

THE İMRALI POST

YOU HEARD HIS NAME. LEARN HIS STORY. DEMAND HIS FREEDOM.

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Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan

Lawyers apply for İmrali prisoners to meet with their families in earthquake area

ANF | İSTANBUL | 8 FEBRUARY 2023

Two earthquakes struck Turkey and Syria on 6 February. The initial 7.7 magnitude earthquake on Monday hit at 04:17 local time, followed by a second 7.5 magnitude quake in the afternoon. The two earthquakes caused devastating damage to 10 cities in Turkey and North Kurdistan and killed thousands of people, while the number of people trapped under the rubble is still unknown.

The Asrın Law Office in Istanbul, which defends Abdullah Öcalan and his fellow prisoners in İmrali Island Prison, Ömer Hayri Konar, Veysi Aktaş and Hamili Yıldırım, have submitted applications for their clients to be allowed to receive news from their families living in the earthquake zones.

The applications were submitted to Bursa Chief Public Prosecutor's Office and the İmrali Prison Administration on February 7 and 8.

Öcalan's lawyers said: "We took this action as the families of our clients live in the earthquake-affected regions. We have not received any news from our clients for a long time, and they are denied the right to receive information from the outside world. Our request also includes a demand for the families and lawyers of our clients to meet them in prison."

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Southern Kurdistan lawyer presents human rights defense award he received to Öcalan

ANF | HEWLER | 9 FEBRUARY 2023

The US Department of State presented the Human Rights Defense Award to Beşdar Hesên, Head of the Behdînan Detainees Volunteer Defense Group. Lawyer Beşdar Hesên returned to Hewler and announced that he had offered his award to the Kurdish people's Leader Abdullah Öcalan.

Hesên told a press conference in Hewler that he would offer his award to Öcalan. "There are two important messages in this award. On one hand, it aims to support free journalists in Kurdistan, while on the other hand, the US State Department drew attention to the state of the courts in the Kurdistan Region."



Freedom for Öcalan campaign collects nearly one million signatures in 19 days in North East Syria

ANF | QAMISHLO | 9 FEBRUARY 2023

The Northern and Eastern Syria People's Initiative, under the coordination of the Abdullah Öcalan Freedom Initiative-Syria, launched a campaign on 22 January with the slogan "The peoples of Northern and Eastern Syria call for an end to the isolation of Leader Öcalan and for his physical freedom."

The organizers of the campaign reported that they have collected more than 892,000 signatures so far.

The People's Initiative announced that they had collected approximately 30,460 signatures in the towns, districts and villages of the Afrin and Shehba cantons.

According to ANHA, Abdullah Öcalan Freedom Tabqa Committee member Mahmud El Isa stated that more than 100,000 signatures were collected across Tabqa.

Raqqa General Assembly Co-Chair Lûey El Îsa stated that more than 170,000 signatures were collected in the city center and its villages.

Fatme Marwan, Executive Co-Chair of Deir ez-Zor Democratic Civil Society Administration, noted that approximately 5,841 signatures were collected in the western region of Deir ez-Zor.

The Future of Syria Party, Deir ez-Zor Youth Assembly Spokesperson, Selam El Îsa, informed that they have collected more than 520 signatures in the eastern region of Deir ez-Zor.

Kobanê Canton Assembly Co-chair Mistefa Ito stated that it has collected more than 51,000 signatures across the canton.

Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan Manbij Committee Spokesperson Asya El Hisên said that more than 120,000 signatures have been collected in Manbij so far.

200,000 people in Heseke Canton and more than 215,000 people in Qamishlo Canton signed the petition demanding freedom for Kurdish People's Leader Abdullah Öcalan.

The campaign is expected to continue until 15 February, the 24th anniversary of the International Conspiracy.



PKK: AKP/MHP fascism will pay for every action

ANF | BEHDINAN | 12 FEBRUARY 2023

The Executive Committee of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) issued a statement on the severe earthquakes of 6 February in the Turkish-Syrian border area. The statement released on Sunday includes the following:

'The Kurdistan Freedom Movement and the Kurdish people have been struck and shaken by another great catastrophe just before the anniversary of the international plot of 15 February 1999 [Abdullah Öcalan's abduction to Turkey], the 'Day of Genocide against the Kurds'. In this great earthquake, which we can call the disaster of the century, dozens of cities and towns and thousands of villages were severely damaged. Thousands of buildings collapsed, tens of thousands of people lost their lives, hundreds of thousands were injured, and millions of people were affected. These are the results we know about on the fifth day after the disaster. The consequences, even with the impact of the harsh winter, are perhaps much more serious than known.

