



## KAHRAMANMARAŞ EARTHQUAKE AND INTERNATIONAL AID

The earthquake of 7.7 and 7.6 magnitudes in Kahramanmaraş, which affected 10 provinces in Türkiye on February 6, 2023, described as the disaster of the century, as a nation, it has caused all of us to experience indescribable pain. As of last week, there were more than 40 thousand casualties, more than 100 thousand injured and 118 thousand destroyed and heavily damaged buildings (TRT News, 2023). These numbers reveal the magnitude of this great catastrophe. The final situation will become clearer with the completion of the debris removal work.

While trying to save the lives under the rubble with the efforts of public institutions, non-governmental organizations and citizens, on the other hand, a great mobilization was started to gather aid from all over the country which was sent to the region in order to heal the wounds caused by the destruction to a certain extent.

In this context, 35 thousand search and rescue officers and 250 thousand public servants have worked in the earthquake zone. With the emergency decree adopted on February 9, 2023, various urgent, medium and long-term decisions were taken for the earthquake zone covering 10 provinces. In this context, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan during his visit to the disaster area announced some urgent packages, such as meeting the housing needs in the entire earthquake zone within 1 year. Giving 10 thousand Turkish liras to families and 100 thousand Turkish liras to the relatives of those who lost their lives and finally, those who want to move from the earthquake zone will be provided 15 thousand Turkish liras for relocation and 5 thousand Turkish liras for rent support. On the other hand, domestic and international aid to the Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD) of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Türkiye has exceeded \$8.3 billion as of February 19, 2023 (TRT Haber, 2023). Both these support packages and aids are expected to increase further in the future.

In the great disaster, in which national unity and solidarity were experienced at the highest levels, many support messages from abroad and assistance offers from approximately 100 countries were received from the first day. In this context, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan received support and condolence calls from 42 countries at the level of the head of state and government. The search and rescue team consisting of 10.943 people from 84 countries reached the earthquake area, and humanitarian aid consisting of various items was transferred to Türkiye with 444 flights from 61 countries (İHA, 2023). On the other hand, international organizations also announced various aid packages to Türkiye due to the earthquake. While the World Bank has announced that it has allocated a budget of 1.78 billion dollars, the European Union has announced that it will provide emergency support of 3 million Euros (Anadolu Agency, 2023a).

When we take a deeper look at the aid and solidarity messages given to Türkiye due to the earthquake in Eurasia we can observe that both the societies of the relevant countries and Turkish citizens are mobilized. First of all, the heads of state and government of all the countries in the region sent their condolence and support messages to Türkiye via telephone and other communication channels on the first day of the earthquake,

additionally, they visited the Turkish Embassies in their countries and expressed their condolences. Intensive support visits continue to foreign representatives at the level of public institutions and organizations and non-governmental organizations, as well as state and government representatives, from the first day. High-level support visits to Türkiye, especially from Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Greece, Armenia and other countries started at the ministerial level and still continues (NTV, 2023).

One-day national mourning was declared in Albania and North Macedonia to support the national mourning declared in Türkiye. In addition to the financial support officially announced at the level of the states, within the framework of the aid campaigns initiated, around 70 million dollars of donations have been collected from Russia, Central Asia, the Caucasus and the Balkans. In addition to these, the amount of in-kind aid, consisting of various products, especially blankets, tents, heaters, and clothes, sent to Türkiye from the same regions has exceeded 5 thousand tons. Apart from these regions, aid campaigns have been launched in many countries. The search and rescue teams sent from all over the world also received intense participation from Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Georgia, Russia, Ukraine, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Albania, Serbia, Greece, Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary. A total of 2.945 search and rescue personnel from these countries have worked in the region. Also, 7.135 tents, which are among the emergency and priority materials for the earthquake area, were delivered to Türkiye without delay.

The Organization of Turkic States (OTS) also displayed close solidarity with the Turkish authorities from the first day and coordinated the member countries' search and rescue teams to reach the region by quickly organizing them. OTS also decided to lower the flags of the member states at the OTS Centre to half-staff due to the declared national mourning. OTS Secretary General Kubanichbek Omuraliyev, who paid a visit to Kahramanmaraş, delivered the humanitarian aid prepared by OTS for earthquake victims to AFAD (Organization of Turkic States, 2023). Moreover, it is seen that aid campaigns initiated by public institutions and non-governmental organizations in Turkic states increasingly continue.

As a result, an earthquake, which is a geological natural disaster, can cause psychological, sociological and economic traumas as well as loss of life and property like any disaster. It is certain that the earthquake, which affected a large region with a population of 13 million, will have direct or indirect effects on all segments of society. Children are one of them. For this reason, it is of great importance that the necessary steps be taken immediately in the rehabilitation of children affected by the earthquake, whose number is around 7 million. In fact, it is known that public institutions have started the necessary works while the debris removal works continue (Anadolu Agency, 2023b). In sum, as after the Erzincan, Gölcük and Van earthquakes and other disasters, the Turkish state and the Turkish nation have the power, capacity and potential to overcome this

great disaster. On this occasion, we wish Allah's mercy on those who lost their lives in the earthquake, patience for their relatives, and thank friendly and brotherly countries for their support and assistance.

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