

# Panamá Country Office

## Earthquake Situation Report No. 6

unicef
para cada infancia

Report period: October 24 al 30 2026 17:00 hrs

## Key Findings

- Monitoring visits conducted by UNICEF, UNHCR, and IOM in Soná, Río Grande, and Mariato indicate a gradual transition from the emergency response phase to early recovery. In several communities, families have begun returning to land near their homes or relocating within their communities of origin, reducing the population residing in some temporary displacement sites. In this context, the continuous monitoring of the situation and UNICEF's targeted support remain essential to prevent setbacks and ensure that the needs of children are addressed in a timely manner.

- Despite these advances, temporary shelter needs persist for families whose homes were destroyed or whose land remains uninhabitable. In several communities, the construction of improvised shelters using locally available materials was observed while assessment processes, debris removal, and recovery efforts continue to advance.

- Field assessments continue to identify significant gaps in water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH), including limited access to safe drinking water, an insufficient number of adequate sanitation facilities, and risks associated with wastewater management and vector-borne threats, particularly in coastal communities and temporary settlements.

- Educational infrastructure continues to be one of the primary concerns. In communities in Río Grande, severe damage and the complete collapse of educational facilities serving multiple communities were verified, affecting the continuity of learning for children and adolescents.

- In coordination with the Ministry of Education, UNICEF initiated the support and installation of three child-friendly protection and education-in-emergencies spaces in Veraguas Province, expanding access for children and adolescents to recreational, learning, and psychosocial support activities.

- Monitoring missions continue to reveal psychosocial support needs among children, adolescents, and caregivers, associated with the loss of housing, uncertainty regarding recovery, and the prolonged impact of the emergency.

## Situation in figures

**57,879**
People with humanitarian needs
(Source: EDAN estimates)

**14,820**
Children and adolescents with humanitarian needs
(Source: SINAPROC)

**17,891**
Homes evaluated
(Source: SINAPROC)

**6,654**
People sheltered
(Source: SINAPROC)

**140**
Shelters authorized nationwide
(Source: SINAPROC)

**619**
Affected Schools
(Source: Ministry of Education)

**122**
Affected Health Facilities
(Source: Ministry of Health)

## Humanitarian Situation and Needs

Monitoring missions carried out by UNICEF, jointly with UNHCR and IOM, in the communities of Soná, Río Grande, and Mariato revealed gradual progress in return processes in some areas, but also confirmed that numerous families continue to face precarious living conditions and require temporary and medium-term shelter solutions. In communities such as Torio, uncertainty persists regarding the continued presence of displaced families settled on privately owned land, while in other locations families have opted to install tents or temporary structures near their damaged homes. Likewise, several families remain in provisional shelters built with locally available materials while assessment and recovery processes continue to advance.

Despite these trends observed in the field, national figures continue to reflect an increase in the number of identified affected persons and in the demand for temporary shelter. In addition to reflecting varying rates of recovery across communities, this increase is associated with the ongoing damage and needs assessments and the progressive consolidation of information by national and local authorities, particularly in areas where field verifications have enabled a more accurate characterization of the impacts. This situation highlights the need to sustain assessment, monitoring, and assistance activities to ensure an evidence-based response targeted at the most vulnerable populations.

The restoration of educational services continues to represent one of the principal challenges. Visits conducted in the communities of Madre Vieja, Las Baldesas, Melena, Hicaco, and Ñopo, in Río Grande, confirmed severe damage to educational infrastructure, including the total collapse of the Madre Vieja school, which serves students from several communities across the area. In other cases, educational facilities continue to be used as collection and distribution centers or have sustained damage that limits the safe resumption of classes. These impacts continue to restrict access to safe learning environments and reinforce the need to implement temporary education solutions and psychosocial support services for children and adolescents.

Needs related to water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) remain a priority in several of the visited communities. In Hicaco and other localities within the Mariato district, challenges were identified regarding access to safe drinking water, insufficient sanitation services, and drainage and excreta management issues, particularly during periods of rainfall. These conditions increase public health risks and disproportionately affect children and other vulnerable populations.

Psychosocial impacts continue to be a cross-cutting concern. During field visits, families, community leaders, and education stakeholders reported uncertainty regarding housing reconstruction, the restoration of educational services, and prospects for returning to normal living conditions. These circumstances continue to underscore the need to strengthen psychosocial support and protection services for children, adolescents, and their caregivers in the most affected communities.

