

Venezuela Earthquake Response and Assistance

Jewish Federations of North America I&O Update 7/09/2026

- Nearly two weeks after the twin earthquakes struck northern Venezuela, the focus has shifted from search-and-rescue to recovery and reconstruction. The official death toll has risen to 3,811, with more than 16,700 people injured and nearly 18,000 left homeless, while authorities continue to account for thousands of missing or uncontacted individuals as communications are restored. Humanitarian agencies are scaling up relief operations, but shortages of clean water, sanitation, temporary shelter, and medical services remain major challenges, particularly in the hardest-hit coastal communities of La Guaira.

- Over the last week, our overseas core partners, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee and The Jewish Agency for Israel, have been on the ground providing support to both the Jewish community and the general community.

- JDC response teams have been working on the ground in Caracas, working with community leadership and local partners to assess needs, coordinate relief efforts, and expand humanitarian assistance. Through the Hebraica JCC and community-led distribution efforts, approximately 5,000 people have received food assistance, while hundreds of volunteers continue supporting both the Jewish and broader communities. Hebraica also remains a critical hub for shelter and family support, including a day camp serving 143 children. As the response shifts toward recovery, JDC is prioritizing housing, psychosocial support, healthcare, and water, sanitation, and hygiene interventions for both the Jewish and general communities. Despite the immense challenges—including the destruction of 23 homes and damage to another 68—the Jewish community continues to demonstrate remarkable resilience and solidarity. Over Shabbat, JDC staff joined a large communal gathering at the Sephardi community center, including a Shabbat dinner attended by approximately 150 people.

- The Jewish Agency's focus on building long-term community resilience is rooted in consistent, on-the-ground presence. Building on years of shared infrastructure, their team arrived in Venezuela this past week. They dedicated the week to delivering targeted, practical training to summer camp staff, parents, and psychologists navigating this challenging reality. Moving forward, they are working closely with local leadership and professionals to map out needs and next steps. In the coming days, alongside the CEO of Hebraica - the community center - they will define their continued efforts from a strategic, forward-looking perspective to ensure sustainable, long-term support.

- The Israeli government's humanitarian mission to Venezuela has expanded from search-and-rescue and damage assessment to supporting the country's recovery efforts. Working alongside Venezuelan authorities, the joint delegation from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the IDF Home Front Command is assessing damaged buildings,

advising on urban search-and-rescue operations, reopening access routes, and sharing Israel's expertise in earthquake response. Following a request from Venezuela's interim president, Israel agreed to extend the mission, reflecting the close cooperation that has developed despite the absence of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

- IsraAID is providing emergency water, sanitation, hygiene, and mental health support in displacement sites while expanding child-friendly spaces, strengthening local response capacity, and conducting ongoing needs assessments to guide longer-term recovery efforts.
- CADENA is coordinating a multi-phase humanitarian response in Venezuela, providing search-and-rescue, emergency medical and psychosocial support, shelter, water and sanitation services, food assistance, and early recovery programs in partnership with local authorities and UN agencies.
- NATAN Worldwide Disaster Relief is providing emergency medical and psychosocial care, while helping restore healthcare capacity by assessing damaged hospitals and supporting the establishment of temporary treatment facilities.
- Early Starters International (ESI), an Israeli humanitarian NGO specializing in early childhood in crisis settings, is training 200 UNICEF volunteers in Venezuela to support young children affected by the earthquake. ESI also plans to establish child-friendly safe spaces for children and their families in the affected areas and to work with local authorities to help rebuild early childhood education.