

From heartbreak to healing: how your donation made a difference in Türkiye and Syria

Australian Red Cross
Türkiye Syria Earthquakes Appeal
12 month impact report





Syrian Red Crescent teams have been providing support to people impacted by the earthquakes since day one.

Photo credit: Olav A. Saltbones/Norwegian Red Cross

One year on from the devastating earthquakes that hit Türkiye and Syria the road to recovery remains complex and long. Over 17 million people have been impacted in unimaginable ways; losing their homes, loved ones and jobs.¹

Since day one, teams from Turkish Red Crescent (TRCS, locally known as Kizilay) and Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) have been there to provide vital and enduring support to impacted communities. Due to their unique roles as trusted local organisations, both National Societies have been able to access communities that others cannot and reach high numbers of people in need.

Since the very first hour, local teams have worked tirelessly to help ease people's suffering. They supported immediate search and rescue operations, as well as providing medical aid and serving millions of hot meals.

Today, these local teams are still working in their communities, to provide much-needed cash grants, shelter, and psychosocial assistance as people rebuild their lives with self-determination and dignity.

This response effort has been supported by the global Red Cross Red Crescent Movement² including Australian Red Cross. This is what it means to be the world's largest humanitarian network – we rally together in times of crisis at the scale needed.

In Australia, we were truly overwhelmed by the kindness and swift action of our community. Generous supporters donated \$6.8 million dollars to help teams on the ground. From the students who sold roses to raise funds, to the artists who auctioned valuable pieces and the everyday Australians who contributed what they could.

This report illustrates the support our Movement has been able to provide thanks to the generosity of people across the world.

One year on, we acknowledge the unfathomable losses experienced by communities in Türkiye and Syria. We celebrate the tenacity of the human spirit exemplified in their commitment to rebuilding their lives. And we express heartfelt thanks for the generosity that has provided vital help to so many.



Penny Harrison
Interim CEO



Alex Mathieson
Director, International Programs and Movement Relations

1. Flash Appeal: Syrian Arab Republic Earthquake (February – May 2023) [EN/AR] – Syrian Arab Republic | ReliefWeb Humanitarian Transition Overview – Türkiye Earthquake Response (August 2023) | OCHA (unocha.org)

2. Red Cross Red Crescent movement is made up of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and 191 National Societies.

Cover photo: A woman walks amongst the rubble caused by the earthquakes in Türkiye.



Turkish Red Crescent have provided 427 million meals to people who have lost their homes.

Photo credit: Turkish Red Crescent

Catastrophic earthquakes

At 4:17am on 6 February 2023, while people slept in their homes, a 7.8-magnitude earthquake struck parts of southern and central Türkiye and northern and western Syria. The damage was widespread and catastrophic, with countless apartment blocks, schools, hospitals, and office buildings collapsing. At midday, a second 7.5-magnitude earthquake struck, resulting in further damage, injury, and loss of life.

The impact

- 55,000 people were killed
- Over 360,000 buildings were either destroyed or severely damaged
- 1.5 million people were left without a home

Tragically, over 50,000 people were killed, and it became the world's deadliest seismic event in more than a decade. Over 17 million people were impacted by this disaster; left without loved ones, homes, and businesses. The scale of the crisis was immense and will require an ongoing, dedicated and coordinated response from local Red Cross Red Crescent teams, other humanitarian actors, and government bodies.

Australia's generosity

We launched the Australian Red Cross Türkiye-Syria Earthquakes Appeal on 7 February 2023. We were overwhelmed with the generosity of Australian people and businesses who donated, shared the appeal on social media, ran fundraising events, and did all that they could to raise funds and awareness for this crisis.

In just the first 48 hours, Australians donated over 1 million dollars to the appeal and ultimately, \$6.8 million dollars was raised to support impacted communities in Türkiye and Syria.

A locally-led response

Since day one, Turkish Red Crescent and Syrian Arab Red Crescent staff and volunteers have led the response. More than 216,000 people have worked tirelessly to provide urgent and vital support.

Thanks to their efforts, and the generosity of Red Cross supporters here in Australia and around the world, the Movement together with local teams have been able to support millions of people who have lost everything.

In the 12 months since the earthquakes hit, the Movement has provided:

In Türkiye thousands of staff and volunteers across 264 branches have provided:

-  427 million hot meals to displaced people
-  134,677 temporary shelters for people who lost their homes
-  2.3 million hygiene kits and personal care items

In Syria thousands of staff and volunteers across 14 branches have provided:

-  6.8 million medical services
-  167,490 people with multi-purpose cash assistance
-  392,300 water and rehabilitation infrastructure services

Looking ahead

While the immediate physical danger has passed, the road to recovery for millions of people in both countries stretches on.

The need for permanent shelter, food, clean water, medical aid, and hygiene infrastructure is ongoing. There is also a continued need for psychosocial support to help heal the invisible wounds inflicted by this disaster. Many people still live amongst rubble, a constant reminder of their immense loss, while many others have never recovered their loved ones' remains.

Local teams, in partnership with IFRC are committed to helping communities to rebuild with practical help.

Social markets provide a sense of normalcy

Throughout affected communities in Türkiye, our local teams have set up a number of social markets, a service where people can visit a shop to choose items free of charge.

The market is stocked with items such as clothes, children's toys, shoes, hygiene kits and cleaning products.

Run by the local TRCS branch with the assistance of volunteers, the social market is very similar to a regular shopping experience at a supermarket, without the cost. It helps to provide a level of normalcy and dignity to those affected by the loss of their homes and employment as it allows families to choose items that are well suited to their needs.



