

Joint statement by the United Nations Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator ad interim for Syria, El-Mostafa Benlamlah, and the Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for the Syria Crisis, Muhannad Hadi, on the earthquake in Türkiye, Syria

Damascus, Amman, 7 February 2023

The United Nations Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator ad interim for Syria, El-Mostafa Benlamlah, and the Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for the Syria Crisis, Muhannad Hadi, reaffirmed the UN's commitment to support the people of Syria in the wake of the devastating earthquake that struck southern Türkiye and northern Syria on the morning of 6 February. The tragedy has already claimed thousands of lives and damaged scores of buildings.

In the early hours of 6 February, multiple earthquakes, the strongest being of 7.7 magnitude struck southern Türkiye and northern Syria. The epicenter was identified as Gaziantep near the Türkiye-Syria border and at least 78 aftershocks have been confirmed so far. The earthquake impacted several governorates in north, central, south, and coastal parts of Syria. Human and material damages were reported, mainly in Aleppo, Lattakia, Hama, Idleb, in addition to Tartous Governorates. The earthquake has left many without food, shelter and in need of medical and psychosocial assistance.

"We express our sincere condolences to the victims' families and wish a speedy recovery to the injured. We stand in solidarity with the people of Syria and Türkiye during this time of need. Urgent support is needed to be able to respond to all those who have been affected in this terrible tragedy," said Mr Benlamlah.

Syria's 12-year crisis has devastated the country, destroyed much of its public infrastructure and left millions of people in need of humanitarian assistance. Syria is also grappling with an economic collapse and a severe water, electricity and fuel shortages. Even before the earthquake, nearly 70 per cent of the population was in need of humanitarian assistance. "We appeal to all donor partners to provide the assistance necessary to alleviate suffering," said Mr Hadi. "This tragedy will have a devastating impact on many already vulnerable families who struggle to provide for their loved ones on a daily basis," he added.

The UN and humanitarian partners are assessing the impact in the affected areas and closely coordinating the response. The response focuses on the most immediate needs, including food, shelter, non-food items and medicines. Much more is needed to ensure no one is left behind. The response capacity in the affected areas is dire, where search and rescue operations are seriously hampered due to the lack of equipment and machinery and a difficult operating environment. The humanitarian community is grateful for the generosity of our donor partners so far and calls on all parties to ensure unfettered access to the affected communities to ensure timely, coordinated assistance.

For further information:

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