### Education

The education response has begun to transition from damage identification toward the planning of alternatives to restore learning processes in the most affected communities. Visits conducted by UNICEF in the Río Grande district confirmed that the loss of educational infrastructure continues to have direct repercussions on access to education, particularly in rural communities where a single educational facility serves students from multiple surrounding areas.

In Madre Vieja Centro, the total collapse of the school serving students from Madre Vieja, Las Baldesas, and Ñopo was verified. In these communities, approximately 346 people were identified, including an estimated 96 children who depend on this educational facility to access learning services.

Furthermore, assessments conducted in Hicaco and Malena revealed that damage to educational infrastructure continues to limit the safe return to classes and the restoration of school routines. In Malena,

school facilities continue to be used for response-related activities while education authorities advance the identification of temporary solutions to ensure educational continuity.

The disruption of this educational space affects not only the continuity of learning, but also children's access to protective environments and community support services that are traditionally provided through and around the school setting. In addition to the physical damage, community stakeholders continue to report challenges in re-establishing educational and recreational routines for children. This situation further reinforces the need to accelerate the implementation of temporary learning modalities and socio-emotional recovery interventions while rehabilitation and reconstruction processes continue to progress.

### Water, sanitation and hygiene and health

Field visits conducted during the reporting period show that WASH needs are becoming increasingly differentiated across communities. While some displacement sites are progressing toward more stable conditions, other localities continue to face challenges related to access to safe water, sanitation, and waste management.

In the Mariato district, particularly in the community of Hicaco, families reported concerns regarding the quality of water intended for human consumption and the limited sanitation conditions available in temporary camps. Field observations also identified issues associated with latrine overflows during periods of heavy rainfall, a situation that could increase health risks for the affected population.

In communities across Río Grande, including Madre Vieja and Las Baldesas, challenges were identified related to the operation of water supply systems and increased water turbidity during rainfall events. In El Ñopo, damage to water distribution infrastructure was reported, while in Malena, water services continue to operate through temporary mechanisms due to damage to the local system.

Field observations indicate that WASH needs are evolving from immediate emergency requirements toward interventions focused on the recovery and sustainability of services. The rehabilitation of affected systems, the strengthening of sanitation conditions, and continued access to safe water remain critical to reducing health and public health risks, particularly for children and adolescents, who face greater exposure to diseases associated with inadequate water, sanitation, and hygiene conditions during prolonged periods of displacement or recovery.

### Child protection and psychosocial support

As the emergency evolves, protection and emotional well-being needs continue to be evident across affected communities. During visits conducted by UNICEF, families and community leaders expressed concerns regarding the prolonged uncertainty surrounding housing recovery, the restoration of services, and the return to normal living conditions.

Children and adolescents continue to experience disruptions to their regular spaces for learning, recreation, and social interaction. In this context, UNICEF strengthened its community presence through the establishment of three Child-Friendly Spaces in Soná, Miguel Alba School, and Hicaco School, expanding access to recreational activities, psychosocial support, and safe spaces for affected children.

Monitoring visits also identified protection risks associated with temporary shelter conditions, including challenges related to privacy, lighting, and safe access to sanitation facilities, particularly for women, girls, and adolescents.

Additionally, although some camps have experienced a reduction in population due to the return or relocation of families, many individuals continue to live in temporary structures or precarious conditions. This situation sustains the need for community-based protection interventions aimed at reducing risks, strengthening support networks, and promoting safe environments for children, adolescents, and caregivers.

## UNICEF Humanitarian Response

UNICEF continues to support the response led by the Government of Panama through technical assistance, inter-agency coordination, field monitoring, and the provision of essential supplies and services for children, adolescents, and their families. During the reporting period, UNICEF strengthened its support to early recovery efforts in the affected provinces, with a focus on water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH), education, and child protection, prioritizing displaced communities and populations facing heightened vulnerabilities.

