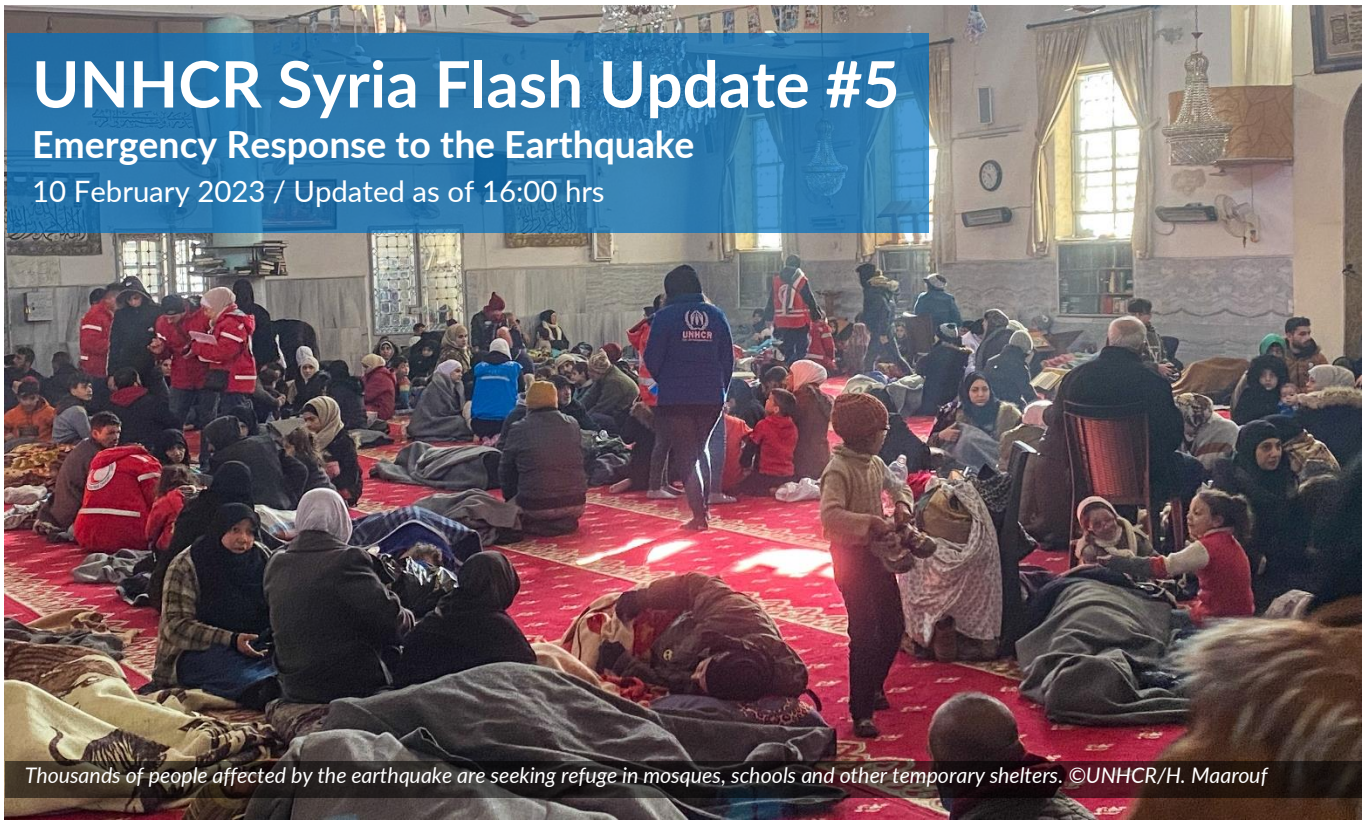
UNHCR Syria Flash Update #5

Emergency Response to the Earthquake

10 February 2023 / Updated as of 16:00 hrs



Thousands of people affected by the earthquake are seeking refuge in mosques, schools and other temporary shelters. ©UNHCR/H. Maarouf

