



**World Health
Organization**
Syrian Arab Republic

SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC RESPONSE TO EARTHQUAKE

SITUATION REPORT #2
9 FEBRUARY 2023



WHO's Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean, Regional Emergency Director, and WHO Syria Country Representative meeting with Syria officials, 9 February 2023



6 MILLION
estimated
PEOPLE AFFECTED
AFFECTED



4.1 MILLION
NEED IMMEDIATE
ASSISTANCE



2 MILLION
estimated
DISPLACED



4+
GOVERNORATES
AFFECTED

HEALTH CONCERNS

- TRAUMATIC INJURIES AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT are immediate health needs.
- CONTINUITY OF ESSENTIAL HEALTH SERVICES is critical to prevent excess mortality and morbidity.
- 20 HEALTH FACILITIES reportedly damaged so far, with assessments ongoing.
- 3 PRE-EXISTING OUTBREAKS IN AFFECTED AREAS:
 - Cholera (all affected governorates, especially Aleppo)
 - Hepatitis A outbreak in coastal area
 - Measles (NES)

HIGHLIGHTS

- A 7.8 magnitude earthquake struck southern Türkiye in the early morning of 6 February 2023. Hundreds of aftershocks have occurred in the days that followed.
- In Syria, Latakia, Hama and Aleppo governorates are the worst affected areas, with further impact reported in Tartous and Deir ez-Zour.
- As of 17:00, 9 Feb, 1 374 deaths and 2 295 injuries are recorded in Aleppo, Latakia, Hama, and Tartous governorates, with the death toll expected to rise.
- Close to 250 shelters are set up. Water and hygiene, food, shelter, medicine, and the provision of health services are immediate priority needs.
- WHO Regional Director and EMRO Emergency Director are currently on mission in Syria to visit affected areas
- More than 150 buildings are fully collapsed (~100 in Latakia, ~50 Aleppo) with hundreds more heavily damaged and uninhabitable.
- More than 20 health facilities are reportedly damaged, the majority of which are in Latakia. Assessments ongoing.
- 1st airlift shipment containing trauma kits, medical equipment expected to arrive 10 Feb, will be routed directly to Aleppo
- WHO submitted 15.67M in needs for health, WASH and nutrition to the upcoming Syria Flash Appeal.

SITUATION UPDATE

In the early morning of 6 February 2023, a magnitude 7.8 earthquake occurred in southern Türkiye near the northern border of Syria. The earthquake was followed 11 minutes later by a magnitude 6.7 aftershock. Many aftershocks are still being felt across the region. Whilst the impact is still being assessed, initial reports evidence significant damage in the areas of southern Türkiye and northern Syria.

In response, the Syria Ministry of Health (MoH) activated its emergency operations centre (EOC) on 6 Feb 2023 under the chairmanship of the Deputy Minister. In all affected governorates, public and private health facilities and medical convoys have been repurposed to support the response and are being managed by the National Ministry of Health (MoH) and Directorate of Health (DoH) at governorate level. Support has been directed to affected areas, with medical convoys including 28 ambulances and 7 mobile clinics, deployed from the health directorates of Damascus, Rural Damascus, Quneitra, Homs, Tartous, Aleppo and Latakia.

To date, 2295 injuries and 1374 deaths, have been recorded in the governorates of Aleppo, Latakia, Hama, and Tartous, with additional reports expected as the search and rescue efforts continue. So far, 3 health workers have reportedly died. The greatest number of injuries were reported from Aleppo, Latakia, and Hama with search and rescue still ongoing.

Due to damaged buildings, as well as fear to return to residences, thousands of families have been displaced with people sheltering vehicles, outside in public parks, mosques, schools and other community centres. Nearly 250 IDP shelters have been set up, mainly in Aleppo and Latakia. Priority response actions include distribution of life-saving and essential supplies and services such as health care, water and hygiene, shelter and protection.



Currently a joint needs assessment is being conducted to understand better the full extent of impact and need. WHO conducted a grading call on 7th February 2023, with the event graded at the highest level of Grade 3.

Area Impact

A shelter in Latakia. Credit: WHO

Latakia and Tartous

Governorate	Deaths	Injuries
Latakia	506	792
Tartous	0	36

- In Latakia, 57 (4new) buildings have collapsed, 200 partially destroyed, 16 schools partially damaged. More than 200 buildings declared unsafe for habitation.
- 142,000 people are rendered homeless and 33,000 are living in collective shelters
- At least 4 hospitals reported damage with at least 1 CT scanner full destroyed, assessments are ongoing
- New trauma and injury cases are no longer arriving at area hospitals
- Many areas restricted for movement due to debris and danger of fragile buildings
- Residents are afraid to return home, ~50 shelters are set up in mosques and schools
- Priority needs include mobile medical outreach and MHPSS support.