UNICEF is focusing its efforts on supporting government institutions in the following areas:

- **Water, sanitation and hygiene:** UNICEF, in coordination with its implementing partner, is advancing the implementation of sanitation interventions at the temporary settlement of La Pericada, including the construction of four showers, seven sanitation facilities, and wastewater management systems, which are expected to be completed by 1 November. These actions will directly benefit approximately 343 displaced persons, including around 54 children and adolescents from Isla Cañas, and will indirectly contribute to improving public health, hygiene, and protection conditions for both site users and surrounding communities. Additionally, UNICEF is managing interventions aimed at strengthening access to safe water, water quality monitoring, and hygiene practices in affected communities in Herrera Province. These actions will contribute to reducing health risks and safeguarding the health and well-being of children and adolescents throughout the recovery process.

- **Child protection and GBV**: Monitoring visits conducted by UNICEF highlighted continuing psychosocial support needs among children, adolescents, and caregivers, associated with the loss of homes, the disruption of educational routines, and the challenges arising from displacement and recovery processes. During the reporting period, UNICEF strengthened its response through the establishment of three Child-Friendly Spaces located at Bonifacio Alvarado Educational Centre, Miguel Alba School, and Hicaco School. These spaces became operational during the reporting period and provided recreational, play-based, and psychosocial support activities to 271 children and adolescents and 117 mothers and fathers affected by the emergency. These interventions contribute to socio-emotional recovery, the restoration of protective routines, and the strengthening of safe environments for children affected by the emergency. UNICEF continues to coordinate with local authorities, partners, and community stakeholders to strengthen community-based protection mechanisms and expand the availability of psychosocial support services for children, adolescents, and their families.

- **Education:** UNICEF continues to support the Ministry of Education (MEDUCA) in monitoring the impact of the earthquake, identifying priority needs, and planning and implementing actions to ensure educational continuity for children and adolescents affected by the disaster. To strengthen institutional capacities to address the educational and psychosocial needs arising from the emergency, UNICEF delivered a theoretical and practical training programme for 133 professionals from Herrera, Los Santos, and Veraguas, including psychologists, social workers, inclusion specialists, supervisors, teachers, school principals, and technical personnel from the education sector. These professionals will support the implementation of Education in Emergencies interventions and socio-emotional support activities in the most affected areas. Additionally, UNICEF, through its implementing partners, established three Temporary Learning Spaces and provided three Early Childhood Development kits, three Recreation kits, two Adolescent kits, and one School-in-a-Box kit in Veraguas to support teachers and education teams in delivering learning, recreational, and psychosocial support activities, with an estimated reach of approximately 2,300 students. These supplies contribute to the progressive restoration of educational routines, the strengthening of protective environments, and the well-being of children and adolescents affected by the emergency.

In coordination with the Ministry of Education (MEDUCA) and regional education authorities in Los Santos Province, UNICEF will advance the establishment of Temporary Learning Spaces (TLS) in earthquake-affected educational facilities. During the reporting period, a joint mission was conducted to identify installation sites and assess complementary Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) infrastructure needs. Priority Temporary Learning Spaces will be established at Nicanor Villalaz Bilingual School (Villa de Los Santos), Rosa María Angulo de Arce Bilingual School (Tonosí), the main town square in Macaracas to serve students from Rafael Antonio Moreno Secondary School and Rudecinda Rodríguez School, and the baseball field in Pueblo de Cañas to support students from Pablo Barrios School and Isla de Cañas School.

In parallel, assessments and improvements of sanitation facilities, including toilets and handwashing stations, will continue in the prioritized schools. These actions will contribute to restoring safe learning environments and psychosocial support services, benefiting approximately 2,855 students across the districts of Los Santos, Macaracas, Tonosí, and Pedasí.

## Humanitarian leadership, coordination and strategy

UNICEF continued to support Government-led coordination mechanisms, contributing to needs analysis and the identification of priorities for early recovery and the resilience of affected communities. In close collaboration with national authorities, local governments, United Nations agencies, civil society organizations, and implementing partners, UNICEF supports response and early recovery efforts in the provinces most affected by the earthquake.

In support of the Government-led response, UNICEF participates in needs assessments, joint monitoring missions, information analysis, and humanitarian gap identification processes to inform decision-making and the prioritization of interventions. During the reporting period, visits conducted in the communities of Soná, Río Grande, and Mariato contributed to strengthening the understanding of needs related to temporary shelter, education, water, sanitation and hygiene, and child protection.

Through its Education, Child Protection, and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) programmes, UNICEF continues to provide technical assistance to national authorities to support the planning and implementation of actions aimed at restoring essential services for the affected population. This support includes the exchange of technical information and the promotion of integrated approaches that link humanitarian response with early recovery efforts.

