

Joint statement of local and national civil society organizations in Türkiye to the Donors' Conference for the people of Türkiye and Syria affected by the earthquake

20 March 2023

On 6 February 2023, two earthquakes of magnitudes 7.8 and 7.6 hit southeast Türkiye, claiming the lives of over 50,000 people in Türkiye and Syria and injuring countless others. The disaster has caused an estimated 100 billion USD in damages,¹ roughly 12 percent of Türkiye's GDP in 2021. The earthquakes have directly affected 9.1 million people² in a region that is home to 15.2 million people. Over 48,000 people have died in Türkiye alone, and hundreds of thousands of buildings have either collapsed or sustained significant damage across the affected areas. The earthquakes have left 2.7 million people displaced in Türkiye³, and there continue to be many challenges in ensuring access to basic needs like clean water, food, and shelter for those who remain in the affected areas, including close to 2 million people living in emergency shelters managed by the government⁴ and many more in informal settlements.

The disaster has coincided with a cost-of-living crisis and growing economic challenges, and the interruptions in economic activity in the provinces affected by the earthquakes is expected to contribute to further economic losses in the agricultural, manufacturing, and service sectors. The affected region was also hosting over 1.7 million Syrian refugees who had already been displaced from their homes in Syria before the earthquakes struck and were living in difficult social and economic conditions.

Recovering from this disaster will be challenging. Some cities and towns like Antakya and Adıyaman city center have been completely flattened, and many more buildings across the affected areas are still undergoing damage because of continuing aftershocks. Immediate action is needed to invest time, resources, and energy to build back better and invest in the future.

In planning and implementing recovery efforts, the undersigned civil society organizations in Türkiye recommend the following:

¹ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/turkey-earthquake-damage-set-exceed-100-bln-un-agency-2023-03-07/>

² <https://reliefweb.int/report/turkiye/turkiye-2023-earthquakes-situation-report-no-9-13-march-2023-entr>

³ <https://reliefweb.int/report/turkiye/turkiye-2023-earthquakes-situation-report-no-9-13-march-2023-entr>

⁴ <https://www.afad.gov.tr/kahramanmarasta-meydana-gelen-depremler-hk-36>

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RECOVERY:

- **Invest in restoration of local businesses, local markets, and supply chains to enable economic recovery that reduce further economic harm and prevent dependence on external aid.** This includes but is not limited to access to finance and insurance for micro, small and medium enterprises, including farmers, women-run small businesses and women's cooperatives; reintegrating farmers into supply chains and providing them with access to finance and other forms of assistance; and strategically targeting investment towards businesses with potential for employment creation, including for women, such as in agriculture, services, STEM, green construction, renewable energy, and the care economy.
- Invest in **vocational training, skills development, and entrepreneurship** programs to help individuals and communities acquire new skills and knowledge, diversify their livelihood options, create new income-generating activities, to adapt to the new economic realities.
- **Support the diverse stakeholders based in provinces that are receiving high numbers of internally displaced persons because of the earthquakes** by investing in their public services and available resources, strategically targeting economic investments towards their local economy, and supporting their capacity to maintain social cohesion between persons affected by the earthquakes with local populations.
- **Protect the rural economy of the affected areas.** Invest in sustainable livelihoods of people working in the agricultural sector, including livestock management, as a strategy to ensure food security and nutrition, and to strengthen the local economy of areas affected by the earthquake.
- **Invest in the development and implementation of programs for children, youth, women, older persons, adults, and other vulnerable groups and marginalized communities** that enable them to resume and adapt to normal life in the aftermath of the earthquakes. Target support to local and national organizations, including women-led, refugee-led, disability-led, and youth-led organizations to support these groups in adapting to normal life. Additionally, there should be efforts to promote social inclusion and community cohesion in the recovery efforts.
- **Ensure access to quality education for all children affected by the earthquake** to resume education activities as soon as possible. This will require investments to immediately construct new schools that adhere to safety standards, hiring and placing qualified teachers, ensuring access to quality educational materials, and investing in early childhood education programs.
- **Invest in public health measures, including psychological support. Reduce the spread of communicable diseases and other long-term health risks** by providing access to clean water, restoring water and sanitation systems, and reducing the risk of exposure to asbestos released by demolished buildings.
- **Ensure that individuals who experienced disability after the earthquake are provided with rehabilitation services and opportunities** that enable them to live with dignity and maintain full and meaningful inclusion and participation across all aspects of life.
- **Respect and invest in the preservation and restoration of the social and cultural fabric of the affected areas,** recognizing its importance in collective psychological and social healing, and protecting the rich intangible cultural heritage of the earthquake effected region. Promote cultural sensitivity and respect for diversity in the recovery efforts.

- **Ensure that no further harm is inflicted upon the people affected by the earthquakes** by investing proper resources and capacities so that all responders working in emergency and recovery have the safeguarding mechanisms and a proper monitoring system to protect the well-being of earthquake affected population including children, youth, women, LGBTI+ and other gender-diverse persons, and other vulnerable groups and marginalized communities. Efforts to prevent sexual and gender-based violence, child abuse and exploitation should be accelerated.

