

EARTHQUAKES IN VENEZUELA | Protection

Analysis – People Exposed to Risks Following the Earthquake. #3

July 07, 2026 – 8:30 p.m.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On the 24th of June 2026, two earthquakes of 7.2 and 7.5 magnitudes affected the centre-north of Venezuela, with particularly severe consequences in the states of La Guaira and Grand Caracas. After 12 days, the emergency continues to evolve in a context marked by internal displacement, temporary shelter arrangements for affected populations in formal or informal collective spaces, persistent disruptions in access to services, and growing demand for humanitarian assistance and protection mechanisms.

According to the most recent official update, the following figures have been reported:

3.685

FATALITIES

16.740

INJURED PEOPLE
HOSPITALISED

6.462

PEOPLE RESCUED

17.907

PEOPLE WHO LOST
THEIR HOMES

2.501

BUILDINGS WITH
SEVERE OR PARTIAL
DAMAGES

10.702

PEOPLE IN
TEMPORARY SHELTER

87

TEMPORARY
CAMPS

Official data as of July 07, 2026

The available information shows that protection needs continue to rise among the population affected by the earthquakes. In addition, the effects of the emergency are not strictly limited to the areas directly impacted, as population displacements have been observed toward host communities and other states in the country, including Bolívar, Delta Amacuro, Anzoátegui, Sucre, Zulia, Táchira, and Apure. The loss of homes, displacement, stays in temporary government-managed shelters and informal accommodation sites, as well as the disruption or weakening of family, community, institutional, and protection networks, have increased exposure to protection risks and reduced the coping capacity of affected communities. Assessments conducted identify significant concerns related to mental health and psychosocial support needs, family separation, inadequate privacy and security in accommodation facilities, and the loss of personal documentation, which may affect access to assistance and essential services. These risks disproportionately affect children and adolescents, women, older persons, persons with disabilities, and other individuals with specific protection needs.

In this context, the sector's priorities continue to focus on strengthening protection mechanisms for the most vulnerable populations, increasing access to specialised services, and helping ensure that affected people can access humanitarian assistance and available services safely and with dignity.

PROTECTION RISK ANALYSIS

The emergency context continues to exacerbate protection risks for the affected population. In the hardest-hit areas, the destruction of homes, buildings, and essential infrastructure has thoroughly transformed the living conditions of communities, leading to displacement, the establishment of temporary shelters, and the disruption of support and protection networks. Exposure to physical risks also persists due to the presence of damaged structures and the continued presence of some people in affected areas, particularly those who are still participating in search efforts or waiting for missing family members to be found. The extent of the loss of lives has also increased the need for the identification of the deceased persons and the processing of the relevant legal documentation.



MAIN RISKS IDENTIFIED

1. FAMILY SEPARATION AND IMPACT ON CHILD PROTECTION MECHANISMS

While assessments have not highlighted a large-scale presence of unaccompanied or separated children and adolescents, concerns persist regarding temporary separations from family members and difficulties in reestablishing contact among members of the nuclear family. Ongoing efforts to search for and identify missing persons, coupled with the sustained impact of human and material losses, continue to affect care dynamics as well as family and community protection mechanisms. As a result, risks related to supervision, care, and access to protective environments for children and adolescents persist. Furthermore, the use of educational facilities as temporary shelters poses challenges for the gradual restoration of the usual protective environments for children and adolescents, as shelter, protection, and educational needs converge within a single space.

2. PSYCHOLOGICAL/EMOTIONAL ABUSE OR INFLICTED EMOTIONAL SUFFERING

Assessments continue to reveal a significant emotional impact among the affected population. The main manifestations reported include anxiety, fear, sleep disturbances, and emotional exhaustion, together with persistent concerns about the safety and well-being of family members. Mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) needs remain among the primary protection concerns identified throughout the response.

