



*More than three weeks after 7.8 and 7.5 magnitude earthquakes struck Turkey and Syria, the region continues to suffer from aftershocks—including a 6.4 magnitude tremor that struck the region on Monday, February 20.*

The death toll from the earthquakes in Turkey and Syria that struck on February 6 have surpassed 50,000 people—including 44,218 deaths recorded in Turkey and 5,914 in Syria.<sup>1</sup> Last week, a 6.4 magnitude tremor struck the region, leading to additional injuries and dozens more buildings toppling on both sides of the border. The quake was felt in Cyprus, Egypt, Israel, Jordan and Lebanon. Shortly after, a magnitude 5.8 quake followed, along with dozens more aftershocks. As of March 1, Turkey's Disaster and Emergency Management (AFAD) agency has recorded nearly 10,000 aftershocks since the first quake on February 6.

The continued quakes have caused widespread panic and anxiety in the region. Tens of thousands of people are still missing, and hundreds of thousands are now homeless as a result of damage to infrastructure. Even the residents whose homes have withstood the quakes are fearful to remain inside—instead sleeping in makeshift shelters, tents and in cars to avoid crumbling infrastructure.

In Syria, early assessments indicate that more than 5.3 million people require basic shelter and non-food assistance.<sup>2</sup> Displacement and damage to public infrastructure also have increased the risk of disease outbreaks, further stretching the limited healthcare system in the region. So far, more than 50,000 suspected cholera cases have been identified in northwest Syria.<sup>3</sup> Cholera cases have also been recorded in other parts of Syria; however, the latest figures are currently not available.

In Turkey, nearly 2 million people have been left homeless and in need of basic assistance, with the majority now living in camps.<sup>4</sup> Preliminary assessments of the camps indicate that significant improvements to

## FAST FACTS

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## OUR FOOTPRINT

- International Medical Corps has been present in **Syria** since 2008.
- We are currently working in 10 governorates across the country, supporting 33 health facilities that in 2022 provided more than 620,000 health consultations and supported 6,850 mental health cases.
- International Medical Corps worked in **Turkey** from 2012 until 2018, with extensive programs in southern areas (including Gaziantep, Hatay, Kilis, Mersin and Sanliurfa) providing health, MHPSS, GBV, child protection, nutrition and WASH programs.

## OUR RESPONSE

- In **Syria**, operating three mobile medical units and two mobile medical teams that have provided 4,700 primary and emergency healthcare consultations.
- Reached more than 1,300 people with psychological first-aid training.
- Delivered more than 15 metric tons of medications, medical supplies and cholera kits to support facilities in Aleppo, Hama and Latakia, with more supplies on the way.
- In **Turkey**, International Medical Corps has partnered with a local organization to distribute 6,285 non-food items—including winter clothing, towels, blankets and hygiene kits—and more than 700 food baskets to almost 4,800 earthquake-affected people in Hatay.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/earthquake-death-toll-surpasses-50000-turkey-syria-2023-02-24>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/briefing/2023/2/63e652994/unhcr-5-million-need-shelter-support-syria-quake.html>

<sup>3</sup> <https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/syrian-arab-republic-earthquakes-whole-syria-situational-updates-1-march-2023>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/turkey-quake-survivors-struggle-find-shelter-nearly-three-weeks-2023-02-25>

water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) conditions are required, and that non-food items—including winter clothing, kitchenware and heaters—are needed urgently to support those who have been displaced.

## International Medical Corps Response



*International Medical Corps is operating three mobile medical units and two mobile medical teams in earthquake-affected areas. To date, the teams have provided 4,700 medical consultations in Syria.*

In response to the earthquakes, International Medical Corps is continuing to provide essential services and support—including health, mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), protection (including child protection and gender-based violence support), non-food item distribution, and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services—to communities in Syria and Turkey.

In **Syria**, International Medical Corps has worked with local partners to deploy three mobile medical units (MMUs), two mobile medical teams (MMTs) and a mobile surgical team to provide primary and emergency healthcare services to residents in shelters and camps. As of March 1, our teams have provided 4,700 medical consultations to internally displaced people in and around the Aleppo governorate and in Lattakia (2,400 patients in Aleppo and surrounding areas, and 2,300 patients in Lattakia), areas that have recorded the highest number of casualties and the worst infrastructure damage in the country. International Medical Corps' three MMUs and the supported mobile surgical team are providing services in and around the Aleppo governorate, where thousands of families have been displaced. The two MMTs have been deployed to Lattakia, where International Medical Corps has been working closely with the Ministry of Health (MoH) to provide critically needed supplies, medications and consumables to support functioning hospitals and public healthcare facilities in the district. The MMTs are

focused on providing services to people living in temporary shelters and makeshift camps throughout the district. The majority of patients seen so far have required primary healthcare consultations, with a particular emphasis on a need for medications to support chronic diseases, including diabetes and hypertension. Given the needs, International Medical Corps is preparing to activate 10 additional MMUs—in collaboration with local partners—to operate throughout the affected areas.

