NORTH-WEST SYRIA FLASH UPDATE #1
Emergency Response to Earthquake

16 February 2022

Overview of Developments

The earthquakes that struck Türkiye and Syria on 6 February 2023 heavily impacted north-west Syria (NWS), a region where 4.1 million people depend on humanitarian assistance, the majority of whom are women and children. Over 4,400 deaths and 7,900 injuries have been reported according to the Health cluster, mainly in the districts of Harim, Afrin and Jebel Saman with numbers expected to rise. The earthquakes have affected at least 96 communities and 35 sub-districts in north-west Syria; more than 1,700 buildings have been completely destroyed and over 6,300 have been partially destroyed[1].

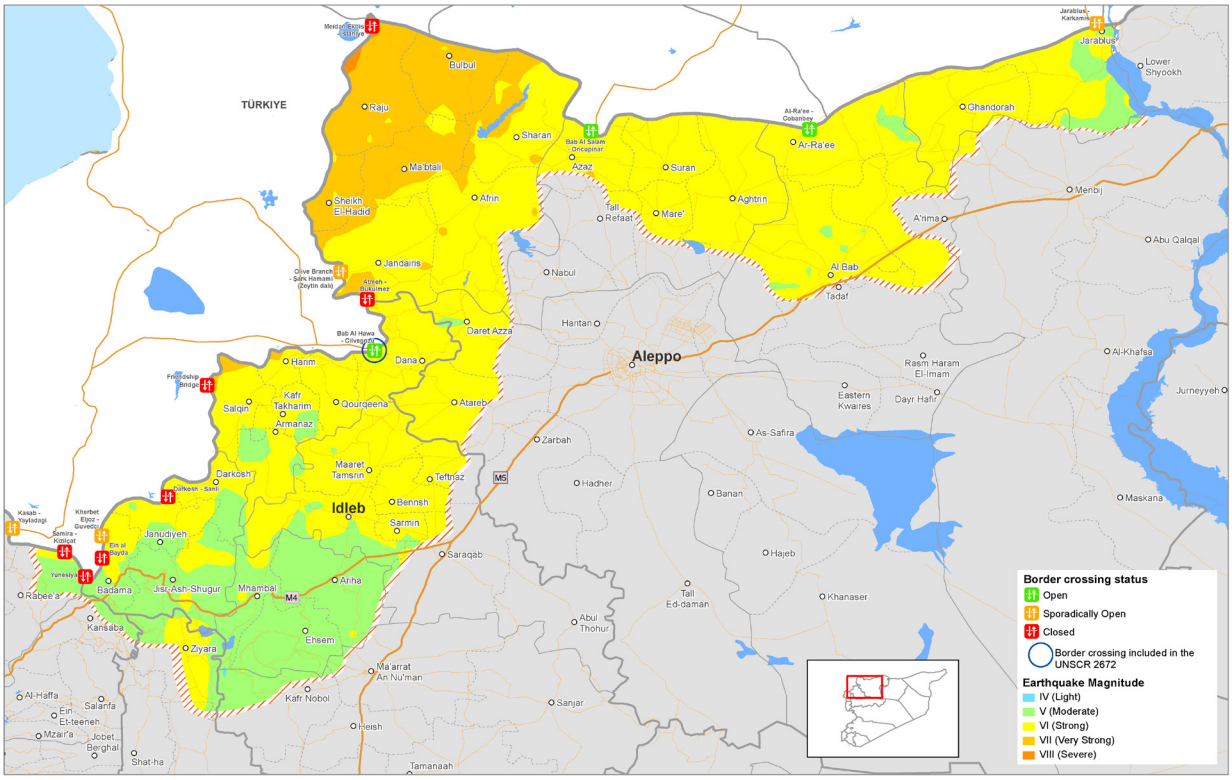
The UN transshipment hub in Reyhanli (Hatay) was inaccessible for 48 hours after the earthquake and the roads from Gaziantep were disrupted. The UN resumed its cross-border operation on 9 February following three days of temporary disruption due to damaged roads. Over 100 trucks loaded with aid provided by six UN agencies have so far crossed to NWS, since the earthquakes.

