



UNHCR TÜRKİYE

EMERGENCY RESPONSE TO EARTHQUAKE

20 February 2023

BACKGROUND AND RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

- According to media reports, a powerful 6.3-magnitude earthquake was registered in Hatay Province on 20 February, the impact of which has yet to be confirmed. This comes two weeks after the two quakes of 7.7 and 7.5 magnitude impacted eleven provinces in Türkiye's southeast region on 6 February.
- A three-month state of emergency has been declared for provinces directly affected by the earthquakes.
- The two earthquakes of 7.7 and 7.5 magnitude in Kahramanmaraş Province on 6 February impacted eleven provinces in Türkiye's southeast region. A three-month state of emergency has been declared for provinces directly affected by the earthquake. **Over 6,400 aftershocks have been registered in the region so far.**
- [According to](#) the Disaster and Management Authority of Türkiye (AFAD), as of 20 February, 41,156 people have lost their lives, while 485,682 people have been [evacuated](#) to other provinces. **Work is ongoing to meet shelter and other needs in 40 provinces.**
- AFAD [informed](#) on 19 February that search and rescue efforts were completed in the earthquake zone except in southern Kahramanmaraş and Hatay, where some 19,000 personnel continue with search and rescue efforts. AFAD also announced that nearly 250,000 tents and over 6,000 containers had been set up in the earthquake zone.
- The Ministry of National Education [indicated](#) on 20 February that schools would start in March. The Council of Higher Education [indicated](#) that the spring term would take place online, to allow for student dormitories to host affected people, and the hybrid education option would be re-evaluated in April.
- The Turkish government is leading the response through coordination by AFAD. The Turkish Red Crescent and several humanitarian organisations are working alongside AFAD. The Presidency of Migration Management (PMM) is coordinating the response with regards to refugees and asylum-seekers, among others.
- Relief and shelter are being provided by the Government of Türkiye in sports and youth centres, schools and university dormitories. Municipalities in provinces outside of the earthquake zone are opening their centres and community spaces to receive people who have lost their homes. Organisations are delivering tents and relief items, setting up mobile kitchens and WASH facilities, and providing hot meals and beverages in the affected provinces.
- UNHCR is responding with life-saving core relief items upon the request of the Turkish government. These include mainly emergency shelter materials, tents, blankets, hygiene and kitchen items, and solar lamps.
- As of early February, UNHCR had three offices in Gaziantep, Hatay and Şanlıurfa with 85 staff.

UNHCR OPERATIONAL FIGURES TO DATE



50,500

UNHCR high-thermal blankets delivered



29,000

hygiene kits delivered



19,500

kitchen sets delivered



15,100

tents delivered



16,300

mattresses delivered



10,000

tarpaulin delivered

UNHCR CAPACITY AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Delivery of Life-Saving Assistance

- UNHCR is supporting the relief efforts of the Government of Türkiye in liaison with AFAD and PMM, prioritizing the delivery of core relief items, tents and shelter materials, and working with partners and communities to identify and assess the overall needs of refugees and the host community.
- With PMM, UNHCR is coordinating the provision of core relief items, including blankets, mattresses, kitchen sets, hygiene kits, heaters, food packs and warm clothing for PMM-managed centres, including 12 temporary accommodation centres (TACs) to accommodate affected refugees and local residents.
- So far, UNHCR has provided 19,500 high thermal blankets, 12,000 foam mattresses and 19,500 kitchen sets, 12,500 supplementary food packs, 9,000 hygiene parcels, as well as heaters, winter clothes and boots, and other standard core relief items to PMM for distribution in the TACs.
- UNHCR has also provided AFAD with over 14,500 family tents, close to 600 all-weather tents, 10,000 tarpaulin, 31,000 high-thermal blankets, and close to 20,000 hygiene parcels. UNHCR is also supporting the Ministry of Family and Social Services with tents, Rub Halls and powerbanks.
- UNHCR is procuring and dispatching additional items and hygiene materials from its stocks in-country as well as globally in Europe, the Middle East and Asia regions to provide urgently needed shelter assistance. Items are dispatched through airlift and road transport.

