

# INFORMATION BULLETIN



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies  
Fédération Internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge  
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja  
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

## COLOMBIA: EARTHQUAKE

16 November 2004

The Federation's mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity. It is the world's largest humanitarian organization and its millions of volunteers are active in over 181 countries.

### In Brief

This Information Bulletin (no. 01/2004) is being issued based on the needs described below reflecting the information available at this time. CHF 50,000 has been requested from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF). The Federation does not anticipate further needs. If approved, unearmarked funds to repay DREF will be needed. This operation will be reported on through the DREF update.

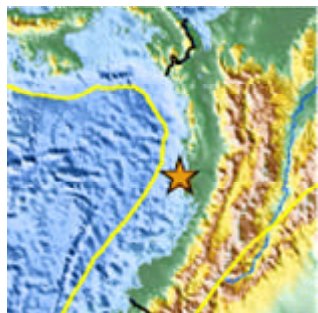
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### The Situation

An earthquake registering 6.7 on the Richter scale struck Colombia on 15 November, 2004, causing some structural damage and injuring nine people. Although the earthquake was one of the most powerful to affect the country in a century, there have been no reported deaths. According to the Colombian National Institute of Geophysics, the epicentre of the earthquake was located in the Pacific Ocean, approximately 50 kilometres from the coastal municipality of Bajo Baudó, in the department of Chocó, which borders Panama. Chocó is the poorest department in Colombia and is very prone to earthquakes. The earthquake was registered at 4:06 in the morning,



local time. Hours later, 12 aftershocks were reported, the largest of which registered 3.4 on the Richter scale. In the municipality of Pizarro, in the department of Chocó, at least four houses were destroyed, 12 houses were damaged and three people were injured. There was also partial damage to the local aqueduct. Given the magnitude of the earthquake the damage was relatively small, due in large part to the fact that the area nearest the quake's epicentre is fairly sparsely populated.

Map showing the epicentre of the earthquake, located 50 km from the west coast of Colombia.

The earthquake was also felt in the city of Cali, in the department of Valle del Cauca, which is the second largest city in the country with more than two million inhabitants. Two hospitals were evacuated in Cali because of structural damage sustained by the buildings, and some 140 patients were relocated to other health facilities. The Colombian Red Cross Society reported that at least five buildings in Cali were damaged and had to be evacuated, and ten houses in the Villas de Guadalupe neighbourhood were partially affected, with damage to the walls and floors. Responding to a request from the Ministry of Social Protection, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) delegate in Cali is visiting the facilities affected and evaluating damage to infrastructure. In the city of Buenaventura, which is the most important Colombian port on the Pacific coast, 25 houses were completely destroyed, 35 more were seriously damaged, and 6 people were injured. In the municipality of Buga, there was damage to 75 percent of the area's electricity infrastructure.

In Bogotá, the earthquake caused electricity outages in the neighbourhoods of Bochica and Villas de Granada. In addition, the earthquake caused a landslide that blocked a highway in the centre of the country and damaged the telecommunications infrastructure in the municipality of Armenia in the department of Quindío.