In the education sector, UNICEF maintains close coordination with the Ministry of Education (MEDUCA) to support the analysis of impacts, the identification of needs, and the planning of Education in Emergencies interventions. In the WASH and Child Protection sectors, UNICEF continues to work with national authorities, local governments, and implementing partners to strengthen access to basic services, promote safe spaces for children, and support the recovery of communities affected by the emergency.

## External Communication and Mobilization of Funds

UNICEF continues to advance communication and advocacy efforts to maintain the visibility of the needs of children and adolescents affected by the earthquake and to promote sustained support for impacted communities. During the reporting period, these efforts focused on highlighting ongoing needs in education, child protection, psychosocial support, and access to water, sanitation, and hygiene services, while also disseminating progress achieved through field-level interventions.

During the reporting period, UNICEF expanded its presence in national media through interviews on television and radio networks, providing further information on the emergency and ways in which the public can support the response through donations. These platforms enabled UNICEF to share updated information on the evolution of the humanitarian situation, the findings of monitoring missions conducted in the affected provinces, and priorities for the early recovery phase. The participation of UNICEF Goodwill Ambassadors

Sheldry Sáez and Maestro Omar Alfanno helped broaden the reach of key messages and raise awareness among different sectors of society regarding the needs of affected children.

UNICEF also continued to strengthen its resource mobilization efforts through fundraising campaigns, engagement with the private sector, and outreach to strategic partners and cooperation agencies. During this reporting period, a Virtual Field Trip was organized for donors and the general public, which, together with other visibility initiatives, helped expand support for the response and create opportunities to sustain priority interventions over the coming months.

As of 30 October 2026, UNICEF had mobilized USD 640,422, equivalent to 25 per cent of the funding required for the earthquake response. While this represents a significant increase compared to the previous reporting period, a funding gap of USD 1.93 million remains against the estimated requirement of USD 2.57 million.

The availability of additional funding will remain critical to expanding the coverage of early recovery interventions, including access to safe water and sanitation, the implementation of Education in Emergencies activities, the strengthening of child protection services, and the scaling up of psychosocial support interventions in the most affected communities. Needs identified through recent assessments indicate that many families continue to face precarious shelter conditions, limited access to WASH services, disruptions in access to education, and ongoing psychosocial support and protection needs. Should the current funding gap persist, UNICEF's capacity to expand and sustain these interventions in the most affected provinces will be significantly constrained during the early recovery phase.

## Reference Links

**1. Interviews**
https://www.youtube.com/live/jMwFVWsm1dE?si=VWHG6LH4z3CdOQyk
https://youtu.be/zf6hrqf73QE?si=o-jfKg-iBmD1BlbB
https://www.instagram.com/reel/De4vIrQNmyU/?vrfl=c2I3cmJ4ODlpZWxp

**2. Media**
https://www.instagram.com/p/DfFcnQEkXMj/?srtk=dWlxdWlsOGVkNHBn

**3. Communications from Counterparts and the UN System**
https://www.instagram.com/p/DfF638gFPxX/?exln=ZGM2ZGtjMGQzdXZw
https://www.instagram.com/p/DfDgl05ILT5/?obrf=aGI3bW50OGZ3Y29j

**4. Human Interest Stories**
https://www.instagram.com/reel/DezwaUStkhX/?exln=MXFlcDB5ZWU4ZTY1bg==
https://www.instagram.com/reel/DesYqOmtu90/?rpxt=MXZubnk2bm8yc3g0dg==

**5. Virtual Emergency Briefing**
https://youtu.be/3-w-44D8WEQ

**6. SBC Content**
https://www.instagram.com/p/De2UV5vmM3u/?obrf=ejBta2pvbTNjaHdi
https://www.instagram.com/p/De2UVfDtKvu/?cplk=cWplY281aWpqOXM5

**7. Goodwill Ambassador and Friends of UNICEF Communications**
https://www.instagram.com/reel/Desp1CWNDtJ/?mdxt=MW4yMzQzbGpvdmJ4Zg==
https://www.instagram.com/reel/DemV_O-NN4m/?vrfl=YXQ5YzJiNGV5Yzlj
https://www.instagram.com/reel/De8D-ORtak7/?mdxt=OTg5eG5pNnVtaDE=

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