation of children and families. The visit focuses on WASH, education, health and child protection, including access to safe water and sanitation and the functioning of affected schools, health facilities and temporary shelters. Needs assessments are being coordinated with the Government and other United Nations agencies and will be conducted over the coming days.

UNICEF is preparing to activate operational support through implementing partners and mobilize emergency supplies, including tents for temporary service spaces and critical WASH supplies, based on the findings of the assessments. UNICEF continues coordinating with national authorities and humanitarian partners and is mobilizing resources to scale up assistance as needs are confirmed.

Humanitarian Leadership, Coordination and Strategy

The Government of Panama is leading the emergency response through SINAPROC and the National Emergency Operations Centre (COE), with relevant institutions conducting damage assessments, monitoring affected areas and supporting the restoration of essential services.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in coordination with the Presidency and relevant national institutions, is facilitating international offers of assistance to ensure that external support responds to verified needs.

⁶ La Estrella de Panamá. "Minsa activa protocolos de emergencia y evalúa daños en 17 centros de salud afectados," 9 October 2026. Based on preliminary information from the Ministry of Health (MINSA).

UNICEF Panama participates in strategic coordination through the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) and technical coordination through the United Nations Emergency Team (ÚNETE). UNICEF is gathering information through national counterparts and partners, including SINAPROC, MEDUCA, MINSA and child protection authorities, to identify emerging humanitarian needs affecting children and their families and inform potential support to the national response.

External Media

Tips for caregivers regarding aftershocks:

https://www.instagram.com/stories/tumananatm/4004502452286375498?utm_source=ig_story_item_share&dIrf=MWRwNXNuYmU2dWZ3NQ==

Next SitRep: 11 October 2026

Who to contact for
further information:

Olga Isabel Isaza
Representative
Panama Country Office
T +18762798334
oiisaza@unicef.org

Yohanna Amaya Pinzon
Programme Manager
Panama Country Office
T +507 6406-8055
yamaya@unicef.org

Clara Ines Luna
Advocacy & Communication Officer
Panama Country Office
T +507 6493-1656
cluna@unicef.org