



UNHCR TÜRKİYE

EMERGENCY RESPONSE TO EARTHQUAKE

24 March 2023

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

- The [International Donors Conference](#) ‘Together for the people in Türkiye and Syria’, in support of the people affected by the earthquakes, was co-hosted by the President of the European Commission and the Swedish Presidency of the Council in Brussels on 20 March. Over 60 delegations from the European Union, its Member States and partners, including the UN, international and European financial institutions, and other relevant stakeholders mobilised support for affected populations in both countries. More than EUR 7 billion were pledged by the international community at the conference, mostly from financial institutions. President Erdoğan’s [opening remarks](#) announced the initial damage assessment in Türkiye as amounting to USD 104 billion and the Turkish Foreign Minister pledged that meeting the needs of those in vulnerable situations would be a priority, specifically underlining that 1.7 million affected Syrian refugees and migrants would benefit in an inclusive manner. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees shared his observations after a recent mission to Türkiye and Syria and appealed for strong acts of solidarity by the international community.
- Ahead of the Donor Conference, UNHCR has contributed to the UNDP-coordinated addendum to the Türkiye Earthquakes Recovery and Reconstruction Assessment (TERRA) advocating for adequate inclusion of refugees in the assessment and policy recommendations. Similarly, the joint statement of the National Reference Group, composed of 58 national, local and refugee-led NGOs under the Refugee Council of Türkiye, included recommendations for economic and social recovery, participation and inclusion, underlining the necessary involvement of all affected populations, including refugees.
- The floods in the earthquake-affected areas of Adiyaman and Şanlıurfa provinces on 14 and 15 March due to torrential rains have claimed [20 lives](#) and have inundated temporary shelters in tent and container cities hosting earthquake survivors. Local authorities in both provinces evacuated the tent sites at risk of flooding, temporarily placed survivors in dormitories, schools and mosques, provided drinking water and cleared the streets of heavy mud.

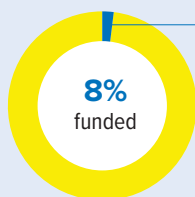
UNHCR FINANCIAL INFORMATION

(as of 24 March 2023)



US\$ 150M

UNHCR's financial requirements for the [earthquake emergency response in Türkiye](#), targeting 1.5 million people