Aleppo

Deaths	Injuries
362	702

- Aleppo PIN: 1.3M (intersectoral)

- UN meeting yesterday – plan from Aleppo government to establish 1 common shelter for up to 150,000
- 53 (1 new) buildings collapsed
- 41 admitted cases in Al Razi Hospital. 43 admitted cases (including 4 children) in Aleppo University hospital.
- At least primary health centers (PHCs) reported some damages (Nobull, Al Zahraa, New Aleppo, Police association)
- DoH called the “General safety committee” to visit and assess all PHCs and hospitals.
- 30 Ambulances with medical teams and mobile clinics are working in affected communities, 32 mobile medical teams are deployed to the collective shelters and provided more than 2,900 services on 8 Feb, 2 NGO hospitals are receiving emergency cases free of charge.
- WHO’s surge trauma specialist arrived and has visited all specialized hospitals. Planning is underway to support patients who require long-term recovery interventions such as surgical, rehabilitative interventions.
- At least 4 PHCs sustained minor damages (2 rural & 2 urban) as well as the Directorate of Health office

Hama:

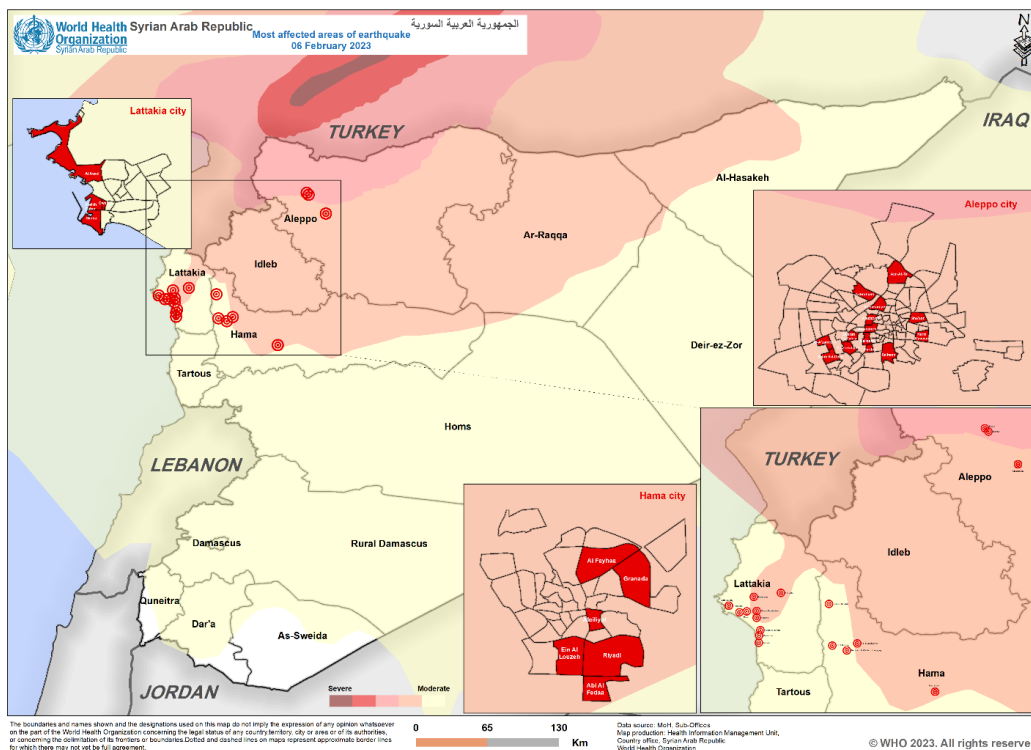
Deaths	Injuries
49	75

- In Hama, a seven-story and a three-story building collapsed, many buildings were partially or mildly damaged. 12 water tanks in different villages were totally damaged
- The city of Hama was heavily impacted, especially Arbaeen neighbourhood, and Sqelbiya district
- WHO has received two requests for support to the National hospital in Hama - ER, ICU and surgical departments and Sqelbiya General Hospital.

Deir ez-Zour

Deaths	Injuries
0	1

- 6 buildings collapsed while 2 buildings have been evacuated in the first day (Jubila).
- The most affected neighborhoods are: Jubila (2) – Al Rushdiah (2) - Al Hamydia (1) – Umal (1).
- More than 600 families are reportedly displaced from their homes due to damages while an additional 68 families were forcibly evacuated.
- Casualties – Al Assad Hospital: 1 case was admitted mild trauma injuries
- No injuries were reported among health workers or health partners.