Over 6 million

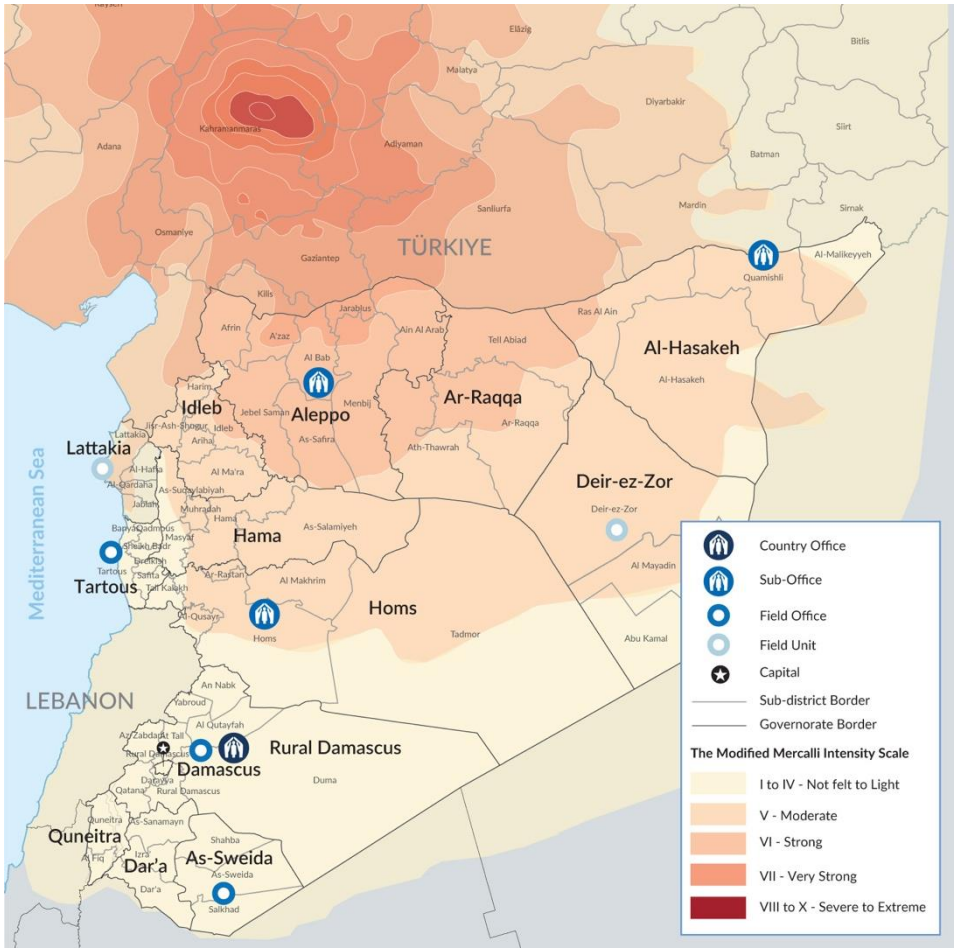
people are affected by the earthquake in areas coordinated by the Syria Humanitarian Country Team

9,840

UNHCR core relief item kits have been released for distribution to affected families

Distribution of core relief item kits continue in

Aleppo, Latakia, Hama and Tartous



Overview of Developments

- As of 10 February, the Syrian Health Ministry reported that at least 1,387 people were killed and over 2,326 were injured as a result of the earthquake across the Government-controlled areas of Aleppo, Latakia, Hama and Tartous Governorates.
- The UN estimates that **6 million people** have been affected by the earthquake in areas coordinated by the Syria Humanitarian Country Team. This includes communities in the most affected Governorates of Aleppo (2 million people), Hama (1.3 million), Latakia (1.2 million), Homs (963,000), Tartous (522,000) and southern Idleb (27,000). This total also includes some communities in the less affected Governorates of Deir-ez-Zor and Ar-Raqqa.
- Based on preliminary data and associated assumptions, the Shelter/Non-Food Item (SNFI) Sector estimates that approximately **5.3 million people** are in need of SNFI assistance across the Whole of Syria, ranging from minor repairs of houses through to life-saving SNFI interventions for those displaced from collapsed buildings.
- Limited search and rescue capacities including the lack of equipment and fuel continue to hamper life-saving response efforts. Other priority needs and gaps are food and water, shelter, core relief items, winterization assistance (including winter clothing), medicine, psychosocial support, hygiene and sanitation assistance. Freezing temperatures, snow and heavy rain are further threatening the life and health of those affected, particularly children, elderly people, and those with pre-existing vulnerabilities.
- The US Treasury Department announced on 9 February that it had issued a six-month license to allow earthquake-related relief that would otherwise be prohibited by sanctions on Syria.
- The Government of Syria also issued a waiver allowing organizations to use the new money transfer exchange rate of SYP 6,900 (Syrian Pounds) for USD 1, instead of SYP 4,500.