International Medical Corps is also continuing to support functioning primary healthcare facilities and hospitals throughout the region by procuring and distributing essential pharmaceuticals, medical supplies and equipment. Our teams recently met in Lattakia with local authorities, physicians and administrators at public hospitals and primary healthcare facilities to discuss gaps in services and identify specific opportunities to help functioning facilities rapidly scale up to meet the needs. Though the major trauma hospital in Lattakia is functioning, with four operating rooms at full capacity, the hospital has five additional rooms that are available to support surgeries but that require essential equipment and supplies to become operational. This facility—along with other hospitals in the district—have conducted several surgeries on earthquake victims and are expecting the need for reconstructive surgery to increase throughout the year, as patients are stabilized. The facilities also need non-food items (including winter clothing, blankets and heaters) and walking aids to support trauma patients.

To support these efforts, International Medical Corps is working closely with the facilities to prioritize needs and identify opportunities to rapidly and effectively procure and deliver items that will support continuity of services in the district. Previously, our team procured and delivered more than 15 metric tons of medications, medical supplies and cholera kits that were distributed to healthcare facilities in Aleppo, Hama and Lattakia with support from the MoH. As of March 1, items have been distributed to more than 11 healthcare facilities in the region. Our teams are continuing to work closely with local authorities to procure additional pharmaceuticals, medical consumables, supplies and equipment to enhance primary and emergency care services in the



*Given the need for food and non-food items, our teams are working closely with local authorities and partners to procure essential supplies—including winter clothes, blankets, mattresses and hygiene items—to support internally displaced people.*

aftermath of the quake. Additional procurements are underway, with items—including additional trauma and cholera kits—expected to be delivered in the coming weeks.

International Medical Corps is also continuing to operate our 24-hour MHPSS hotline, along with six centers that are providing services from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., including weekends, in affected areas in the north of Syria. To provide comprehensive and integrated support to earthquake victims, community health workers, as well as specialists in MHPSS, protection and nutrition, are embedded in our MMUs and MMTs to provide psychological first-aid (PFA) and psychosocial support to patients seeking healthcare services. As of March 1, International Medical Corps has reached more than 2,300 people with training and services related to PFA, and has provided more than 500 in-person psychosocial and mental health consultations. Our teams have noted an increased number of post-traumatic stress disorder and depression cases in the wake of the quakes, with many families fearful of more earthquakes and afraid their homes could collapse. As a result, many families who have homes that are still standing have taken to sleeping in trucks, tents and open spaces, despite the harsh weather. Given the increased levels of anxiety and fear, International Medical Corps launched six mobile PFA teams made up of specialists in psychosocial support, child protection (CP) and gender-based violence (GBV) who are providing services to internally displaced residents in and around the Aleppo governorate. Together, the six teams have provided services to more than 900 people.

Additionally, International Medical Corps' GBV and CP teams have been providing group activities for and consultations to vulnerable women, girls and children residing in shelters and camps. Our teams have focused on providing safe spaces where children can express their fears and emotions, distributing games and toys for children, and conducting awareness-raising sessions related to sexual harassment and body limits, so far reaching more than 450 women, girls and children with these services.

International Medical Corps' Nutrition team is also providing support as part of our MMUs to earthquake-affected communities in and around the Aleppo governorate. As of March 1, the team had provided support to more than 250 pregnant and lactating women and more than 380 children, and had distributed nutrition supplies to support more than 300 women and children in the affected areas.

To support the large number of internally displaced people, International Medical Corps is working closely with local authorities and other non-governmental organizations to procure additional supplies—including winter clothing, blankets, heaters, drinking water, hygiene kits and dignity kits—to support those living in shelters and camps. Finally, because the destruction of infrastructure, water and sewage lines after the earthquake has increased the possibility of disease outbreaks—especially concerning given that Syria suffered a cholera outbreak in late 2022, with cases reported in all 14 governorates—our WASH teams are working closely with local partners on installing latrines, trucking in water and distributing hygiene kits.

In **Turkey**, International Medical Corps is working with local partners and authorities to address immediate needs related to food and non-food items. In partnership with the Association of Assistance Solidarity and Support for Refugees and Asylum Seekers (MSYD-ASRA)—a local humanitarian aid organization that focuses on providing basic needs and improving the living conditions for people and communities that are affected by humanitarian crises, conflicts, human-rights violations and natural disasters—International Medical Corps has distributed 6,285 non-food items (including winter clothing, towels, blankets and hygiene kits) and 709 food baskets to 4,778 earthquake-affected people in Hatay province.



*In addition to procuring and distributing food and non-food items to earthquake victims in Hatay province, International Medical Corps is partnering with MSYD-ASRA to support warehouse management in Antakya.*

Additional procurements are underway, with International Medical Corps partnering with International Blue Crescent Relief and Development Foundation (IBC)—local non-governmental organization focused on alleviating human suffering—to procure and distribute hygiene kits, drinking water, non-food items and medical supplies to support communities in Gaziantep, Kilis and Kramanmaras. International Medical Corps and IBC also will provide medical supplies—such as wheelchairs and crutches—to earthquake victims who suffer trauma injuries.

Given the damage to infrastructure, International Medical Corps is also working with local partners to address critical needs related to WASH and health, particularly the need for additional medicines and medical equipment for functioning healthcare facilities. Going forward, International Medical Corps will continue to work with local partners to address these critical needs and ensure that activities are integrated and complementary to existing and planned efforts.