

Alert note*Turkey - Syria Earthquake, 6 February 2023*

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Forum: ACT Syria Forum

Type of emergency: Natural disaster- Earthquake
Date of emergency (if rapid onset): 06/02/2023

1. The nature of the emergency

An earthquake with a magnitude of 7.8, with at least 78 aftershocks have been reported followed by a second earthquake of 7.5 magnitude, at a depth of 17.925 km (11.14 miles) has occurred at Central Turkey near the city of Gaziantep, as reported by the National Earthquake Information Center (NEIC) of the USGS on February 06, 2023, 01:41:15 UTC. Preliminary analysis indicates that this is a very strong earthquake, and it is very shallow (shallower quakes generally tend to be more damaging than deeper quakes).

Widespread building collapse has been reported in southeast Turkey and northern Syria. The earthquake was also felt across Lebanon, Cyprus and the region while it is expected that aftershocks which may be at the same intensity as the initial earthquake will be felt for weeks. In Syria, there have been 783 deaths based on early reports (403 in the government-controlled areas and 380 in the uncontrolled areas), 1,315 injuries, and 4,000 damaged buildings and still hundreds of trapped civilians under the rubble.

Death toll has reached more than 1,500 based on the latest reports in Turkey, less than 24 hours after the disaster, and 2,300 have been injured and search and rescue operations are ongoing in several major cities, and a total of 1,718 collapsed buildings destroyed in Turkey's Gaziantep and Kahramanmaraş provinces, said Vice President Fuat Oktay.

Syria's healthcare system is overwhelmed by the number of people in need of medical attention, as some hospitals have been damaged, as reported by Mazen Kiwara, Middle East regional director for the Syrian American Medical Society, through Al Jazeera. Kiwara said his team had to evacuate a maternity hospital in Afrin and reported at least five deaths, including that of a pregnant woman. Severe winter conditions of snow and rain are preventing first responders to reach people who need assistance.

Disaster Alert¹ estimated that 23.08 million people are affected across four countries – Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, and Cyprus. Kiwara added on his statement that the effort should be focused on the humanitarian response, especially in shelter and health to protect the population of more than 1.5 million people in northwest Syria alone.

2. The impact and scale of the emergency

The earthquake that has hit Syria and Turkey is a large-scale emergency with both countries calling for immediate support. Aleppo, Latakia, Hama, Tartus, Idlib and surrounding areas have been affected severely. Residents have been displaced due to high levels of building collapse with more than 3000 people reported without shelter as a result of the earthquake in Aleppo alone. With heavy storms approaching the area, people are not only facing displacement but also extreme cold reaching -2 degrees at night.

The opposition-held regions in Syria are heavily populated with some 4 million people displaced from other parts of the country by the fighting. Many live in buildings that are already heavily damaged from past bombardments. Hundreds of families remain trapped in rubble, the opposition emergency organization, called the White Helmets, said in a statement. Thousands of buildings were reported collapsed in a wide area extending from Syria's cities of Aleppo and Hama to Turkey's Diyarbakir, more than 330 kilometres

¹ https://disasteralert.pdc.org/disasteralert/?hazard_id=193961

(200 miles) to the northeast. Displacement, destruction of homes and no access to heating or water have affected the residents that were able to get out from under the rubble.

The Syrian population was already deeply affected by the ongoing war and the economic collapse of the country and now, many people must deal with being displaced, losing their livelihood, and fighting the harsh winter conditions.

3. Local and national capacity

All agencies, local and international, are working in a challenging and complex operating environment, with decreasing financial support despite increasing needs. ACT Syria Forum (ASF) members are well positioned in their areas of operations and all have well trained staff that can work in difficult situations with utmost efficiency and productivity. Members have extensive experience in humanitarian response and are active in coordination groups such as the Syria International NGO Regional Forum (SIRF), as well as relevant regional forums such as the NW Syria NGO Forum. These forums give voice to LNGOs and INGOs conducting humanitarian responses in the region, as well as avenues to facilitate their collective engagement.

The joint work of the ASF members has allowed a facilitation of implementation of proposed activities to be carried out within a transparent work implementation. ASF members will coordinate with each other to ensure complementarity of proposed activities. ASF members will maintain communication and collaboration through monthly Forum meetings and/or through side meetings if needed. ASF members will also be reporting their work through coordination structures to ensure efforts are not duplicated and a synergy approach is taken to alleviate the hardships of beneficiaries by complimenting the work between actors.

The ASF has mobilized to support operations in Latakia, Hama, Aleppo and Idlib. Currently members are undertaking needs assessment in different locations, and some are responding to the emergency with the limited resources available.

