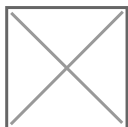




A priest celebrates a funeral Mass in La Guaira, Venezuela, July 15, 2026, for 2-year-old Kalani Martinez and her mother, Ashley Martinez, 29, victims of the earthquakes. Two catastrophic earthquakes hit Venezuela in quick succession June 24, leaving at least 5,000 dead with thousands still missing. (OSV News/Reuters/Pablo Sanhueza)

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July 17, 2026

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Twin earthquakes in Venezuela have left nearly 5,000 people dead, according to government officials, triggering a massive mobilization of humanitarian aid organizations.

In a July 15 update on X, National Assembly President Jorge Rodriguez announced the latest figures, confirming that the death toll from the back-to-back disasters had reached 4,829.

The twin earthquakes, which struck the northern Venezuelan state of La Guaira in the evening June 24, measured 7.2 and 7.5 in magnitude and were the strongest to hit Venezuela in more than a century.

According to the figures released by Rodriguez, the number of injured was currently at 16,740. The earthquakes left 17,907 people homeless, with 20,857 individuals currently seeking shelter across 106 temporary camps. The infrastructural damage included 856 affected buildings and 190 total structural collapses.

Emergency crews have rescued 6,462 individuals from the disaster zones, and seismologists have recorded 1,284 aftershocks. In a report published July 16 by UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund, the hundreds of aftershocks have continued to increase risks and hamper recovery efforts.

The earthquakes' extensive damage, especially to homes and schools, the organization noted, has created "a major child-focused humanitarian emergency" as well as hardships for vulnerable groups, including pregnant women and people with disabilities.

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Catholics around the world have joined in efforts to raise funds to assist Venezuelans struggling to find basic supplies, food and medicine.

The Latin American and Caribbean Episcopal Council, known as CELAM, posted a video on X July 15, urging Catholics to donate to Caritas Venezuela, following the launch of their campaign, "Tras el temblor, el amor" ("After the earthquake, love").

The campaign includes progress reports on the humanitarian aid the Catholic charitable organization has received and where it is distributed. In its July 10 report, Caritas Venezuela said it distributed 13,050 metric tons of aid in the 10 days following the twin earthquakes.

Water made up the largest share of the distributed aid at 5,612 tons, followed closely by 5,220 tons of food items. The organization also distributed 1,305 tons of hygiene products and 914 tons of donated clothing.

One of Caritas Venezuela's partners helping distribute the aid is Catholic Relief Services — the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' official overseas humanitarian and development agency.

CRS is "working extremely closely" with its in-country partner, the U.S. agency's spokesperson, Brittany Wichtendahl, told OSV News July 8.

Arriving in the Latin American nation July 9, Robyn Fieser — who is coordinating CRS emergency communications on the ground — found "there were literally blocks of buildings that were just pancaked onto themselves. There was massive destruction for blocks."

"It looked a little bit like a war zone," said Fieser, speaking to OSV News from Venezuela in a July 13 call. She asked people to "keep Venezuelans in their hearts."

In Bolivia, Caritas announced a nationwide collection set to take place in parishes July 26, urging donations that would provide food, medicine and temporary housing to victims in Venezuela.

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In a July 16 statement, Bishop Heiner Wilmer of Hildesheim, president of the German bishops' conference, called on Catholics in the country to pray for Venezuelans and

encouraged them to donate to Caritas Venezuela.

Initial donations made by German parishes and individuals, he noted, were "received with great gratitude in Venezuela" and distributed by Caritas.

"Through them, our aid reaches those in need directly. We must not abandon the victims of the earthquakes and must help now," Wilmer said.

"Church partners on the ground can distribute aid supplies quickly and effectively; they also support the often severely traumatized people with psychosocial services. Reconstruction will take years," the bishop added. "Please support Caritas International's vital emergency relief efforts with your donation."