UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency

Regional Bureau for Europe

UNHCR TÜRKİYE
EARTHQUAKE EMERGENCY RESPONSE

5 April 2023

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Türkiye's Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (AFAD) announced on 3 April that, following damage assessments, settlements in Bingöl, Kayseri, Mardin, Tunceli, Niğde and Batman provinces have been declared disaster zones due to the condition of buildings in the six provinces. On 1 April, the Minister of Environment, Urbanisation and Climate Change informed that 2.5 million citizens were hosted in temporary accommodation areas, and that the Ministry would prepare 100,000 additional containers to host at least 500,000 earthquake-affected citizens in those areas by May. Meanwhile, AFAD stated on 30 March that some 610,000 tents and 45,000 containers had been installed in 289 container areas in the affected region.

UNHCR FINANCIAL INFORMATION

(as of 5 April 2023)

US$ 150M

UNHCR's requirements for the earthquake emergency response in Türkiye, targeting 1.5 million people

The overall funding to the Syria and Türkiye Earthquake Emergency Appeal is 38%

UNHCR ITEMS DELIVERED TO DATE

Overall:
659,000

core relief items dispatched to Turkish authorities and partners; include among other:

112,300 high-thermal blankets

62,800 hygiene kits

45,000 sleeping bags

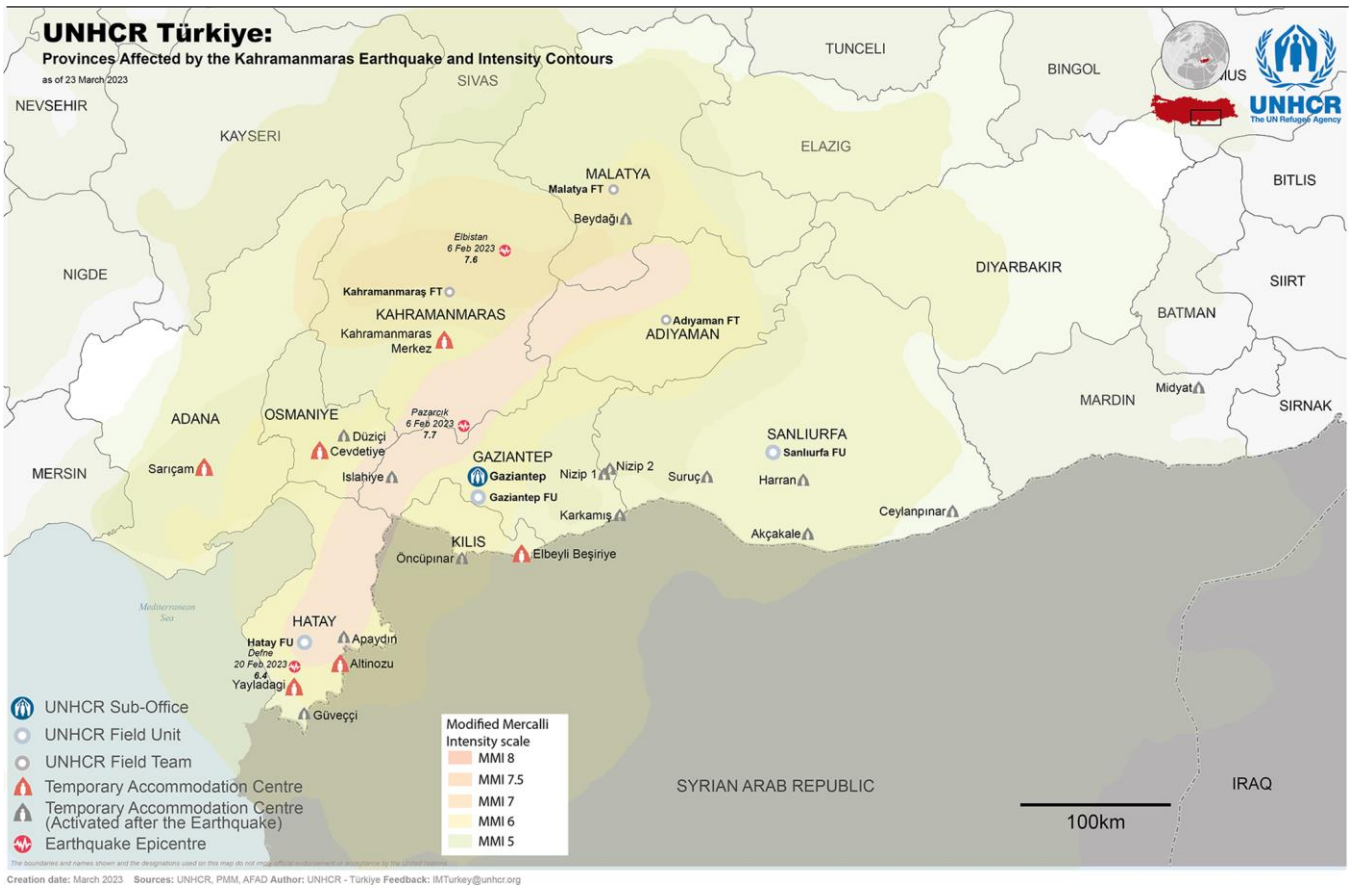
35,400 sleeping mats

32,700 tents

32,500 kitchen sets

28,700 foldable beds

21,300 foam mattresses



BACKGROUND

- Close to 22,500 aftershocks have been recorded since 6 February, of which at least 45 were between 5 and 6 on the Richter scale. The three-month state of emergency remains in place for the 11 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 Turkish government is leading the response through the Disaster and Emergency 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 community members. The Ministry of Family and Social Services (MoFSS) offers protection and psychosocial services for women, children and other at-risk groups.
- UNHCR is providing core relief items (CRI) upon 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. The Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) meets once a week in Ankara. UNHCR leads the protection sector and cash-based intervention technical working group, and contributes to other sectors with partners, NGOs and UN agencies in collaboration with the local authorities and provincial directorates.

UNHCR CAPACITY AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Delivery of Assistance

During the past week, UNHCR coordinated the first direct distribution of CRIs to the affected areas, delivering 62,000 items to municipalities and district authorities in Sanliurfa, Midyat, Siverek, Adiyaman and Artuklu provinces, as well as refugee housing units to municipalities in Hatay, Kirikhan and Iskenderun provinces. The delivery included sleeping mats, hygiene kits, kitchen sets, blankets and clothes.