### Damage and Persons Affected

DEPARTMENT	MUNICIPALITY	COMMUNITY	HOUSES DESTROYED	HOUSES DAMAGED	OTHER STRUCTURES AFFECTED	PERSONS INJURED	FAMILIES AFFECTED
Chocó	Bajo Baudó (Pizarro)	Pitalito	4	13		6	866 families 4,330 persons
		Pavasa	0	0			
		Guineal	1	20			
		Sivirú	10	82	5 community centres		
		Puerto Adán	0	10			
		Curicha	1	1			
		Pilizá	10	10			
		Puerto Abadía	0	0			
		Pizarro	2	12			
		Dotenedó	6	1			
		Uzuga	4	20			
		Playa Linda	6	15			
		Puerto Vivero	16	0	1 school		
		Buchúa	50	0			
	Fomeño	1	5				
	Virudó	2	0	1 school			
	Medio Baudó	Querá	26	50		49 families 245 persons	
		Puerto Olivia	4	0	1 school		
		Isla de los García	8	0			
		Puerto Meluk	1	6			
		La Calle	4	-			
		La Aurora	0	24	1 school, 1 church, 1 school cafeteria		
		Villa Mamá	2	2			
San Luis	2	12					
Platanares	2	6					
<b>Sub total Choco</b>			<b>162</b>	<b>289</b>		<b>6</b>	<b>915 families 4,575 persons</b>
DEPARTMENT	MUNICIPALITY	COMMUNITY	HOUSES DESTROYED	HOUSES DAMAGED	OTHER STRUCTURES AFFECTED	PERSONS INJURED	FAMILIES AFFECTED
Valle del Cauca	Cali	Barrio Lleras, Villas de Guadalupe and Pampalina		10 houses 340 apartments	2 hospitals, 7 buildings		350 families 1,750 persons
	Cerrito			2		1	2 families 10 persons
	Restrepo			1	1 community centre		1 family 5 persons
	Buga				Damage to telephone and electricity services		
	Buenaventura	Barrio Bellavista and Lleras	26	41		7	65 families 400 persons
<b>Sub total Valle del Cauca</b>			<b>26</b>	<b>394</b>		<b>8</b>	<b>418 families 2,165 persons</b>

TOTAL	188	683	4 schools, 1 church, 1 cafeteria, 2 hospitals, 7 buildings, 6 community centres Damage to telephone and electricity services	14	1,333 families 6,740 persons
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Source: CRCS report 16 November, 2004

The earthquake struck Colombia at the same time that a large portion of the country is being affected by serious flooding.

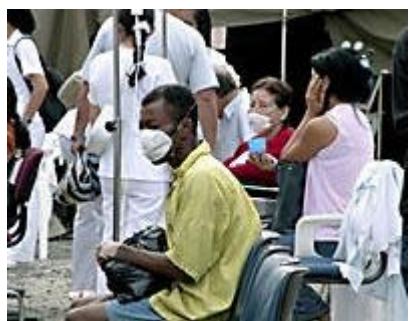
### Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The Colombian Red Cross Society (CRCS) branches in the departments of Choco, Valle del Cauca, Quindio, Cauca and Nariño have carried out damage and needs assessments, with support from the CRCS municipal units and local emergency prevention and response committees. On 16 November, a flight was chartered to transport Red Cross personnel from the Choco branch of the CRCS to the municipality of Bajo Baudó to provide humanitarian assistance based upon a damage and needs assessment being carried out.

The Red Cross branch in Valle de Cauca has provided personnel and ambulances to evacuate patients from the affected hospitals and other at-risk buildings. In coordination with the local emergency committee in Cali, a damage and needs assessment is being carried out to determine the total number of families affected so that appropriate food and non-food items and psychosocial support can be provided. Today, 45 relief packets were sent along with Red Cross personnel to assist the earthquake-affected families in Buenaventura. In Buenaventura, the Red Cross has also transported injured persons to the regional hospital.

A disaster management delegate from the Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) was deployed to Colombia to evaluate the damage and immediate needs and, together with the Federation representative in Colombia, is coordinating actions with the CRCS.

The requested DREF funds will be used to conduct damage and needs assessments, to mobilize personnel to the affected areas and to provide immediate humanitarian assistance to affected families, including food, water and shelter, in coordination with the National Direction of Prevention and Response to Disasters. Of particular concern are populations in the department of Choco and in the Pacific coastal region. This region has been highly affected by the internal civil conflict and access for damage evaluations can only be done by air and water.



Patients in a hospital in Cali sit outside the building after being evacuated following a 6.7 magnitude earthquake that struck the region on 15 November.  
*Photo courtesy of Reuters*

*All International Federation Operations seek to adhere to the Code of Conduct and are committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (SPHERE Project) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.*

*For support to or for further information concerning Federation operations in this or other countries, please access the Federation website at <http://www.ifrc.org>*

*For longer-term programmes, please refer to the Federation’s Annual Appeal.*

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