1. EVENT OVERVIEW

Priority concerns

The priority concerns in the areas affected by the earthquake are:

- access to mental health and psychosocial support;
- ensuring access to health care services for the most vulnerable and affected populations;
- post-trauma rehabilitative care;
- water and sanitation services;
- prevention and control of disease outbreaks, including through strengthening disease surveillance; and
- ensuring access to essential health services, particularly for women, children, the elderly and those living with noncommunicable diseases.

WHO actions

- In Türkiye, WHO continues to support the government-led response, working in close coordination with the Türkiye Ministry of Health (MoH), the Ministry of Family and Social Services (MoFSS) and the Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (AFAD).
- WHO, with other United Nations (UN) agencies and humanitarian partners, laid down the strategic and operational priorities moving forward in order to improve outcomes for affected populations. The priorities will focus on maintaining stronger links to the government for support, improving service delivery in informal settlements, expanding the cash distribution instead of in-kind donations, ensuring equal access to the humanitarian response for vulnerable populations and, lastly, planning for a conclusion of the humanitarian response phase.
- WHO has provided psychological first aid training to 563 staff from the MoH and 913 staff from the MoFSS. WHO also reached a total of 1265 MoH and MoFSS staff who attended online “Ask the Expert” sessions on mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS).
- As of 16 April, WHO had delivered over US$ 500 000 of supplies for scabies and lice treatment, as well as over US$ 300 000 of laboratory supplies including multiplex polymerase chain reaction (PCR) panels and rapid diagnostic tests (RDTs) for malaria and cholera. WHO has delivered almost 27 tonnes of supplies to the MoH, including 560 different modules of trauma and emergency surgery kit (TESK), interagency emergency health kit (IEHK) and pneumonia kits. In addition, WHO is in the process of prepositioning acute watery diarrhoea (AWD) supplies.
- WHO has released a flash appeal for immediate funding totaling US$ 84.5 million, of which US$ 50.8 million has been requested for Türkiye. As of 16 April, 17.7% of required funds have been received by WHO.
More than two months after the devastating earthquakes that struck the Kahramanmaraş province in Türkiye on 6 February and 20 February, a state of emergency remains in place for the 11 provinces directly affected by the earthquakes where 50 339 people lost their lives, including more than 6800 foreign nationals, mainly Syrians. To date, there have been more than 22 500 aftershocks, and nearly 307 000 buildings and 893 000 independent units were damaged throughout the region. On 3 April, the AFAD declared six additional provinces, Bingöl, Kayseri, Mardin, Tunceli, Niğde and Batman, as “disaster areas affecting general life” due to the presence of moderately and heavily damaged buildings identified in a recent earthquake damage assessment.

The Government of Türkiye is leading the earthquake response, coordinated through the AFAD with the Turkish Red Crescent (TRC). The UN and humanitarian partners continue to mobilize emergency teams and relief operations in Türkiye, in support of the response by the Government of Türkiye.

The Temporary Settlements Support Sector (TSS) reported that almost 2.4 million people were identified as residing in temporary settlements, of whom close to 1.6 million (68%) are in informal settlements. People living in informal sites continue to reside in bare minimum living. Women and girls are particularly affected due to persisting shortages in sexual reproductive health (SRH) supplies, and a lack of access to contraceptives, menstrual products and safe spaces for breastfeeding. The most severely affected areas, including Hatay, Adıyaman, Kahramanmaraş and Malatya, are currently hosting 92% of the population living in temporary settlements.

Fig.1: Distribution of population in temporary settlements in the earthquake-affected provinces, as of March 2023
As of 16 April, the Türkiye Earthquakes Flash Appeal, requiring $1 billion to assist 5.2 million people, was funded at 29.3% with $294 million received. The humanitarian community has quickly mobilized to carry out a coordinated response, delivering life-saving aid and protection assistance to people in the most impacted locations. Relief items such as food, medical supplies, shelter, hygiene and dignity kits, and WASH assistance, among other essentials, have also been delivered.