We share the pain of all those affected

The Kurdish people and the peoples of Turkey and Syria have suffered very serious damage as a result of the earthquake of 6 February, the epicentre of which was Maraş. We, Kurds and the peoples of the Middle East and all humanity, have suffered heavy losses and our pain is great. First of all, we share the pain of all those who were affected by the earthquake and those who felt its effects. We wish Allah's mercy on those who lost their lives in this great disaster and a speedy recovery for those who were injured. Our condolences go out to all our people, especially the relatives of the victims, the peoples of Turkey and Syria and all humanity. We thank all those who participated in the mobilisation and provided assistance to reduce the damage, alleviate the suffering and heal the wounds of this great disaster. We believe that our peoples and humanity will overcome this pain.

The state and the government kill with deceit and lies

An earthquake is undoubtedly a natural disaster that comes from the depths of the earth. It is not yet known exactly how much events on the earth's surface influence this situation. However, mankind now knows exactly where earthquake zones are located. It is known that the line where the earthquake occurred on the morning of 6 February is a significant earthquake area. The main reason for the serious consequences is the fact that the settlements were not built earthquake-proof and no serious measures were taken for a possible earthquake. Moreover, it is now clear that the tens of billions of dollars collected from society for years as earthquake tax were not spent for this purpose, but were given to looting AKP/MHP supporters. So, it is not the earthquake that kills, but the state and the government that deceive the public with fraud and lies.

The Akp/Mhp government is mainly responsible

Let us content ourselves for the time being with the observation that earthquakes are a natural disaster. However, it has also been shown that the AKP/MHP government, contrary to its announcements, has in

fact not taken any measures. The earthquake of 6 February has revealed and unmasked the reality of the AKP/MHP government in all its aspects. The reality is this: Firstly, the government did not take any precautions against the earthquake and for this purpose gave the money collected from the people to its own supporters. Secondly, the institutions set up by the government for such disasters are inadequate in dealing with the earthquake. In other words, the AKP/MHP government did not adequately carry out the necessary relief and rescue measures after the earthquake and left the society to its own devices. For these two reasons, the government is mainly responsible for the damage and the number of deaths. Thirdly, by declaring a state of emergency, the AKP/MHP government is trying to politicise the aftermath of the earthquake and extend the life of the government on this basis.

People should take their destiny into their own hands

The solidarity shown by our people so far has played an important role in sharing and alleviating the suffering, even if it is not entirely sufficient. Especially after overcoming the initial shock, it is clear that a very important solidarity has taken place at the level of mobilisation. Even the state of emergency of AKP/MHP fascism could not prevent this situation. However, it is appropriate to point out the following points: Clearly, it is not right for societies to entrust their lives and fate to the state to such an extent. Instead of asking the state for help after a disaster, it is clearly better to take one's fate into one's own hands beforehand. The fascist AKP/MHP government has fulfilled the requirements of a state and used the money supposedly collected for earthquakes for its own benefit. The reality of the state and the government at stake must be properly understood by all peoples. Instead of asking the state for help, people should take their destiny into their own hands and organise themselves as a society.

A question of humanity

From the very first moment, our freedom movement has called on all peoples and humanity to show solidarity. Based on the understanding that social solidarity keeps alive, we have especially asked our people abroad as well as in South and East Kurdistan to help North and West Kurdistan. Knowing that nothing can be expected from the state, our movement has instructed all revolutionary and patriotic forces to take part in the rescue work and rubble removal in the course of mobilisation. The principle is that all those who call themselves human should share their resources with those who have suffered from the earthquake. In order not to add new sufferings to those caused by the earthquake, all revolutionary forces have been called upon not to take offensive actions until they are attacked. This attitude of our movement will continue until the heavy suffering caused by the earthquake is alleviated and eliminated.

