NORTH-WEST SYRIA FLASH UPDATE #2
Emergency Response to Earthquake

20 February 2022

Overview of Developments

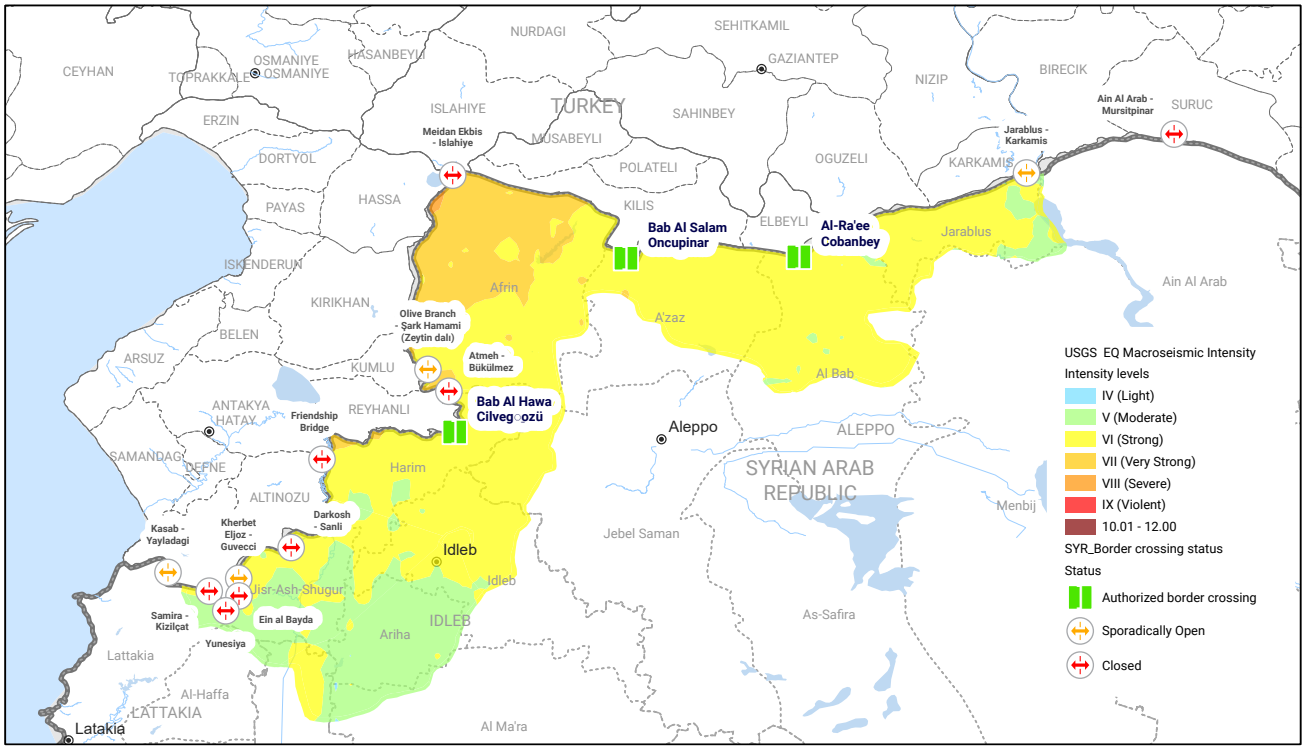
The earthquakes that struck Türkiye and Syria on 6 February 2023 heavily impacted north-west Syria (NWS), a region where **4.1 million people depend on humanitarian assistance**, the majority of whom are women and children. **Over 4,500 deaths and 8,300 injuries** have been reported according to the 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 NWS; **more than 9,000 buildings have been partially or completely destroyed and over 11,000 people have become homeless**[1].

Over 190 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 could better facilitate 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**. **UNHCR Syria's appeal of $51.3 million**, including **NWS aims to assist 385,000 individuals** with protection and access to social services; psychosocial support and counselling; relief items; emergency shelter; cash and in-kind assistance.

On 19 February artillery shelling affected Tuffahiyeh, Fleifel, Banin and Ruwaiha communities in Idleb; Ankawi and Qalidin communities in western Hama; Hosh Elsayed Ali community in northern Homs; Ein Issa – Ein Bnar and Nawwara-Klz communities in northern Lattakia. No casualties were reported[2].

Earthquake Affected Areas and Border Crossings[3]



[1] OCHA Situation report – 17 February
[2] OCHA Türkiye – Daily Update – 20 February 2023
[3] USGS, OCHA – 15 February

UNHCR Emergency Response

UNHCR is leading the coordination of 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.

The Government of Syria (GoS) has accepted that UN staff can cross into NWS from Gaziantep. UNHCR staff joined inter-agency missions on 14, 15 and 18 February and met with local officials, NGOs and the community. The next mission is scheduled for 21 February.

Shelter and Core relief items

Over 190 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[4]	Tents	Rubb halls
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 (21 February)	Bab Al-Salam		1,000		
Upcoming (22 February)	TBC			300	4

Assistance distribution as of 19 February:

Tents 1,840 distributed
9,200 reached individuals

CRI Kits 2,090 distributed
10,450 reached individuals

Tents installation in Harim Armanaz, Alqaws (Idleb)
Photo: ©WATAN

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 11 February, UNHCR expanded its delivery of humanitarian assistance to NWS. Between 6 and 19 February, 2,090 CRI kits were distributed to 10,450 earthquake affected persons in Jandaris (Aleppo) and Armanaz, Azar, Darkosh, Foz - Zuf, Idleb, Jdidet Eljisr, Jisr-Ash-Shugur, Kherbet Eljoz, Mudiah - Luxin, Qanniyeh and Salqin communities in Idleb). At the same time, 1,840 tents were distributed to 9,200 earthquake affected persons in Ariha, Armanaz, Atma, Harim, Kelly, Maland and Sarmada communities in Idleb and Afrin, Atareb, Bulbul, Dowaibeq, Jandairis, Ra'el, Suran (Suran) and Tuwama communities in Aleppo.

UNHCR is sending 500 Refugee Housing Units to Gaziantep expected to be delivered to NWS within a week 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 Maaret Tamsrin (open area) and expanded existing camps including new sites establishment. These are currently hosting more than 190 households. In Idled and Azaz, UNHCR's protection partner SHAFAK has established 16 temporary shelter centers.

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

Camp Coordination and Camp Management

The Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Cluster has tracked more than 86,500 displacements between 6 and 17 February after the earthquake. Departures principally occurred from Jandaris, followed by Salqin and Harim. The main locations where displaced people arrived to included Dana, Salqin and Idleb 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 Harim, Salqin (Idleb)
Photo: ©WATAN

Protection

In Idleb and Azaz, in the 16 temporary shelters established by UNHCR partners SHAFAK protection teams provide affected populations with WFP food, heating, psychosocial support, information on the available medical services and other sectoral activities targeting 965 households. The protection teams have so far supported with psychological first aid 9,200 individuals in Idleb and 5,169 individuals in Azaz.

The Protection Cluster and its Areas of Responsibility (AoRs) launched a rapid protection assessment on 20 February with the participation of 22 partners and covering 107 communities most affected in NWS. The purpose of this exercise is 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. Initial findings from this assessment will be shared next week to partners to provide strategic guidance, advocacy message and acute risks protection awareness.

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