Public Health Impact

- Currently on visiting Latakia, WHO Regional Emergency Director, Dr. Rick Brennan, described the destruction and devastation as “incredible” and described the response efforts of the local community and health care workers as “amazing... in spite of a lack of resources” as they worked to receive and treat hundreds of patients in the space of a few hours. To watch the full remarks from Latakia, please visit: https://twitter.com/WHOSyria/status/1623747535398477824?s=20&t=g5Fjuu_DFbxm54U9HtghFg
- Immediately following the earthquake, trauma-related deaths and injuries from collapsed building and debris were reported.
- Within the affected areas, the number of trauma and injury cases have declined following a tremendous surge in the immediate aftermath of the earthquake. Additional needs related to plastic and orthopaedic surgery, as well as provision of physical rehabilitation, prosthetics and assistive devices are expected.
- Prior to the earthquake, 1120 public health facilities were included in quarterly HeRAMS, of which only 28 public hospitals and 540 primary health centers (PHCs) were fully functional and 15 public health hospitals and 80 PHCs were partially functional. Assessments are ongoing to determine extent of damage on facilities. Preliminary reports indicate at least 20 health facilities have sustained damages, the majority of which are in Latakia; assessments are ongoing.
- Persons exposed to harsh weather conditions as a result of displacement and/or damage to their accommodation are at high risk for hypothermia. With thousands of people displaced and cold weather conditions, shelter needs are top priority at this time.
- Due to crowded conditions in existing shelters, there is heightened increase the risk of outbreaks and disease transmission, including spread of respiratory illness such as COVID-19 and influenza, as well as those related to pre-existing outbreaks of cholera, hepatitis A and measles.
- Mental health support is a priority need due the extreme trauma and stress resulting from the earthquake on affected populations, in particular experienced by children, as well as the response workforce.
- Significant damage to the water networks has been reported to above-ground infrastructure with dozens of tanks reportedly collapsed or fully damaged; WASH assessments continue. Turbidity, contamination, and reduced functionality have been reported, and as such there is anticipated higher risk of waterborne illness, including exacerbation of pre-existing cholera and hepatitis A outbreaks.

RESPONSE PILLARS

Leadership and Coordination

- The emergency health response is being led by the MoH and DoH at governorate level and the Emergency Operations Center has been fully activated at the MoH.
- On 7 February 2023, World Health Organization (WHO) co-chaired the first humanitarian health Sector meeting within 24 hours of the earthquake and is co-leading the health sector with the MoH.
- WHO has activated a full-scale incident management response, activating all pillars under the global Emergency Response Framework.
- On 8 February 2023, the Regional Director Dr. Ahmed Al Mandhari and Regional Emergency Director Dr. Rick Brennan arrived in Damascus and conducted a briefing with WHO staff before proceeding to Latakia on 9 Feb.
- WHO is currently formulating a regional earthquake flash appeal for Syria and Türkiye and has also submitted its needs to the OCHA Whole of Syria flash appeal.
- WHO is deploying technical and operational surge support to bolster earthquake response capacity (3 already in country).

Information Management and Surveillance

- Official casualty figures are being reported by national MoH
- WHO is closely coordinating with surveillance teams and rapid response teams to ensure ongoing surveillance and detection, as well as readiness for any surge in infectious disease cases, especially in affected areas.
- Support to Rapid response teams (RRTs) has been requested from Tartous and Hama

Procurement and Logistics

- In response to MoH and DoH requests for additional medical supplies and equipment, WHO has mobilized immediate essential supplies to the affected areas while also initiating procurement from local and global sources.
- Within the first 24 hours of the response, WHO dispatched essential medicines and supplies to Aleppo, Homs, Hama, Tartous and Latakia, in addition to the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC). Supplies will enable the provision of 102,415 treatments, 300 trauma cases, in addition to 550,00 water disinfection tablets.
- On 7th February 2023, surgical and trauma kits weighing 0.6 tons were delivered to Aleppo DoH.
- Supplies for more than 102,415 treatments, 300 trauma cases have been deployed to affected governorates.
- In Hama, WHO dispatched a cholera periphery kit, oxygen masks and an oxygen cannula (650 kg).
- A WHO chartered flight is scheduled to reach Aleppo on 10 February bringing in trauma and emergency surgical kits (a total of 138 pallets, 178 cubic meters). This shipment will be followed by a second flight (74 pallets, 102 cubic meters) bringing trauma kits, body bags, and instruments.
- NCDs treatments – including hemodialysis sessions which are also vital for treatment of crush injuries – are in the pipeline for procurement, to support continuation of essential services to affected populations.

