

2023 Türkiye & Syria EARTHQUAKES RESPONSE



Situation Report #9

February 21, 2023

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- Two strong earthquakes struck southeast Türkiye and northwest Syria on Feb. 6, killing more than 46,000 people.
- Aftershocks have continued to shake the region, including a 6.3-magnitude earthquake on Feb. 20 that caused additional damage.
- Project HOPE's Emergency Response Team is on the ground to support survivors through the delivery of key medical equipment and supplies, disaster hygiene kits, and shelter support.
- Project HOPE's emergency assessments show significant WASH needs at internally displaced camps.

SITUATION OVERVIEW

On February 6, 2023, a 7.8-magnitude earthquake occurred near Gaziantep in southeast Türkiye. Several hours after the initial quake, a 7.5-magnitude aftershock struck, one of the hundreds to follow that have complicated search efforts and caused additional buildings to collapse.ⁱ The death toll in Türkiye and Syria from the February earthquakes has surpassed 46,000 people. United Nations officials expect this number to increase significantly as more victims are recovered.

Survivors of the earthquakes again rushed from their homes or took shelter on February 20 when 6.4- and 5.8-magnitude aftershocks struck near Antakya, Türkiye. There are reports of some buildings that collapsed, trapping people under rubble. As of writing, an estimated 294 people have been injured and six killed from these aftershocks in Türkiye. Over 100 people were reportedly injured in Syria.

In Türkiye, where an estimated 9 million people were affected, needs remain high as the population experiences widespread displacement. Officials estimate that over 1 million people are now displaced, many living in shelters, in vehicles, and on the streets.ⁱⁱ

Project HOPE's Emergency Response Team has identified several neighborhoods with significant displaced populations living in makeshift tent camps. The displaced families only have tents for shelter, despite the cold winter temperatures. There is little access to proper hygiene facilities, including showers, toilets, and latrines. The Emergency Response Team's assessments show that some camps of up to 3,000 people have only one latrine. In addition, the assessed camps have no running water, increasing the chances of unclean water being used and spreading illness. Within every community that Project HOPE has assessed, there is a clear need for



Widespread damage can be seen in Kahramanmaraş, Türkiye following the Feb. 6 earthquakes. Photo by James Buck for Project HOPE, 2023.

mental health and psychosocial support as survivors reel from the earthquake's destruction and continued aftershocks.

Project HOPE has also identified significant needs among health centers, including mobile medical units for rural populations, temporary housing for health care workers, medicines, and medical supplies.

Those affected include the over 4 million Syrians who sought safety in Türkiye during the 12-year conflict between government forces and opposition military forces. Thousands of refugees are returning back to Syria following the announcement by Türkiye that they will be allowed to re-enter at a later time.

In Syria, humanitarian care and supplies have slowly entered the affected area following the re-opening of three border crossings. Those entering have met a challenging security situation and a significant need for assistance for the over 10 million Syrians impacted by the quake.ⁱⁱⁱ North Syria is held by the Syrian government, while northwest Syria is under opposition control. The U.N. is assisting in the movement of aid into opposition-held areas.

PROJECT HOPE RESPONSE

Project HOPE activated our Emergency Response Team in the immediate aftermath of the initial earthquake and mobilized partners to support these efforts. In the first 24 hours, Project HOPE's team began assisting survivors out of the rubble and directing them to medical services.

Through our partner SAMU, a Spanish-based humanitarian response organization, Project HOPE deployed a K-9 search and rescue team to help locate survivors in collapsed structures. The team conducted 25 interventions, during which they located and recovered 23 deceased individuals.

The Emergency Response Team is mobilizing 100 infant incubators for import and distribution through the Turkish Ministry of Health. Project HOPE will begin distribution of hundreds of sleeping bags, as well as 2,000 disaster hygiene kits and 1,000 infant hygiene kits that have arrived in Türkiye. The team has also identified a manufacturer to produce containers that can be outfitted to house health care workers or to function as field clinics. The first two generators have been received by Project HOPE's team in Türkiye and have been distributed in Nurdagi, a city near Gaziantep.

Project HOPE is working to identify additional local Turkish vendors for the procurement of medical supplies, additional hygiene kits, and generators.

Project HOPE's team is communicating with local partners operating in Syria to respond to the immediate health needs. This is likely to include supporting program activities of partners as well as the potential delivery of medicines and medical supplies to the impacted communities.

The Emergency Response Team is also mobilizing additional surge support, including a Mental Health and Psychosocial Support expert and a Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene expert. Through its partner, SAMU, Project HOPE continues to have a Type 1 Mobile Medical Team on standby if requested by the government.

Project HOPE first started providing medical support in Türkiye in 1987 and has responded to previous crises including the 1999 earthquake and Syrian refugee response in 2013-2015.



SAMU, a Project HOPE partner, deployed a K-9 search and rescue team to Antakya, Hatay, Türkiye after the earthquake. Photo by James Buck for Project HOPE, 2023.

ⁱ <https://reliefweb.int/report/turkiye/earthquake-turkiye-and-north-west-syria-flash-update-no-2-7-february-2023>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.nytimes.com/video/world/middleeast/100000008768658/earthquake-turkey-syria.html>

ⁱⁱⁱ https://www.cnn.com/middleeast/live-news/turkey-syria-earthquake-updates-2-13-23-intl/h_96320c686b707dc5b3928088d2fc2224