Communications with Communities (CwC)

- Through its CwC channels, UNHCR is disseminating information and messages related to the earthquake from official sources (mostly PMM and the Ministry of Family and Social Services) to communities in multiple languages, including Arabic and Farsi.
- The [UNHCR Türkiye Information Board](#) and WhatsApp communication group posted information related to the movement of refugees and asylum-seekers from areas impacted by the earthquake, information on state hotlines and mobile kitchens and death registration and means to report on fraud related to the earthquake, among others.
- A dedicated page was set up on the [UNHCR Türkiye's Help website](#) for earthquake resources, where tips and social media messages for survivors in the aftermath of the disaster and awareness-raising on trafficking post-earthquake period were posted, as well as hotline numbers specific to gender-based violence, including seeking help and reporting.
- Reach to UNHCR's CwC channels continued to rise during the past week. Compared to the first week following the earthquake, the second week recorded a 55% increase in reach on the Türkiye Information Board on Facebook. The Help website recorded a 14% increase in users and a 43% increase in page views, while the UNHCR's counselling line recorded 72% more calls compared to week prior, with a higher rate of inquiries on resettlement and on earthquake-related financial assistance.
- From 6 to 17 February, some 2,200 earthquake-related calls were received from 20 locations, mostly by Syrian nationals, Afghan and Iranian nationals, with queries on related to support for accommodation, food and core relief items.

UNHCR Response

- **Needs assessments:** UNHCR field units are carrying out preliminary assessments and coordinating with partners, communities and local NGOs to follow the movements of people, identify basic shelter needs and understand the needs on the ground. As more tents are being set up in various provinces and neighbourhoods, the most pressing needs of people living in the tents are blankets, mats, winter clothes, socks, diapers, baby food, and shoes.
- **Coordination:** UNHCR's field teams are working with the local authorities from provinces neighbouring the affected areas to identify challenges, needs and population movements as they start receiving individuals from the earthquake affected provinces.
- **Resettlement:** Some 282,000 refugees, mostly from earthquake-affected areas, were referred by PMM to UNHCR for resettlement processing last week, in addition to UNHCR's regular identification process of vulnerable refugees for resettlement. UNHCR is prioritising the urgent identification, processing and departure of vulnerable refugees.
- As the need for psychosocial support increases in the aftermath of the earthquake and based on a request by the World Health Organisation (WHO), UNHCR delivered 70 tents to serve as counselling centres during the day, and as shelters for psychosocial teams at night. The tents were delivered on 15 and 17 February to nine provinces of south-east Türkiye.

INTER-AGENCY

- On 16 February, the Emergency Relief Coordinator, Martin Griffiths, designated Mr. Alvaro Rodriguez, the Resident Coordinator (RC) for the United Nations in Türkiye since December 2021, as Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) for Türkiye for an initial three-month period. In support to this role, Mr. Sebastian Rhodes Stampa has been deployed as Senior OCHA Response Advisor.
- The Humanitarian Country Team, consisting of representatives of the UN and NGOs as well as the Turkish Red Crescent and the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) agreed on 20 February to the HC-led coordination structure developed by OCHA in consultation with UN agencies. UNHCR will be leading on Protection and co-leading Child Protection and GBV.
- The inter-agency team is ensuring that the initiatives and tools developed under the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) are adapted and used for the earthquake response.

APPEALS AND FUNDING

- In alignment with the [Türkiye Earthquakes UN Flash Appeal](#), which was launched on 16 February, UNHCR issued its [Earthquake Emergency Supplementary Appeal](#) covering Türkiye and Syria with financial requirements and targets for activities in 11 provinces impacting over 15 million people, including 1.75 million refugees. Requirements for Türkiye are USD 150 million. The overall aim of UNHCR's action is to improve living conditions of earthquake-affected people, and to assist those with specific needs, including among refugees, in finding and accessing necessary services including documentation and social protection.
- In the Supplementary Appeal, which mirrors the UN Flash Appeal, UNHCR included life-saving relief items such as tents, blankets and hygiene kits for up to 1.5 million earthquake-affected people, to be delivered under the coordination of AFAD. In addition, UNHCR is supporting the authorities and earthquake-affected communities in maintaining social protection services available and accessible, working together with other organisations. UNHCR is also providing targeted assistance to earthquake-affected refugees with specific needs, working closely with PMM and the Ministry of Family and Social Services. Under the appeal, UNHCR is also planning to boost existing support mechanisms, including outreach, communication with communities and tailor-made specific assistance, so that refugees affected by the earthquakes continue to live in safety and security across the country. Furthermore, UNHCR extends its support to ensure continuity of registration and documentation services for refugees in liaison with PMM. This is a crucial undertaking, as many earthquake-affected refugees have lost their essential documentation, including identity documents.

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