PARTICIPATION AND INCLUSION:

- Ensure that the recovery efforts of all actors **are transparent, accountable, inclusive, and participatory**, with regular monitoring, evaluation, and learning to assess progress and identify areas for improvement.
- **Planning, design, and implementation of recovery efforts should leave no one behind.** They must consider the intersecting inequalities already experienced by people living in the affected areas based on their gender, legal or migration status, ethnicity, age, socioeconomic background, dis/ability, or other identifying characteristics. Ensure the collection of gender-disaggregated data and other data disaggregated by the diverse groups living in the affected areas to inform all planning, design, and implementation of recovery efforts.
- **Develop and implement measures that enable local civil society organizations directly impacted by the earthquakes to reorganize their activities and operations at the local level.** Design direct and flexible funding mechanisms, enable allocation of space and equipment for local and national civil society organizations, including women’s and refugee-led organizations, to rapidly respond to the urgent and long-term needs of their constituencies. While recognizing the existing capacities and leadership of community-based, local, and national actors in responding to disasters and emergencies, invest in these organizations to lead and implement effective recovery efforts, including disaster risk reduction measures, to enhance their **resilience** and ability to respond to future disasters.
- **Involve affected populations and other local actors in the long-term planning, design, and implementation of recovery efforts**, ensuring consultations are held to identify their needs and priorities, including women, children, youth, refugees, LGBTI+ and other gender-diverse persons, and the civil society organizations that work with them.
- **Rebuild cities, buildings, and infrastructure that enable the full inclusion of women, children, older persons, people living with disability, LGBTI+ and other gender-diverse persons, and other vulnerable groups and marginalized communities in public life.** All infrastructure should be friendly, safe, accessible to women, children, people living with disability, older persons, and other vulnerable groups and marginalized communities. Public spaces such as parks and community centers should take measures that allow for their full participation. In addition, there should be efforts to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment in the recovery efforts.

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE:

- **Recognize and account for the threats of future natural and man-made disasters, including the climate crisis, in rebuilding efforts.** Redesign and rebuild cities, towns, and villages to be greener, more sustainable, and better equipped to withstand future disasters and protect their

populations. Foster partnerships between local, regional, and international actors to build a sustainable recovery that addresses the root causes of the disaster and the underlying vulnerabilities of affected communities.

- In building back better, **integrate disaster risk reduction measures into all recovery efforts by all stakeholders, while ensuring that rebuilding efforts abide by and respect existing and future engineering standards, safety codes, and regulations**, including earthquake-resistant construction, early warning systems, evacuation plans, investments in emergency water supplies and systems, and training programs on emergency preparedness and response for all actors.
- **Protect and preserve natural ecosystems and habitats, as well as green spaces in urban areas in and around the affected areas.** This includes adopting environmentally-sensitive practices in the removal and disposal of debris from the earthquakes; targeting investments towards the recycling of raw materials to support reconstruction efforts; and ensuring that urban/rural planning and reconstruction efforts create and maintain healthy and habitable environments (land, water and air) for both humans and other living beings.
- **Ensure that all investments comply with international laws and conventions and national legislation that apply to the Republic of Türkiye**, including but not limited to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights; and the United National Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement. Ensure that impact assessments are conducted before and during all interventions to avoid any violations of human rights and follow the international and national regulations.

Signatory Organizations⁵

Refugee Council of Türkiye (TMK)
Afganistan's Hazaras Culture and Solidarity Association
Afghan Refugees Solidarity Association
Association for Solidarity with Syrian Refugees in Izmir (SMDD)
Bonyan Organization
Hazara Students Culture and Solidarity Association
Human Resource Development Foundation (IKGV)
Idea and Art Workshop Association (FISA)
International Blue Crescent Relief and Development Association (IBC)
International Humanitarian Migrants Association (BIG)
International Psychosocial and Education Association (UPSED)
Mardin Joint Women's Association (MOKID)
Orange Organization
Oxfam-KEDV
Ravdanur Foundation
Sened Association
Support to Life Association (STL)
Syrian Literati and Writers Association
The Research Center on Asylum and Migration (IGAM)
Watan Association

Localization Advocacy Group (YSG)
Erişim Destek Derneği (EDD)
Göçmen Dayanışma Derneği
Innovation for Development Association (I4D)
KAOS-GL Association
Kırkayak Kültür Association
Mavi Kalem
Maya Vakfı
Violet Organization
Association of Civil Society Development Center (STGM)
Toplum Gönüllüleri Vakfı (TOG)
Uluslararası Çocuk Hakları Elçileri Derneği (ICHILD)
Yuva Association

Türkiye Local NGO Humanitarian Forum (TIF)
Nirengi Association
Uluslararası Göçmen Kadınlar Dayanışma Derneği (UGKDD)
Needs Map Social Cooperative (İhtiyaç Haritası)
Genç Hayat Foundation
Pikolo Association
Sevgi ve Kardeşlik Vakfı (SEVKAR)
Human Rights Association
Development Foundation of Turkey
Gıda Kurtarma Derneği
Sağlıkta Genç Yaklaşımlar Derneği
Development Workshop (Kalkınma Atölyesi)
Mother Child Education Foundation (AÇEV)
İnsani Gelişme Vakfı (INGEV)
HERA Inc.
Habitat Association
Inogar Cooperative
Eksi25 Association
Teachers Network (Öğretmen Ağı)
Palet Kültür Sanat ve Eğitim Derneği
Sabancı University Education Reform Initiative (ERG)
Çocuğa Karşı Şiddeti Önlemek için Ortaklık Ağı
Suna and İnan Kıraç Foundation
Sosyal Ekonomik Kültürel Kalkınmayı Destekleme Derneği (SEKDER)
Esitlik ve Diyalog Derneği
Uçan Süpürge Derneği
Türkiye Eğitim Gönüllüleri Vakfı (TEGV)

⁵ There is significant overlap in membership amongst the TMK, YSG, and TIF, with many members being member to more than one network. For the purposes of this statement, all organizations have been listed once.