Funded:
US\$ 12.5M

The overall funding to the Syria and Türkiye Earthquake Emergency Appeal is 20%

UNHCR ITEMS DELIVERED TO DATE



102,000
high-thermal blankets



47,300
hygiene kits



45,000
sleeping bags



32,300
tents



28,700
foldable beds



19,500
kitchen sets



15,300
foam mattresses

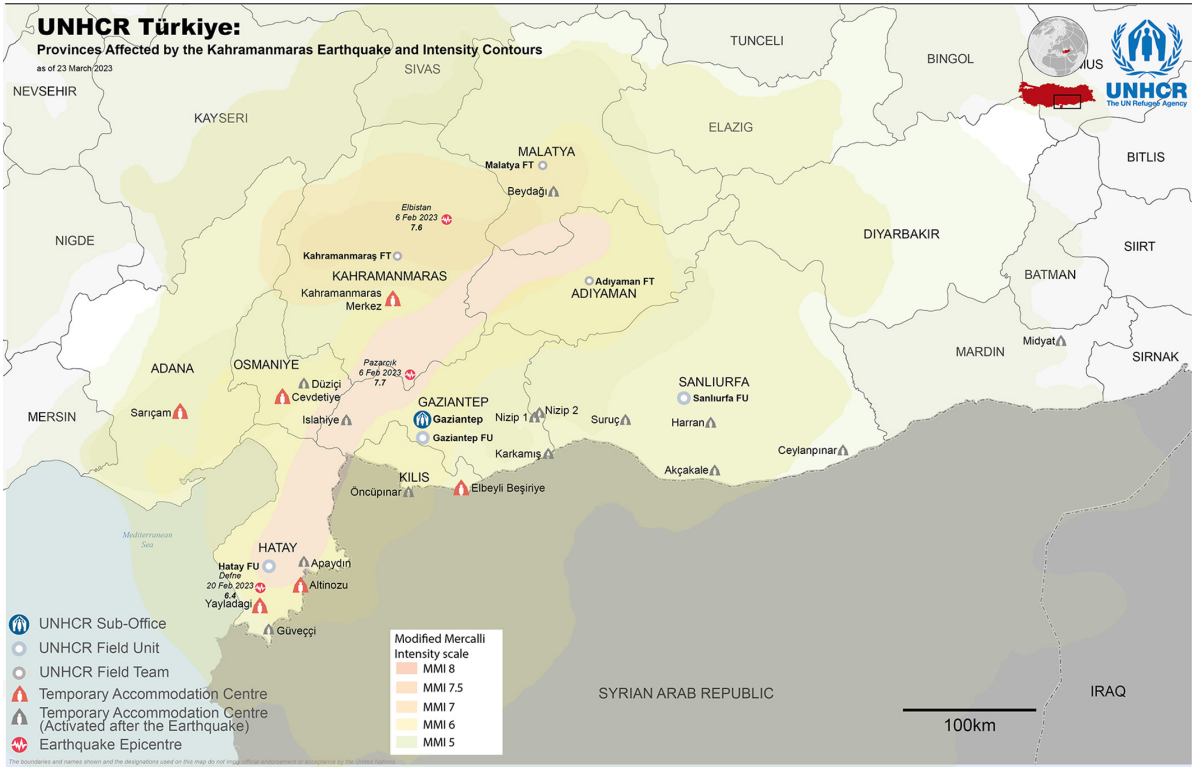


10,000
plastic tarpaulin



Overall 545,000

core relief items dispatched to Turkish authorities and partners



BACKGROUND

- On 6 February two earthquakes of 7.7 and 7.5 magnitude took place in Türkiye's Kahramanmaraş Province, followed by further earthquakes and tremors of various magnitudes in Malatya province and central Türkiye, including an earthquake of 5.3 magnitude in Kahramanmaraş as recently as 23 March. Collectively, 11 provinces in Türkiye's southeast region and neighbouring Syria were impacted. To date, over 16,300 aftershocks have been recorded, at least 45 with a magnitude between 5 and 6 on the Richter Scale. The three-month state of emergency remains in place for provinces directly affected by the earthquakes.
- According to authorities, over 50,000 people have lost their lives in the earthquakes, of whom at least 6,800 are foreign nationals, most of them Syrians. The Minister of National Defence, estimates that as of 11 March, close to 55,000 Syrians have, temporarily exited to Syria, reportedly to check on family in earthquake-affected areas in Syria and attend funerals, and well as due to loss of property in Türkiye.
- The Turkish government is leading the response through the Disaster and Management Authority of Türkiye (AFAD) and provincial governors. The Turkish Red Crescent (TRC), local partners and humanitarian organisations are working alongside AFAD. The Presidency of Migration Management (PMM) is coordinating support to temporary settlements accommodating refugees and members of the host community. Whereas the Ministry of Family and Social Services (MoFSS) is making available protection and psychosocial services for women, children and at-risk groups.
- UNHCR is providing core relief items (CRI) upon the request of the Turkish government, including emergency shelter materials, tents, blankets, hygiene and kitchen items, solar lamps, heaters and winter clothes. UN agencies also support through in-kind and financial contributions through the UN coordination system.
- The UN inter-sector coordination mechanism for the earthquake response has been operating out of Gaziantep since 1 March. UNHCR is leading the protection sector and cash-based intervention technical working group, and contributing to other sectors with partners, NGOs and UN agencies in collaboration with the local authorities and provincial directorates.

Delivery of Life-Saving Assistance

- UNHCR is procuring and delivering CRIs and hygiene materials to PMM-managed centres (including 12 temporary accommodation centres), AFAD, MoFSS as well as local authorities and partners. Items are procured from stocks both in-country and in the Europe, the Middle East and Asia regions and are dispatched through airlifts and road transport. To date, UNHCR has delivered over 545,000 CRIs and additional items are in the pipeline to be handed over to these counterparts for deliveries based on the outcomes of rapid assessments and needs identified by partners and community members.

Communication with Communities (CwC)

- Since the initial earthquakes on 6 February, the UNHCR counselling line has received over 5,300 earthquake-related calls mainly from Syrian nationals followed by Afghan and Iranian nationals in Gaziantep, Hatay, Kahramanmaraş and other locations. The callers were mostly seeking information on accommodation and financial support.
- Through its CwC channels, UNHCR is disseminating official information and messages related to the earthquake in multiple languages, including Arabic and Farsi. During the past week, the Help website [earthquake section](#), launched on 8 February, reached 43,900 page views. The posts cover post-earthquake recommendations, emergency hotlines, information from the government portal related to family tracing, and anti-fraud messaging, among others.

Education

- UNHCR conducted a rapid needs assessment with DAFI and Higher Education Cash Grant (HECG) students in the earthquake-affected areas, which informed that over 60% of DAFI students had their homes damaged to various degrees of severity, and approximately 55% are struggling with unsteady accommodation situations. 56% reported financial assistance as their primary need, while 52% identified shelter as their second most pressing concern.
- Based on this assessment, in consultation with partner “Presidency of Turks Abroad and Related Communities” (YTB), UNHCR is working towards setting up a cash top-up of TRY 5,000 (approx. USD 260) to benefit 483 recipients of DAFI scholarships and higher-education cash grants who are affected by the earthquakes. The amount is in accordance with YTB’s support to affected students, and similar to top-ups of other education programs in Türkiye as well as to assistance provided by the Turkish Government to families affected by the earthquake.