By the end of March, [UN agencies and humanitarian partners](#) had supported more than 4.2 million people. More than 71 000 medical consultations have been provided and 42 emergency medical teams (EMTs) were deployed to provide life-saving health services. SRH services have been provided to 6800 people through six stationary and 11 mobile units, providing 2100 reproductive health supplies, while 13 300 people have received dignity kits and maternity kits.

Building on previous experiences in the country, humanitarian actors continued to put impacted community members at the centre of the response by strengthening accountability to affected populations, including through two-way communication and community engagement. Existing community channels, such as the WHO and MoH WhatsApp lines used for COVID-19 information sharing, the UNHCR counselling hotline, TRC community lines, community groups and consultation forums for refugees and host communities, have been expanded to support earthquake-affected people, providing them with information on humanitarian services and government assistance.

**Access to health services**

According to a statement by the MoFSS, as of 16 April, 4808 psychosocial support (PSS) staff have been deployed to the earthquake area, and they provided PSS support for 1 609 248 people. In addition, 5213 PSS staff provided services for 677 477 affected people who were transferred from the earthquake area to other provinces, and 15 PSS staff from the ALO 183 hotline for women and children at risk of violence and abuse provided PSS support for 985 people.

However, addressing health and psychosocial support for children and adults is an urgent challenge that will need to continue after the humanitarian phase has ended.

According to the [UN Development Programme](#), about 70% of the survivors injured by the earthquake are expected to have a disability. They are also more likely to be psychologically affected and in need of targeted MHPSS services. Many people with disabilities, including refugees and migrants, have lost their assistive devices/mobility aids in the earthquakes, limiting their mobility and access to information and services, including health, education and protection, increasing their risks of violence, especially for women and young people with disabilities.

Another major concern remains the availability of safe drinking water due to disruptions to water networks and the recent flooding in late March. These disruptions not only create challenges for accessing safe and clean water, but also pose a significant risk to food safety, skin infections and AWD, among other issues.
**WHO ACTIONS TO DATE**

**Leadership and coordination**
- WHO continues to support the government-led response, working in close coordination with the MoH and AFAD.
- WHO, with other UN agencies and humanitarian partners, laid down the **strategic and operational priorities** moving forward in order to improve outcomes for affected populations. The priorities will focus on maintaining stronger links to the government for support, improving service delivery in informal settlements, expanding the cash distribution instead of in-kind donations, ensuring equal access to the humanitarian response for vulnerable populations and, lastly, planning for a conclusion of the humanitarian response phase.

**Health sector coordination**
- WHO, along with UNICEF, continues to lead health and nutrition sector coordination in Gaziantep as well as in the four hubs in Hatay, Kahramanmaras, Adiyaman and Malatya.
- WHO conducted a key MHPSS stakeholders’ coordination meeting to identify current needs and challenges in the field and develop a joint roadmap for MHPSS for the next 3 months. Among the identified activities are establishing coordination mechanisms at provincial level, conducting needs analysis and access studies for the different groups, identifying resources, strengthening areas of self-help and social support, advocacy with service users involved in decision-making processes, and monitoring and evaluation.

**Health operations**
- WHO has provided psychological first aid training to 563 staff from the MoH and 913 staff from the MoFSS. WHO also reached a total of 1265 MoH and MoFSS staff who attended online “Ask the Expert” sessions on MHPSS. Additional face-to-face support for social care workers was provided in Kahramanmaras and Hatay.
- WHO is drafting a response plan to a request from the MoH to provide mental health services in Adiyaman, Hatay and Kahramanmaras, the provinces most affected by the earthquake.
- In response to a request for international assistance issued by the Government of Türkiye on 6 February, WHO, with the AFAD, coordinated EMT deployments to provide life-saving emergency health care for the injured and the most vulnerable affected by the disaster. As of 16 April, the Emergency Medical Team Coordination Cell is being dissolved and plans are in place to transition to post-emergency response by conducting mass casualty training and outbreak preparedness for UMKE, the national medical rescue team, and the MoH.

**Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH)**
- WHO continues to develop and translate PSEAH community messages and posters, and disseminate them throughout PSEAH Network partners.
- WHO continues to provide training of trainers for all PSEAH focal points. The PSEAH Network is supporting training/refreshers for the broader nongovernmental organization (NGO) community, using Inter-Agency Standing Committee training materials and UNICEF’s online platform.
- WHO developed and shared advocacy materials with the two main implementing partners, ASAM and Doctors Worldwide.
**Risk communication and community engagement (RCCE)**

- Overall, the WHO RCCE team, in collaboration with the health promotion department of the MoH, developed and disseminated health messages that included water use, infodemics, frostbite and hypothermia, children’s health, breastfeeding, MHPSS, food safety, chronic diseases and asbestos.
- Public health advice for preventing and treating heat stroke has been developed and is currently undergoing the approval process.
- WHO drafted a concept note to work with the Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants (ASAM) to support breastfeeding and women’s health community engagement activities in Kahramanmaras.
- WHO, UNICEF, and the health promotion department of the MoH are collaborating to integrate a chatbot into the MoH’s earthquake response website.
- WHO and the health promotion department of the MoH are working on a survey through the MoH’s earthquake hotline to identify information needs and to develop a distribution plan for content.

**Emergency communications**

The following stories were published on the WHO/Europe website:

- WHO staff’s experience in the earthquake zone: an interview with a UN health coordinator in Gaziantep. Read [here](#).
- 2 months on from the Türkiye earthquakes: going the last mile to provide continuing health services. Read [here](#).
- Over the last 2 months, healthcare workers from 20+ countries have come together in Emergency Medical Teams saving lives and providing health care to those who survived the earthquakes. Watch the video [here](#).
- New life, new hope: exceptional people making a difference in Türkiye. Read the story [here](#).

---

**WHO’s public health advice shared through our social media channels helps protect communities.**
Supplies and logistics
- As of 16 April, WHO had delivered over US$ 500 000 of supplies for scabies and lice treatment, as well as over US$ 300 000 of laboratory supplies including multiplex PCR panels and RDTs for malaria and cholera.
- WHO has delivered almost 27 tonnes of supplies to the MoH, worth more than US$ 222 000. The main supplies delivered include over 560 different modules of trauma and emergency surgery kit (TESK), interagency emergency health kit (IEHK) and pneumonia kits.
- WHO also is in the process of prepositioning AWD supplies.

Resource mobilization
- WHO has released more than US$ 16 million from the Contingency Funding for Emergencies, of which US$ 1.4 million was allocated to the WHO Türkiye Country Office for the emergency response. WHO has released a flash appeal for immediate funding totaling US$ 84.5 million, of which US$ 50.8 million has been requested for Türkiye. As of 16 April, 17.7% of required funds have been received by WHO.
- The UN in Türkiye has issued a flash appeal amounting to US$ 1 billion to assist 5.2 million people affected by the devastating earthquake. The appeal includes the initial financial requirements of UN agencies and NGOs. As of 16 April, only 29.3% had been funded (US$ 294.5 million). In the health and nutrition sector an estimated US$ 118 million is required, of which only 13.8% has been funded (US$ 16.2 million).

3. KEY NEXT STEPS

WHO will work to consolidate the response in the affected areas. This includes providing support to the MoH by:
- leading the health and nutrition sector coordination in Türkiye;
- enhancing community engagement and listening to guide the response;
- supporting the transition of EMT service delivery to disrupted health systems;
- supporting health service provision to displaced populations to allow continuity of care, especially for women, children, elderly people and those with noncommunicable diseases;
- strengthening and extending mental health services; and
- reinforcing early warning and surveillance for infectious hazards.