This impact is also observed among caregivers, community leaders, frontline responders, and managers of temporary shelters, some of whom are themselves directly affected by the emergency and show signs of emotional overload. In addition, individuals requiring specialized mental health care have been identified, including cases that need psychiatric follow-up or continued access to medication, whose needs have not yet been fully met.

Among children, observations made during field visits suggest that the experiences they lived through during the emergency continue to be reflected in their play and social interactions, highlighting the persistence of severe emotional distress. At the same time, in some shelter settings there appears to be a tendency to normalize manifestations of stress, anxiety, and emotional suffering, which could contribute to the under identification of mental health and psychosocial support needs.

3. GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Displacement and the prolonged stay of affected people in temporary camps and other collective accommodation arrangements continue to create risk factors for gender-based violence (GBV), particularly for women, girls, and adolescents. Assessments have identified concerns related to a lack of privacy, insufficient lighting, exposure to strangers, and difficulties in ensuring safe spaces within some shelters. Furthermore, these spaces have demonstrated shortcomings from a gender and protection perspective, with limited privacy in water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities, as well as weaknesses in access control and registration mechanisms. Added to this, daily and sustained interactions between the affected population, response actors, support staff, security personnel, and military personnel can create risks of exploitation, abuse, harassment, or unequal power dynamics, especially for women, girls, and adolescents. Taken together, these factors require continuous monitoring and the strengthening of prevention, mitigation, and response measures against gender-based violence, exploitation, and abuse.

4. DISCRIMINATION AND STIGMATISATION, DENIAL OF ACCESS TO RESOURCES, OPPORTUNITIES, SERVICES, AND/OR HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

Risks of exclusion for part of the affected population persist in terms of access to assistance, essential services, and protection mechanisms. While the response focuses primarily on formally designated temporary shelters, some individuals and families remain in informal settlements, open spaces, or damaged structures, in many cases to safeguard their belongings or stay close to their communities. The limited provision of assistance and services in these areas tends to increase risks of exclusion, particularly for older adults, people with disabilities, people with limited mobility, people with chronic illnesses, and people with mental health and psychosocial support needs, as well as for children and adolescents. This situation also raises protection concerns for women, girls, and adolescents, who may face increased exposure to risks of gender-based violence, including exploitation, abuse, and other forms of violence, in contexts characterised by precarious housing conditions, the absence of formal protection mechanisms, and the limited availability of specialised services. Finally, Indigenous groups have also been identified among the population living



outside formal shelters, reinforcing the need to ensure inclusive, culturally appropriate, and equitable mechanisms for access to assistance and protection.

SECTOR PRIORITIES

As the emergency evolves, strengthening protection mechanisms in temporary shelters, informal settlements, and affected communities remains essential, especially for people who continue to face barriers to accessing formal response systems. Likewise, strengthening the capacities of shelter facility managers and their support teams is essential to address protection risks and foster safer and more inclusive environments. Significant needs persist in the early identification of, support for, and provision of specialised care to people with specific protection needs, including children and adolescents, women, older adults, people with disabilities, Indigenous peoples, and people requiring mental health and psychosocial support.

RESPONSE

The Protection Cluster and its Areas of Responsibility continue to support the response by strengthening sectoral coordination, monitoring risks, and coordinating with national and state authorities. During the reporting period, access for protection actors to temporary shelters and other spaces providing assistance to the affected population has been progressively expanded, facilitating the deployment of specialised teams and the implementation of monitoring, assessment, and protection service delivery activities.

Coordination among authorities, partner organisations, and sectoral actors has facilitated capacity strengthening for those responsible for temporary shelters and their support teams. This Coordination has also supported the creation of joint spaces for intersectoral assessment and analysis, enabling a more comprehensive understanding of humanitarian and protection needs. Furthermore, there has been a gradual incorporation of organisations into coordinated response efforts, promoting complementary interventions and the integration of approaches addressing child protection, gender-based violence, mental health and psychosocial support, and documentation assistance for the affected population.

FINAL NOTE

This analysis is based on information currently available and will be updated as the situation evolves and additional information becomes available.

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