Calling Akp/Mhp fascism to account

It is quite clear that AKP/MHP fascism was once again caught red-handed with the 6 February earthquake. It has been exposed how the government looted the earthquake tax collected from the people for its supporters and invested it in the war against the Kurdish people. Now it wants to use the consequences of the earthquake as a justification for war and prolong its stay in power by imposing a state of emergency. Undoubtedly, all the peoples of Turkey, especially the Kurds and the revolutionary democratic forces, will not let this opportunity pass and know how to suffocate AKP/MHP fascism in the suffering it has caused. They will hold AKP/MHP fascism accountable for all its actions, one by one. They will not allow the elections to be postponed because of the earthquake and they will bury fascism in history.

Solidarity is a necessary condition for society

Clearly, both the severe earthquake and the harsh winter conditions will extend the efforts to heal the wounds and alleviate the suffering over a long period of time. Not only in removing the rubble, but also in repairing the severe damage caused by the earthquake, our people must show the necessary solidarity and live in a state of constant mobilisation. They must share the food in their hands, the house they live in and the goods they use with the people who suffered from the earthquake. This is a necessary condition for an existing people and a functioning society. We believe that our people will always live with such an attitude of solidarity and sharing.

They say that in every evil there is also good, and we hope that the earthquake disaster will also contribute to freedom. Our movement has already fought for freedom in the struggle against the consequences of the Wan earthquake as well, and we hope that it will be victorious in the struggle against the consequences of this earthquake and ensure the freedom of Kurdistan and the democratisation of Turkey based on the physical freedom of leader Öcalan. In this way, the movement and the people will be able to alleviate the heavy suffering we have experienced.

In this context, we once again share the pain of our people and call on everyone to constantly and increasingly show solidarity and share with those who have suffered from the earthquake."

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People in Northern and Eastern Syria protest International Conspiracy

ANF | 12 FEBRUARY 2023

The 24th anniversary of the International Conspiracy against Kurdish people's Leader Abdullah Öcalan was protested with actions in Heseke, Reqa, Deir ez|Zor and Tabqa in Northern and Eastern Syria.

Heseke

Refugees from Serêkaniyê living in Wasûkanî Camp in Heseke condemned the isolation and the International Conspiracy which led to the capture of Kurdish people's Leader Abdullah Öcalan.

People marched with banners that read "Leader Öcalan's freedom is the key to peace in the Middle East" and held a rally. Emine Mihemed, a member of the Washukani Camp Council, condemned the international silence against the isolation imposed on the Kurdish people's leader and said: "Our actions will continue until the freedom of Öcalan is achieved."

Raqqa

A march and rally were held in Raqqa promoted by civil organizations. Photos of Abdullah Öcalan and the flags of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) were carried during the march that started in front of the General Assembly.

A statement was read to underlined that “Abdullah Öcalan’s ideas directly affected the Syrian peoples, who organized based on the idea of national democracy and the brotherhood of peoples and established their own autonomous and civil administrations.”

Deir Ez-Zor

A protest was held in the west of Deir ez-Zor. During the march and rally, Martyr Families Assembly Youth member Muhemed El Hisên said that “Leader Abdullah Öcalan’s resistance in Imrali prison is the strongest message to the enemy.” He continued, “The freedom of Leader Öcalan is our freedom. We are ready to die for his freedom. Thanks to Leader Abdullah Öcalan’s ideas and philosophy, the blood shared by the martyrs, the resistance carried out by the youth and the sacrifices of the guerrillas, the enemy’s attacks on the region were repelled.”

Tabqa

The action in Tabqa was organized by civil society organizations. The action called on the UN, humanitarian and legal organizations to fulfil their duties and take action to end the isolation and ensure the physical freedom of the Kurdish people’s Leader.

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Activists in Rome protest 15 February 1999 International Conspiracy

ANF | ROME | 12 FEBRUARY 2023

The International Conspiracy, which culminated on 15 February 1999, with the kidnapping of Kurdish people’s Leader Abdullah Öcalan and his deportation to the Turkish state, was protested in Rome by Kurds living in Italy and their friends.

The march started in Piazza Esquilino. The crowd chanted slogans demanding the freedom of Kurdish people’s Leader Abdullah Öcalan. Activists from Milan, Turin, Bologna, Grosseto, Livorno and Pisa also attended the march that ended in Piazza San Giovanni.