Dr. Fatima Kanesh is one of the Syrian Red Cross doctors that has provided 6.8 million medical services to people affected by the earthquakes.

Photo credit: Jani Savolainen / IFRC



Since the very first day Turkish Red Crescent have been providing meals to people who have lost everything.

Photo credit: Turkish Red Crescent

Travelling medical vans provide critical care in Syria

Dr. Fatima Kanesh is a SARC doctor who has been providing healthcare to people affected and displaced by the earthquake and the ongoing conflict in Syria. She spends her days working in a van that is designed to function as a small mobile medical facility, with medicine and basic tools for diagnosing patients. Vans like this travel throughout affected regions in Syria to provide vital healthcare.

"We have encountered many diseases that were the result of people leaving their homes, living in shelters and changing their health habits due to the earthquake. We have seen many patients with lice, scabies, diarrhea as well as respiratory and intestinal infections" says Dr. Fatima.

"We are providing people with information on how to sanitize water before drinking it, the right way to wash their hands, take care of hygiene and prepare a rehydration solution."

Medical staff like Dr. Fatima have helped to provide 6.8 million medical services since the earthquakes struck in Syria.



Children make paper hats with our local teams.

Photo credit: Jani Savolainen / IFRC

Psychosocial support is critical for children in Syria

In Syria, children face one of the most urgent and complex humanitarian crises in the world, they have lived through years of conflict and now they must navigate the aftermath of these devastating earthquakes.

This is why psychosocial support for children continues to be one of the key components of the earthquake response in Syria. This support focuses on providing children with tools for coping with and expressing their emotions through art, music and craft activities.

These therapeutic sessions also provide children with a space to just be children; to play, socialise and learn together.

A place to call home

Throughout impacted regions in Türkiye, container cities built by TRCS offer over 79,000 people a safe and comfortable place to call their own.

After losing their house in the earthquake, Mehmet and his fiancé found themselves living in one of these prefabricated homes in the container city of Kahramanmaraş.

These temporary homes are designed to be comfortable places for people to heal and recover in dignity. They provide running water, grey water, electricity, and air conditioning as well as areas for recreation, relaxation, and religious activities.

Vitaly, there are Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) tents, staffed with psychologists, translators, and psychosocial support staff, helping adults and children at the camp to process their grief, fear, anger, and anxiety.

Mehmet and his fiancé are grateful for the shelter they have received from TRCS. They are now excitedly planning their wedding and looking for a permanent home.



Mehmet has been living in a container home provided by Turkish Red Crescent after his house was destroyed in the earthquakes.

Photo credit: Onur Isik Canturk/IFRC



A mobile medical team from the Syrian Arab Red Crescent is providing health services at a collective shelter in Aleppo, Syria.

Image Credit: Olav A. Saltbones / Norwegian Red Cross



Reflections from Australian Red Cross humanitarian delegate Massimo Campagna

In June 2023 I had the opportunity to visit southern Türkiye as part of an Australian Red Cross monitoring trip to the earthquake zone. It's hard to comprehend the profound impact the earthquakes have had on the people of Türkiye and Syria until you're amongst the rubble of once thriving neighbourhoods, witnessing the destruction, and seeing how it has changed people's lives forever.

The numbers are hard to read. Across both countries, nearly 60,000 lives were lost, and in Türkiye alone, 4.3 million people remain displaced. On the other side of the border, Syrians who have endured more than a decade of conflict must now contend with this new disaster.

"Everywhere, I saw a determination to recover and rebuild."

Yet, despite the challenges there was the undeniable sense of determination in local communities to recover and rebuild. Since day one, teams from Turkish Red Crescent and Syrian Arab Red Crescent have been tirelessly responding to the urgent and changing needs of affected people. Staff and volunteers across Türkiye, Syria, and from all around the globe have been on the ground with local communities since day one, and will continue to be there for the weeks, months and years ahead as both countries move towards recovery.

As we were driving around the earthquake-affected regions, the sheer scale of the response operation led by Turkish Red Crescent became clear. Perhaps the biggest aspect of the response in Türkiye has been the "mass feeding" – the preparation and distribution of hundreds of millions of hot meals. The Turkish Red Crescent was tasked with this by the Turkish Government, and it was a role they proudly took on.

With so many homes destroyed and with around 2.6 million people now living in tent cities, the provision of hot meals has been critical in the first phase of the response.

We had the opportunity to visit some of the industrial-scale kitchens that Turkish Red Crescent have set up in universities, community centres, and camps, where they are able to prepare and deliver 60,000 meals three times a day, amounting to an astounding 416 million meals since February.

Over the border, Syrian Arab Red Crescent has been instrumental in providing assistance to those who need it. They've been distributing essential relief items, providing clean drinking water, providing over 2.4 million people with medical services, and extending mental health support to survivors, giving them an opportunity to process what they've been through.

The scale of the earthquakes in Türkiye and Syria was almost too much to comprehend. But to witness the response by the local teams on the ground was nothing short of astonishing.

Despite the gravity of this disaster, it is in moments like this that the best of humanity shines through.



Thank you

We are deeply thankful to the Australian community for the heartening generosity you have shown the Turkish and Syrian people impacted by these catastrophic earthquakes.

It is thanks to our supporters that the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement can help these communities to rebuild. Walking side by side on the long road to recovery.



The work continues. People affected by the earthquake are still in need of food, shelter items, hygiene kits, medicine and other support.

Photo Credit: Syrian Arab Red Crescent