

Government now has \$180 million available for no-bid emergency contracts

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Summary

La Prensa reports that the Cabinet's state of emergency after the 9 October magnitude 7.5 quake authorises up to \$100 million in no-bid contracting until 31 December, on top of \$80 million still available from an August El Niño emergency. Since 2024 the Mulino government has issued five such declarations worth \$360 million in total.

Details (summary of the article)

La Prensa reviewed the government's growing use of emergency declarations, which let ministries buy works, goods and services without public tender. Cabinet Resolution 108, published in the Official Gazette on Saturday, the day after the magnitude 7.5 earthquake centred in Tonosí (Los Santos), declares a nationwide emergency and frees up to \$100 million, with institutions obliged to commit the money by 31 December. Unlike earlier decrees, the quake funds will be handled through a trust at Banco Nacional under the Finance Ministry, each payment needs prior clearance from the Comptroller General, and unused money must return to the Treasury. A second live decree from 25 August, tied to El Niño, allows another \$80 million until 30 June 2027, so \$180 million is currently available outside normal procurement rules. Since July 2024 there have been five such declarations totalling \$360 million, including a \$160 million package after the November 2024 floods that hit Chiriquí, Bocas del Toro and the Ngäbe-Buglé comarca, of which \$120 million went to the Public Works Ministry and \$23.7 million to IDAAN. Accountability reports naming contractors and amounts are only required after the emergency ends, so spending is not visible while it is under way. Economy Minister Felipe Chapman said the economy will not stop, that Panama can cover the most urgent damage, and that any extra financing would be soft loans; he also thanked the IDB, CAF, IMF, CABI and the United States for non-reimbursable aid.

Original (es)

Gobierno acumula cinco emergencias y \$360 millones para contrataciones por vía excepcional

Desde 2024, el Gobierno ha aprobado cinco declaratorias de emergencia que habilitan \$360 millones para contrataciones excepcionales. Dos siguen vigentes y suman \$180 millones.