UNHCR is delivering CRIs to PMM-managed centres, including temporary accommodation centres, AFAD, MoFSS, local authorities and partners. To date, UNHCR has delivered over 659,000 CRIs to these counterparts.

UNHCR is strengthening the outreach capacity of its seven NGO partners across the country by providing cash-based specific needs funds (SNF) to assist up to 55,000 earthquake-affected refugees across the country, as well as other refugees in need. Some partners have resumed their regular activities in the earthquake-affected areas, many working from temporary premises, providing counselling, identification and referral services to people in need.

Communication with Communities (CwC)

Since 6 February, the UNHCR counselling line received over 6,000 earthquake-related calls that were predominantly placed by Syrian, Afghan and Iranian nationals. Gaziantep records the highest number of calls, followed by Hatay and Istanbul. Callers mainly enquired about accommodation and financial support.

UNHCR is disseminating official information and messages related to the earthquake in multiple languages, including Arabic and Farsi, through its CwC channels. The Help website's earthquake section has reached close to 54,000 page views since its launch on 8 February. The website provides information on post-earthquake recommendations, emergency hotlines, information on family tracing, eligibility for cash assistance and anti-fraud messaging.

Education

UNHCR is providing supplies such as yarn, leather, and textile equipment to nine public education centres and 10 Ministry of National Education (MoNE) coordination centres in Adıyaman, Gaziantep, Hatay, Kahramanmaraş, and Malatya provinces. Refugees and the local population will produce blankets, clothes, shoes, sleeping bags and coats for their own use and for earthquake-affected people in these centres.

UNHCR also supports 25 Ministry of Youth and Sports (MoYS) centres in Kahramanmaraş, Hatay, Gaziantep, Osmaniye, Adıyaman, Diyarbakir and Kilis provinces with essential items, such as hygiene kits, blankets and mattresses to benefit the young people they serve.

UNHCR is coordinating the above response with the MoNE and the MoYS to support the national earthquake response in collaboration with UNICEF.

Field Response

UNHCR's protection partners' assessments and observations continued highlighting the specific needs of women and children. UNHCR has completed protection assessments for 390 people so far, identifying 370 individuals as having resettlement needs owing to specific vulnerabilities. Others have been referred for medical, protection or legal services as well as UNHCR cash-for-protection interventions.

UNHCR is communicating with refugee-led organisations (RLOs) and community-based organisations (CBOs) both in affected areas and in neighbouring provinces to assess their earthquake response, identify capacities and needs, and observe population movements in and out of impacted areas.