UNHCR Emergency Response

Core relief items

- Core relief items (CRIs) are being released to partners for distribution. As of 10 February, UNHCR has released 9,840 CRI kits[1] for distribution to affected families in Aleppo, Tartous, Latakia and Hama. This includes the new release of 400 CRI kits to affected families in south Idleb Governorate. Distributions of these CRI kits are ongoing.
- UNHCR Syria is ensuring that 30,000 CRI kits remain in stock in Aleppo, Homs and Tartous that can be immediately used for the earthquake response in affected areas. UNHCR is also ensuring that Aleppo, Homs and Tartous each have at least 10,000 winter jackets/clothing kits in stock.

[1] A CRI kit includes the following items: high-thermal blankets, mattresses, kitchen sets, plastic sheeting, jerry cans, and sleeping mats.

Situation Updates

Aleppo Governorate

- Search, rescue and recovery efforts continue in Aleppo.
- As of 9 February, 17 out of a total of 31 UNHCR-supported community centres are operating and functional. Nine centres are closed due to structural damages.
- Staff, including deployed to centres that are closed, are also working in collective shelters or in centres run by other partners.
- Community centres are prioritizing the delivery of awareness raising sessions on safety and earthquake response, psychosocial support and referrals to emergency services. Mobile teams and outreach volunteers are active and have

been ensuring vulnerable groups have access to information on services. They are also providing psychological first aid.

Homs/Hama Governorates

- On 9 February, UNHCR conducted an inter-sector mission to assess the situation of people affected by the earthquake in Hama Governorate. UNHCR collected information on damages to buildings and key needs. The team also visited the national hospital, which is helping people injured during the earthquake.
- Based on information collected during the mission, it appears most of the families affected by the earthquake in Hama Governorate are being hosted by relatives.
- The main protection needs in collective shelters relate to psychological first aid, psychosocial support, dignity kits and social and recreational activities for children.
- Some of the families in the collective shelters said that they were scared to return to their homes because the walls had cracks and had not been assessed for safety yet.
- On 10 February, UNHCR received reports of 120 families who arrived to Kfarbo village (rural Hama) from Aleppo and Latakia. They are mainly being hosted by relatives and others in the community. Ten of these families are being hosted in a reception centre and have received CRIs.
- UNHCR and its partner have provided CRIs to families in three collective shelters (one shelter in Salhab in rural Hama and two shelters in Hama city). The items distributed include mattresses, blankets, sleeping mats, kitchen sets and winter jackets. Blankets were also delivered for affected people in the Hama national hospital.

Distribution of core relief items in Kafr Bohm, rural Hama Governorate. ©UNHCR/S. Sawas

Tartous/Latakia Governorates

- According to the National Seismological Centre, on 10 February at 11:17 hrs, another earthquake of 3.9 magnitude on the Richter scale was recorded 55km west of Latakia Governorate. No damages were reported and all UNHCR staff in the area was safe and accounted for.
- Around 160 families affected by the earthquake arrived from Aleppo to Mashel Hilu (Tartous Governorate), out of which 60 families received CRI kits on 9 February. Additional distributions were ongoing at the time of writing.
- On 10 February, UNHCR undertook a mission to Safita, Tartous Governorate, and (amongst other activities) monitored the distribution of CRIs to displaced families hosted by relatives. The displaced families are from Aleppo and the recent earthquake either damaged their homes or the buildings in their surroundings, forcing them to move to Tartous.
- Meanwhile assessments of structural damages to buildings in the coastal area continue.

Distribution of core relief items in Mashel Hilu, rural Tartous Governorate. ©UNHCR/E. Kabbas

For additional information on the situation, please refer to:
Syrian Arab Republic - Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) Coordinated Response Flash Update #4 - Earthquake (As of 09 February 2023)
Syrian Arab Republic - Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) Coordinated Response Flash Update #5 - Earthquake (As of 10 February 2023)

Fundraising

- An inter-agency Whole of Syria Flash Appeal in response to the earthquake is expected to be published shortly, covering an initial period of three months. The Flash Appeal will include UNHCR's financial needs, primarily for protection and shelter/CRIs.
- The United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) announced (7 February) the release of a $25 million grant to help kick-start the humanitarian response in the region.

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Children in the Soum and Boukm collective shelter in Hama, 9 February. ©UNHCR/S. Sawas