4. Key needs and gaps

The situation is still very unsafe and unknown in many areas with ongoing aftershocks. Due to the harsh weather conditions, winterization has been identified as a major need with kits such as blankets, heating tools, mattresses required as churches and mosques are hosting the displaced. Food, especially hot meals are needed for those who lost their homes as well as hygiene kits. Support in rehabilitation will also be required after the initial response phase.

Please indicate whether you are considering:

	Indicate your intention with an X below
Rapid Response Fund (<i>intended for small and medium scale emergencies</i>)	X
Appeal (<i>intended for large scale emergencies</i>)	X

Due to the nature of this emergency, the forum is planning to respond , by requesting RRF as an emergency support and then may be followed by an appeal, based on the results of the assessment. However, The Syria forum had published an appeal a few weeks ago which is not yet funded, but based on the needs assessment a revision of the current appeal or a new appeal will be sought, with having a response inside affected parts of Turkey if members’ assessment shows the needs.

Budgets have not been estimated as members are still conducting their assessments, which will be presented during the Emergency Steering Committee meeting.

Note: If you indicate an intention to launch an appeal, the secretariat will activate an Emergency Steering Committee meeting within two working days on receipt of this alert.

5. Potential responses

ACT Alliance members have responded to the Syrian crisis, an ongoing multi-sided armed conflict since the unrest began in March 2011. The ACT Syria Forum members in the region, and their work on the ground, has observed the increasing needs of directly and indirectly affected populations, especially among

children and youth. In responding to the humanitarian needs of vulnerable people affected, ASF will continue to provide humanitarian assistance in this complex environment. ACT members in Syria will coordinate their work collaboratively in the ASF Forum.

While in Turkey there is no ACT forum, few members are operating from there, with few members having regional mandate are part of the Syria forum and are covering Turkey; the Syria forum will coordinate the response with other ACT members that are planning to respond in Turkey to have a better coordinated response if an appeal is to be.

MECC's previous interventions cover most of Syrian governorates including Damascus, Damascus rural, Darra, Aleppo, Homs, Coastal area, Homs, Hassakeh and Kamishly. Besides, MECC has adopted a multi-sectoral approach and intervened in most sectors including rehabilitation, waste management campaigns; health support: medications, health awareness sessions, Hygiene promotion activities; Food and NFI distribution, educational support, livelihoods support: vocational training; Protection support, women empowerment through life skills sessions and conducting PSS to traumatized individuals, teachers and family members injured; WASH support. MECC supported to date more than two million families under different sectors. MECC plans to support more than 3000 beneficiaries for hot meals, refuge, food kits, hygiene kits, support in rehabilitation and rescue.

Christian Aid (CA) has previously been working with local partners inside Syria since 2015 and has been responding to the associated refugee crisis in neighbouring countries since 2012. CA's aims in Syria are to 1) provide needs-based, accountable, humanitarian relief, and to 2) promote the resilience of communities and Syrian civil society, which are at the forefront of the conflict and response. CA interventions in NW Syria in recent years have included monthly multi-purpose unconditional cash assistance, as well as the distribution of food and hygiene kits, and the distribution of kits consisting of mattresses, pillows, blankets and carpets to displaced families in informal IDP camps. Through a recent EU-funded education and resilience project, 4 community centres were set up in NW Syria with a local partner. These centres provide safe spaces to improve the skills, resilience and social inclusion of young people through remedial education, university scholarships, vocational training, including specialised nursing diplomas, psychosocial support and community involvement. Through this same project, young people were trained in advanced first response, as well as COVID-19 protocols, and supported to form volunteer first response committees. CA will be connecting with its local members and supporting their local members in any support needed.

The Department of Ecumenical Relations and Development (DERD) is the charitable arm of and is affiliated to the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East (GOPA) established in 1994 is currently the largest faith-based and one of the few low-risk organization in Syria based on INGO partner assessments. With 45 offices and 43 service centers, GOPA-DERD's total of 2000 main full time/part time staff and outreach mobile teams implement a wide range of programs in 13 out of 14 governorates in Syria, that address all the needs of those affected, IDPs and refugee returnees. GOPA/DERD work under the sectors of: Livelihood (Long-term: VT, Grants & Short-term: Cash (MPCA)/Voucher-assistance), FSA/FSL, FI/NFI distribution, Protection, Education, Health, Shelter & WASH. GOPA plans to respond through its centers in the areas of Latakia, Hama, Aleppo and Northern Syria by providing winterization kits, food items, medicines and emergency support.

MECC, CA and GOPA-DERD will respond to the disaster providing support needed based on the needs assessment. Initial response plan may include winterization kits, hot meals and food kits, medicine and emergency support as well as efforts for immediate relief and rehabilitation.

ASF members are currently conducting their rapid assessment to respond to this disaster. ACT members present in Turkey are also conducting their assessments and will coordinate with the ACT Syria Forum and the ACT MENA regional office.