In the southeast region, UNHCR identified 45 RLOs and CBOs which are mostly engaged in distribution of items to earthquake-affected people; three of these are women-led organizations. UNHCR identified a need for capacity-building on case identification referral mechanisms. Most RLOs have inquired with UNHCR about registration, travel permits and tenant rights, and have indicated that the preferred channel of communication with refugee groups is social media, specifically WhatsApp and Facebook.

The damage caused by the earthquakes has led to job losses and assistance-dependency for many residents. Job opportunities are scarce due to destroyed workplaces. The arrival of earthquake survivors in the neighbouring provinces has resulted in a sudden increase in demand for housing, job opportunities and socio-economic support.

Meanwhile, through its field monitoring and population tracking, UNHCR is observing refugees returning to the earthquake-affected areas because of high rent and price of commodities in other provinces.

Temporary exits and returns to Türkiye

On 27 March, the Minister of National Defence estimated that close to 60,000 Syrians had temporarily exited to Syria, reportedly to check on family in earthquake-affected areas and attend funerals, and due to destruction of their residencies in Türkiye.

As of 31 March, based on information from authorities and partners, UNHCR estimates that around 3,800 of them have returned to Türkiye. Temporary exits to Syria, as per state policy, can continue until 20 April and return admissions will end by 15 September.

UNHCR presence in affected areas

UNHCR conducts daily missions from Gaziantep and Sanliurfa to affected provinces. To reinforce the emergency response capacity in the southeast, UNHCR has carried out over 75 support missions, including surge deployments and national and international staff from across Türkiye to support key areas of the response such as supply, protection, field security, and inter-agency coordination.

As of beginning of April, UNHCR had 88 staff in Gaziantep, Hatay and Şanlıurfa, and in the temporary Office in Malatya, established on 13 March.

SNAPSHOT OF COMMUNITY INITIATIVES AND LOCAL ENGAGEMENT

- Local NGOs across Türkiye are supporting refugees who have left earthquake-affected provinces with accommodation and in-kind assistance. UNHCR is following up on efforts of local NGOs to identify needs and gaps.
- A positive example of community structure is the Arab Women's Association in Adiyaman, which is promoting that host and refugee communities jointly run daily activities in their temporary settlement and where the association will be implementing mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) activities for host and Syrian refugee children.
- The refugee-led Homs Turkman Association in Osmaniye is also engaging with the refugee communities providing information, offering Turkish and Arabic language courses, and working on child protection mostly targeting out of school children.
- The Konak refugee centre in Izmir, has been providing reading and writing classes for out-of-school children and support lessons for school-aged children to support them with their studies. The centre is also providing Turkish courses for women, English classes, and therapy game sessions for all refugees in the community, including earthquake survivors.

INTER-AGENCY

- Under the OCHA-run inter-sector regional coordination mechanism established for the earthquake response in coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and AFAD, UNHCR leads the Protection Sector, co-leads the Cash-Based Intervention Technical Working Group (CBI TWG) and contributes to other sectors including the cross-cutting Accountability to Affected Populations coordination, together with partners, NGOs and UN agencies in collaboration with the local authorities and provincial directorates. Additionally, four area-based coordination hubs operate in the worst-hit provinces.
- To strengthen localization, co-chairs have been elected for the Protection Sector (Association for Solidarity with asylum-seekers SGDD-ASAM), as well as for the sub-sectors on child protection (Support to Life) and violence against women, girls and vulnerable groups (KAMER Foundation).
- State representatives from AFAD and local authorities, in particular the Provincial Directorates of the Ministry for Family and Social Services (PDoFSS), Health (PDoH) and Migration Management (PDMM) participate in protection meetings at the hub level, thereby enhancing the local coordination to address the needs of persons with specific needs.
- The Protection Sector and sub-sectors on child protection and violence against women, girls and vulnerable groups have rolled out an earthquake field observation tracking tool to capture protection trends in the earthquake-affected areas and to ensure an evidence-based response.
- The CBI TWG held its fifth meeting in Gaziantep on 29 March, with participants from 31 organisations and donor entities. The meeting discussed the Turkish Red Crescent's matrix to prevent duplication in cash assistance.
- On 28 March, UNHCR hosted a meeting with the Local Humanitarian Forum (LHF), an initiative of the Localization Advocacy Group, consisting of 58 local and national NGOs responding to the earthquake emergency with support to earthquake survivors. UNHCR and the forum members exchanged information on ways to engage both at the central level and through the four coordination hubs, and explored opportunities for further advocacy and information sharing.
- 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.

UNHCR is grateful to the donors who have contributed to the earthquake response, with unearmarked and softly earmarked funds as well as those who have provided earmarked contributions

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