



Staff from our mobile medical teams deployed to Lattakia meet to discuss their work to provide needed supplies, medications and consumables to support functioning hospitals and public healthcare facilities in Syria

It has been close to two months since two devastating earthquakes struck Turkey and Syria, killing more than 50,000 people—including at least 45,968 people in Turkey and 7,259 people in Syria—and injuring many thousands. The 7.8- and 7.5-magnitude earthquakes also destroyed critical infrastructure, leaving the communities in the area in urgent need of humanitarian assistance.

Thousands of families have been left homeless after more than 160,000 buildings collapsed or were badly damaged in the quake. According to the International Organization for Migration, more than 2.7 million people have been displaced in Turkey alone due to the earthquake. Most are residing in temporary settlements, half of which are considered informal. Tents are not proving to be an adequate solution for sheltering people, with scabies outbreaks being reported due to unsanitary conditions.

In Syria, the earthquake further damaged already impaired water infrastructure. Water systems in the country are now running even less efficiently, with a higher risk of the water supply being polluted with contaminated water. Syria already had been challenged with cholera outbreaks before the earthquakes, making new levels of water contamination even more of a concern.<sup>1</sup>

The need for healthcare support in affected areas is critical, with millions of people displaced. Antibiotics, access to medications for chronic diseases, mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), wound care, maternal and pediatric health, cholera treatment and clean water are some of the top reported needs.<sup>2</sup> As time progresses, mental health needs are increasing, with MHPSS becoming one of the most needed services, particularly for pregnant women who have been exposed to high levels of stress and are at risk of complications, such as first-trimester loss.

## FAST FACTS

- The death toll from the earthquakes in Turkey and Syria has surpassed 50,000 people. More than 5.9 million people have been displaced.

## 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 its southern areas (including Gaziantep, Hatay, Kilis, Mersin and Sanliurfa), providing health, MHPSS, GBV, child protection, nutrition and WASH programs.

## OUR RESPONSE

- In **Syria**, we are operating 10 mobile medical units and one mobile surgical team that so far have provided more than 15,000 primary, emergency and surgical healthcare consultations.
- We have conducted PFA sessions in temporary accommodation shelters that have reached more than 4,000 people.
- We have delivered more than 15 metric tons of medications, medical supplies and cholera kits to support facilities in Aleppo, Hama and Lattakia, with more supplies on the way.
- In **Turkey**, we are working with local partners to procure and distribute non-food items and provide health and mental health services, as well as providing food, to support IDPs in camps and shelters.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/humanitarian-crisis-persists-for-survivors-in-turkey-syria-after-devastating-earthquake>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.directrelief.org/2023/03/follow-the-data-crisisready-shares-emergency-response-models-for-turkey-syria-earthquakes>

## International Medical Corps Response

In the almost two months since the earthquakes, International Medical Corps has been working with local authorities and partners to provide essential healthcare services to affected communities by deploying mobile medical units (MMUs) and teams, and procuring and distributing essential medications, consumables and supplies. Our teams have also been providing primary healthcare and MHPSS services, protection (including child protection and gender-based violence support), and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services.

In **Syria**, International Medical Corps is currently operating (directly or in coordination with partners) 10 MMUs, in addition to a mobile surgical team providing minor and emergency surgeries, as well as referrals. As of March 27, our teams had provided more than 15,000 consultations to people in the affected regions. The majority of consultations have been related to primary healthcare concerns such as non-communicable diseases and upper respiratory-tract infections, as well as hygiene issues related to scabies and lice.



*Working with a local partner in Syria, International Medical Corps has deployed a mobile surgical team to support earthquake-affected communities in the aftermath of the tremors.*

The MMUs and mobile surgical team are currently providing services in camps and shelters for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in and around the Aleppo governorate, where thousands of families have been displaced. In collaboration with a local partner, International Medical Corps' mobile surgical team is providing services throughout the Aleppo governorate and surrounding areas. As of March 27, the team had provided consultations to more than 1,000 patients, the majority of whom required orthopedic services.

With needs related to health and MHPSS increasing—particularly for those living in shelters and camps—International Medical Corps is also deploying an additional mobile medical team (MMT) over the next six months to meet health and mental health care needs in Hama and Lattakia. Over the past week, International Medical Corps staff members visited the affected areas throughout Aleppo, Hama and Lattakia to ensure that current interventions address immediate needs and to assess whether additional MMUs or MMTs are required, helping us to design future interventions to effectively meet critical gaps in care.