On 13 February United Nations Secretary General António Guterres welcomed the decision by the Syrian President to open the two crossing points of Bab Al-Salam and Al Ra'ee from Türkiye to north-west Syria for an initial period of three months. The opening of these crossing points will allow the timely delivery of humanitarian aid to those affected by the earthquake.

On 14 February, the UN published an inter-agency flash appeal on the earthquake situation, covering the Syrian Arab Republic's main humanitarian needs. The appeal targets 4.9 million people out of 8.8 million people affected by the earthquake in the whole of Syria.

On 16 February, UNHCR released an emergency supplementary appeal for Türkiye and Syria, which includes critical needs and planned interventions in NWS.

Earthquake Affected Areas and Border Crossings[2]



[1] OCHA North-west Syria: Flash Update No. 9 as of 15 February 2023
[2] OCHA, Sources: USGS, field reports - crossing points of Bab Al-Salam and Al Ra'ee updated

UNHCR Emergency Response

UNHCR is leading the coordination of the three clusters: Shelter/NFI, Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) and Protection, in close partnership with the Humanitarian Liaison Group, local and international NGOs, and the Whole of Syria coordination structure.

Shelter and Core relief items

Over 100 trucks loaded with aid crossed the Bab Al-Hawa and Bab Al-Salam border-crossing since the earthquakes struck on 6 February. UNHCR has participated in four convoys to date:

Date	Crossing point	UNHCR trucks	CRI Kits[3]	Tents	Rubbhalls
11 February	Bab Al-Hawa	12	2,000		
14 February	Bab Al-Hawa	18	2,500	1,000	
16 February	Bab Al-Hawa	2		600	
16 February	Bab Al-Salam	2		600	
Delivered since earthquake			**4,500**	**2,200**	
Upcoming (22 February)				300	8

Thanks to stock already prepositioned in NWS, within 48 hours of the earthquakes UNHCR through partner WATAN distributed 882 tents in Aleppo and Idleb Governorates, reaching 4,410 individuals.

Following the resumption of transshipments, on 15 February, 135 CRI kits were distributed to 650 earthquake affected persons in Jandaris (Aleppo) and Idleb community (Idleb). At the same time, 50 tents were distributed to 250 earthquake affected persons in Jandaris for a total of 932 tents to 4,660 earthquake affected persons in the last week.

UNHCR is sending 1,000 Refugee Housing Units to Gaziantep to be delivered to north-west Syria and used as temporary accommodation centers and emergency housing.

UNHCR through partner WATAN has established four reception centers run by local authorities in Ariha (Ariha park), Atarab (Al Snaa school), Atarib (Asl Shamal schools) and Mpauaaret Tamsirin (open area) and expanded existing camps including new sites establishment.

UNHCR's protection partner SHAFAK has established 16 temporary shelter centers where protection teams provide affected populations with food, heating, psychosocial support, information on the available medical services and recreational activities targeting 965 households.

The Human Appeal reception center in Maaret Tamsrin, Idleb, can accommodate up to 1,000 people.

UNHCR convoy delivers relief items inside north-west Syria.
Photo: ©UNHCR

The Government of Syria (GoS) has accepted that UN staff can cross into NWS from Gaziantep. UNHCR staff accompanied the first two UN missions to NWS on 14 and 15 February to meet with local officials and the community.

[3] A core relief item kit contains High Thermal Blankets, Plastic tarpaulins, Foam Mattresses, Hygiene kit, Sleeping mats, Carpet-Kitchen set, Jerry cans, Solar lamp.

Camp Coordination and Camp Management

The Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Cluster has tracked more than 57,000 displacements between 6 and 13 February after the earthquake. Departures mainly occurred from Jandairis, Salqin and Harim. The main locations where displaced people arrived included Dana, Maaret Tamsrin sub-districts.

Displacements are ongoing and the figure is expected to rise dramatically. Establishing reception centres for IDPs and safe spaces for women and girls are priorities.

Tents and CRI distributions in Jandaris (Aleppo)
Photo: WATAN

Protection

The Protection Cluster and its Areas of Responsibility (AoRs) plan to roll out a rapid protection assessment next on 20 February to identify most affected population groups, emergent protection risks and map accessible/available protection services in affected areas. Information gathered from this assessment will provide evidence-based information to prioritize protection response activities linked to family separation, individual protection assistance (IPA) and housing, land and property (HLP) related rights.

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