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Shengal youth start long march for Öcalan

ANF | SHENGAL | 12 FEBRUARY 2023

15 February marks the anniversary of the international conspiracy that led to the Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan's abduction to Turkey in 1999. Since then, Öcalan has been held as a political hostage on the prison island of İmralı, most of the time under conditions of total isolation. Kurds and their friends are going into action all around the world to demand the lifting of Abdullah Öcalan's incommunicado detention and the resumption of peace negotiations and conditions for the Kurdish leader in which he can live and work freely in order to contribute to the solution of the Kurdish question.

The Union of Young Women in Shengal and the Yazidi Youth Union have started a long march on Sunday to mark the anniversary of the 15 February international conspiracy.

The march led by young people kicked off in Sinune under the motto "Youth are the devotees of Leader Öcalan."

The young activists are expected to cover 10 km till the "Leader's Garden" in Kers Valley where they will make a statement to the press.

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Prisons in Turkey

Three prisoners die in Hatay Prison

ANF | 9 FEBRUARY 2023

It was reported that some convicts and detainees in Hatay T Type Closed Penitentiary Institution allegedly started a riot on Wednesday evening.

In the statements by the Turkish authorities regarding the issue, the incident was described as an attempt to escape. It was reported that three prisoners died and 12 prisoners were injured.

Videos circulating on social media showed the brutality the prisoners were subjected to and a soldier is heard saying "stop beating, there are cameras."

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Prisoners in Kırıklar jail send winter clothes in solidarity with earthquake victims

ANF | İZMİR | 10 FEBRUARY 2023

The earthquake caused heavy damage in many areas from Maraş to Amed, from Malatya to Adiyaman, from Hatay to Adana. While trying to heal the wounds with the support of the people, solidarity came from the political prisoners in Kırıklar No. 2 F Type Prison. The detainees, who sent a message through their families, expressed their condolences to the families of those who lost their lives, wishing a speedy recovery to the injured, and stated that they sent their winter clothes to the earthquake victims.

Government's responsibility

The message of the detainees reads as follows: "Time stood still, our hearts froze, our tongues twitched on the morning of 6 February. In the Golden Crescent from Hatay to Amed, hundreds of thousands of people were left under the collapsed buildings. They are still there. We know that this has nothing to do with fate or the wildness of nature. We know that the government that holds the production and economic monopoly is responsible for the consequences of these events. We know that the military monopoly is the perpetrator of this massacre.

We are at the dawn of get rid of these people, who turned nature into a human killer. Let's rebuild the Golden Crescent, the cradle of civilization, on the memories of those who sacrificed their lives. This is the only way to properly commemorate them. We call on our families and friends to act in solidarity. We call on the unity of the peoples, despite the AKP-MHP fascism and profiteering calculations. We share the pain of all our peoples, express our condolences, and wish a speedy recovery to our wounded."

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MED TUHAD-FED calls on Ministry of Justice to explain situation of prisons damaged by earthquake

ANF | 12 FEBRUARY 2023

MED TUHAD-FED, the Federation of Legal and Solidarity Associations for Families of Detainees and Convicts, said in a statement that prisons have been damaged in the earthquakes that occurred in Pazarcık-Maraş on 6 February and in Elbistan-Maraş on 7 February and called on the Ministry of Justice to explain what happened and what the situation is.

The statement said: "While the families of the prisoners are struggling with the consequences of this tragedy, they are worried about the situation of their relatives in prison. The concerns of families are increasing because of the images published on social media and the statements of the Ministry. There is complete uncertainty in terms of the current situation in Türkoğlu, Elbistan, İskenderun, Hatay and

Malatya Prisons. Communication between families and prisons has been cut off completely. While the ministry is expected to provide regular information on its official website, it remains silent.”

MED TUHAD-FED issued a call to the Ministry after lawyer visits were denied.