To support functioning healthcare facilities, International Medical Corps is meeting with local authorities, physicians and administrators at public hospitals and primary healthcare facilities to identify needs, support surgeries for earthquake victims and address immediate gaps in supplies, medications and equipment caused by increased patient caseloads. The need for reconstructive surgery for victims is expected to increase throughout the year, as patients are stabilized. International Medical Corps is working to help one operating room in a trauma hospital in Lattakia increase its surge capacity for reconstructive surgeries by procuring and delivering critical equipment, including surgical instruments and trauma-care supplies.

Additionally, International Medical Corps is continuing to support the Ministry of Health (MoH) by procuring and delivering essential pharmaceuticals, medical supplies and equipment for healthcare facilities in Aleppo, Hama and Lattakia. Our team has so far delivered more than 15 metric tons of pharmaceuticals, medical supplies and cholera kits to support operating facilities in the target areas. International Medical Corps also is coordinating with the MoH to ensure that the items are distributed to the facilities with the most need. Our teams are procuring additional cholera kits, dignity kits, trauma supplies and consumables (including gauze and bandages), as well as walking aids and pharmaceuticals, that will be delivered to facilities in Aleppo, Hama and Lattakia.

Given the multisectoral gaps and needs in the region, International Medical Corps' MMUs and MMTs include specialists in MHPSS, protection and nutrition to provide integrated, comprehensive support to patients. International Medical Corps is relying on MHPSS specialists and a cadre of trained community health workers (CHWs) who have been providing psychological first-aid (PFA) training and direct psychosocial support to patients seeking healthcare. In the past month, International Medical Corps' team has reached more than 4,000 people through training and PFA-related sessions. Given the increased levels of stress and anxiety within the affected communities, International Medical Corps has integrated six mobile PFA units comprising specialists in psychosocial support, child protection (CP) and gender-based violence (GBV) who are providing services to IDPs in and around the Aleppo governorate. We are launching an additional six MHPSS mobile clinics, and are 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.

International Medical Corps' GBV and CP teams also are providing group activities for and consultations to vulnerable women, girls and children currently living in temporary shelters and camps. Services include conducting awareness-raising sessions, providing safe spaces where children can express their fears and emotions, and distributing games and toys for children. International Medical Corps' Nutrition team is providing support to earthquake-affected communities in and around the Aleppo governorate as part of our MMUs. As of March 26, the team had provided support to nearly 1,000 children and pregnant and lactating women, providing infant and young-child feeding in emergencies educational sessions and distributing nutrition supplies.

Finally, our WASH team is working closely with local authorities and other non-governmental organizations to procure additional supplies—including drinking water, hygiene kits and dignity kits—to support IDPs living in shelters and camps. As a result of the quake, damage to water and sewage lines has been reported across the affected areas, increasing the risk of disease outbreaks. To mitigate risk, our WASH teams are working closely with local authorities to install latrines, provide clean water and distribute hygiene kits.

In **Turkey**, International Medical Corps is working with our partners—Association of Assistance Solidarity and Support for Refugees and Asylum Seekers (MSYD-ASRA), the International Blue Crescent Relief and Development Foundation (IBC) and Doctors Worldwide Turkey (DWWT)—to support IDPs by procuring and distributing essential non-food items, including winter clothing, towels, blankets, hygiene kits and drinking water. We also are working with them to deliver mobile primary healthcare, MHPSS services and medical supplies in Gaziantep, Hatay, Kilis and Kramanmaras. In partnership with MSYD-ASRA, International Medical Corps is distributing non-food items to people in shelters, including blankets, food baskets, diapers, towels, hygiene kits and winter clothing. MSYD has also procured an additional 3,000 food baskets, along with diapers, blankets, towels and hygiene items, to distribute to IDPs in Antakya and Hatay.



*In Turkey, our teams are working closely with our partner MSYD-ASRA to deliver critically needed supplies.*

In partnership with IBC, International Medical Corps has distributed drinking water to 5,000 IDPs and refugees living in Islahiye tent camps, in the southern Turkey province of Gaziantep, one of the areas hardest-hit by the quakes. The team also is procuring nutrition packages, adult winter clothing and canned food to be distributed in Gaziantep (Islahiye), Kahramanmaraş (Elbistan) and Kilis, and is planning to deploy an MMU, in coordination with the MoH, to provide emergency and primary care to displaced people. In partnership with DWWT, International Medical Corps is delivering mobile primary healthcare, food baskets and MHPSS services in Gaziantep, Hatay and Kahramanmaras.

Moving forward, International Medical Corps will continue to work with local partners to address critical needs related to health, MHPSS and WASH in the region.