Health Operations and Technical Expertise

- **Trauma:** EMRO & WCO teams agreed on conduct trauma assessment tool implemented for the 8 public hospitals in Aleppo, Latakia and Hama to which injured people are referred & managed: 2). develop criteria for follow up and referral pathway; 3). mapping of partnerships and service capacity to refer patients, activate trauma TWG4 and to develop 3 month detailed costed trauma plan
- **Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS):** WHO is focused firstly on support staff and their families in this challenging time. In its coordination role for MHPSS working group, WHO is mobilizing local stakeholders and sectors, including MoH, NGOs, as well as child protection and protection, to provide MHPSS support to affected communities. The MoH and Ministry of Education MHPSS personnel trained on Psychological First Aid (PFA) and Basic Psychosocial Skills (BPS) are forming quick response teams in the affected areas. As of 8th February, 72 PHC in the affected governorates 8 Hama, Latakia 14, Tartous 20, Aleppo 19, Deir Ezzor 5, Homs 6 PHC provide integrated MHPSS services.
- **Surveillance and Outbreaks:** EWARS system is functioning at the affected areas for early detection of threats related to infectious diseases with a total of 237 reporting sites at the affected sub-districts. WHO is working with MOH and DOH counterparts to assess the needs for strengthening the diseases surveillance in the affected governorates is in process. RRTs will be supported with chlorine tablets, DOHs will be supported with rapid diagnostic kits for Cholera and COVID-19, as well as medicines for treatment of acute diarrhea including IV fluids, antibiotics, ORS.
- **WASH:** In addition to the dispatch of water disinfection tablets and brochures, WHO is working with focal points on the ground to monitor water quality and prepare for impacts on water infrastructure. Approximately 550,000 water disinfection tablets were deployed to affected areas.
- **Essential Health Services:** Four NGOs have been engaged in Aleppo to provide medical services during the response with further deployments planned to affected areas in the coming days.
- **Risk Communication and Community Engagement:** WHO has undertaken daily digital social listening being in order to detect emerging issues and concerns. Major conversation trends and topics emerging include: Calls to increase aid and support to Syrian affected populations, reports of search and rescue volunteers found dead in the rubble during searches, fears of returning home and preferring to stay in shelters or in public settings. A coordination meeting was held with RCCE partners to coordinate efforts for collective outreach



and communications to affected populations. WHO is developing key messages across a range of immediate and longer-term health risks pending testing and approval. An integrated community health responder training package under development, addressing multiple health risks current under development. Community feedback mechanism currently under development

CHALLENGES

- Limited hospital capacities (human and health resources) to address mass casualties.
- Dynamic and evolving situation on the ground
- High risk of:
 - Spread of water and food borne diseases due to disrupted water supplies, including exacerbation of ongoing cholera and Hepatitis A outbreaks (pre-existing outbreaks)
 - Disease transmission in crowded shelter conditions, including respiratory illness, measles (pre-existing outbreak)
 - Significant mental distress and disorders, especially among children.
- Harsh winter weather and extreme cold temperatures complicate search and rescue efforts, as well as shelter solutions.
- Significant distress and fear within the affected population, with households not returning to residences. Likelihood of rumors and misinformation increasing as situation evolves.
- Ongoing fuel crisis has hindered response efforts.

PRIORITY NEEDS AND ACTIONS

- **New resources are urgently needed** to accelerate flow of aid and assistance to affected areas
- Unhindered access to most affected populations.
- Facilitated entry and distribution of medicines, supplies, equipment, and surge support staff.
- Continuity of health care services, especially for women, children, elderly, persons with NCDs
- Ensured access to MHPSS for the affected population, particularly children.
- Fuel for response to enable ambulance transport, search and rescue, MMTs, community outreach, etc.
- Support to partners, in particular NGO partners providing immediate services, to ensure supply of sufficient safe water and continuation of essential health services.

FUNDING NEEDS FOR IMMEDIATE RESPONSE

For the first 3 months, WHO estimates it will require 15.67 million USD for immediate response needs in Syria. Further resources will be required to support repair and rehabilitation of affected health facilities which have yet to be assessed, as well as respond to anticipated outbreaks and longer term health needs of those affected by the crisis.

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To support WHO's response in SYRIA, please visit:

<https://earthquakeresponse-turkiyesyria.who.foundation/>

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