Resettlement

- During the second and third weeks of March, UNHCR interviewed refugees from earthquake-affected areas who are sheltering in Ankara and Istanbul. Within the same period, UNHCR submitted 146 resettlement cases related to 664 refugees affected by the earthquakes to Australia, Canada, Germany, France, Italy, Spain and the USA; and 161 cases relating to 597 refugees departed to Canada, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland and the USA. UNHCR continued advocating with resettlement countries for more rapid processing of resettlement cases.

Field Response

- The recent heavy rains in Sanliurfa and Adiyaman have severely impacted earthquake-affected people living in temporary settlements. Among those who perished is a family of five Syrians, according to the manager of a youth centre in Sanliurfa. UNHCR teams are visiting the centres that accommodate flood survivors to identify survivors’ needs and provide support to the authorities.
- Ongoing assessments and field-based observations from UNHCR’s protection partners continue to highlight the specific needs of women and children, unaccompanied older persons as well as people with disabilities and people living in rural areas who are unable to access essential services. UNHCR continues to prioritise at-risk groups, including refugees, through bilateral exchanges with partners and relevant sectors (particularly WASH, Shelter and Temporary Settlement Support), encouraging the re-establishment of protection services and referrals.
- Since 6 February, UNHCR’s protection teams have received around 80 referrals of vulnerable protection cases from multiple sources, including UNHCR’s counselling line and partners. In the past week, UNHCR completed protection assessments of cases related to 506 individuals. Around 435 individuals were identified as having resettlement needs due to specific vulnerabilities. Others were referred to medical, protection or legal services or UNHCR’s cash for protection interventions.
- In provinces neighbouring the affected areas, UNHCR is working with the local authorities to identify needs, challenges and population movements, as individuals from the earthquake-affected provinces arrive. Accommodation is provided by refugee relatives, local associations as well as through municipalities, in sports centres and dormitories among others.

UNHCR presence in the affected areas:

- UNHCR conducts daily missions from Gaziantep to affected provinces, to better understand the situation on the ground and follow up on activities. The emergency response capacity in Gaziantep is enhanced through the onboarding of 10 surge deployees to support various aspects of the response including supply, administration, human resources, reporting, protection, field security, cash and inter-agency coordination, as well as regular ongoing missions of colleagues from Ankara and the field offices.
- As of mid-March, UNHCR has offices in Gaziantep, Hatay and Şanlıurfa, with a temporary presence in Malatya with 88 staff .
- UNHCR established a temporary presence in Malatya as of 13 March to facilitate implementation of activities in the province and reduce travel time from Gaziantep.

INTER-AGENCY

- Under the OCHA-run inter-sector regional coordination mechanism, put in place for the earthquake response in close coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and AFAD, UNHCR leads the Protection Sector, co-leads the Cash Based Intervention Technical Working Group and contributes actively to other sectors, including the cross-cutting Accountability to Affected Populations coordination whose Task Team is being formally established and is expected to be chaired by UNHCR. Co-lead structures are still being defined. Additionally, there are four area-based coordination hubs in the worst-hit provinces (Adiyaman, Hatay, Kahramanmaraş, Malatya).
- UNHCR participates in coordination meetings in various capacities at the south-east level in Gaziantep and the provincial hubs, and in Ankara through the Humanitarian Country Team. Provincial and local authorities as well as international and national NGOs, actors, partners and UN agencies participate in the meetings.
- The Centrality of Protection and Protection Mainstreaming remain at the core of the response with the Protection Sector proactively liaising with the other sectors and providing regular updates on protection-related initiatives at the inter-sector coordination cell in Gaziantep. Cross-sectoral thematic protection discussions are being organized for the Protection Sector to further support other sectors.
- To strengthen localization, co-chairs for the Protection Sector and the child protection and the violence against women, girls and vulnerable groups sub-sectors are going through an election process. The results will be announced soon.
- Local authorities, in particular AFAD, and the Provincial Directorates of the Ministry for Family and Social Services (PDoFSS), Health (PDoH) and Migration Management (PDMM) have been participating in several provincial protection meetings enhancing the local coordination to address the necessities of persons with specific needs and related services, including for some vulnerable groups living in spontaneous settlements and identified by protection partners.
- The cash-based interventions technical working group (CBI TWG) last week, held its meeting with participants from 28 organisations. The Turkish Red Crescent, the co-chair of the CBI TWG, presented some Key Access Barriers related to cash assistance, in previous cash programmes such as the ESSN. These include issues surrounding ID registration, address registration, access and mobility, and technical issues. Most of these barriers are still relevant and may be worsened because of the impact of the earthquake. UNHCR provided some programming-related lessons learnt. The CBI TWG also discussed considerations for the implementation of Cash for Work, participants, including local municipalities, agencies and organisations shared their experiences, considering the context of Türkiye that requires specific work permits.
- In alignment with the Türkiye Earthquakes [UN Flash Appeal](#), UNHCR is appealing for USD 150 million to cover the emergency response in Türkiye through an [Earthquake Emergency Supplementary Appeal covering Türkiye and Syria](#). 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. The Appeal is for a duration of three months.

DONATE