The association asked:

- A statement about the current situation in Türkoğlu, Elbistan, İskenderun, Hatay and Malatya Prisons. Damages to prisons should be made public. Information on how many prisoners lost their lives or were injured due to both earthquakes and other causes should be transparently disclosed to the public.
- The number of prisoners in these jails before the earthquake should be announced. It should be explained how many prisoners have been transferred to different places and whether the deportation will continue.
- Families should be informed about the transfer of detainees from Türkoğlu, Elbistan, İskenderun, Hatay and Malatya Prisons. The Ministry should take responsibility for informing families.
- The Ministry should provide clothing and all other basic needs free of charge for the prisoners-convicts who are transferred from Türkoğlu, Elbistan, İskenderun, Hatay and Malatya Prisons to different prisons.
- The Ministry should urgently set up a crisis desk in the earthquake zones and share the contact number of the desk with the families.”

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Military aggression and occupation

Xosnav Ata continues vigil in front of OPCW to protest
Turkish chemical attacks in Kurdistan

ANF | DEN HAAG | 8 FEBRUARY 2023

Xosnav Ata continues his vigil in front of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in Den Haag. The vigil is on day 187.

NAV-YEK co-chair Çiçek Yıldız and two executive women from the Yazidi Women’s Assembly Roof Organization (SMJÊ) visited Ata on Tuesday.

The women said that they visited Xosnav Ata to express their solidarity and support for the action.

Drawing attention to the earthquake disaster that took place in Bakur and Rojava in the morning of 6 February, the women expressed their condolences to the people of Kurdistan. The delegation called on all democratic institutions and organizations, and especially the people of Kurdistan living in Europe, to support the aid campaign launched by Heyva Sor.

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HRE: The Turkish state attacks people hit by earthquake

ANF | 8 FEBRUARY 2023

The Afrin Liberation Forces (Hêzên Rizgariya Afrinê, HRE) have denied a report by the Turkish Defense Ministry. The ministry had claimed that the People's Defense Units YPG had attacked the Turkish military base Öncüpinar with artillery shells from Tel Rifat.

The HRE report: "The Defense Ministry of the occupying Turkish state claimed that the YPG attacked the Turkish army's base in Öncüpinar from Tel Rifat with heavy weapons. However, the YPG has no units in Tel Rifat. Only our forces are in the area. And our forces did not attack enemy bases in this period when our people were hit by a severe earthquake. This claim by the Turkish occupying power is untrue."

The statement added: "Rather, the Turkish occupying forces attacked our areas. The Turkish army bombed the Tel Rifat region on 6 February. Tel Rifat is an earthquake-affected area. Our people are attacked by the Turkish army even in such a situation.

The claims made by the Turkish Defense Ministry are false and are being circulated to distort reality. We extend our condolences to the families of all those who lost their lives in the earthquake and wish the injured a speedy recovery."

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Cemil Bayık: We won't carry out military actions unless the Turkish state attacks us

ANF | BEHDINAN | 9 FEBRUARY 2023

KCK Executive Council co-chair Cemil Bayık issued a message after the earthquake that killed tens of thousands of people and caused a great humanitarian disaster.

Bayık, confirming a unilateral ceasefire, said: "We call on all our forces that carry out military actions to stop all military actions in Turkey, in metropolises and cities. In addition, we decided not to take action

unless the Turkish state attacks us. Our decision will be valid until the pain of our people is relieved and their wounds are healed.”

Bayık underlined that the stance of the Turkish state would be decisive in the implementation of these decisions.

KCK Executive Council co-chair Cemil Bayık said: “Our honorable people. The earthquake caused a great disaster. Our people are under very difficult conditions in Bakur Kurdistan, Rojava, Turkey and Syria. In particular, the peoples are suffering much more because of the policy carried out by the invading and murderous Turkish state. The Kurdish people, the Turkish people, the Arab people and other peoples are suffering greatly.

The experiences of society have affected us a lot. I wish God’s mercy on those who lost their lives and a speedy recovery to the injured. Again, my condolences to the families of those who lost their lives and to all our people. We feel and live your pain.

Unfortunately, earthquakes happen everywhere, all over the world. But the important thing is that many countries are taking earthquake precautions. Therefore, they suffer less damage and loss. But when we look at Turkey, such disasters are happening because measures are not taken.

All resources should be used to rescue people

Thousands of our people are still under the rubble. Our people need to be pulled out from under the rubble. Because it is winter, there is snow, there is rain, the weather is cold. If they are not rescued from the rubble as soon as possible, they may die from the cold. Therefore, everyone should mobilize all their resources. Everyone should mobilize to save our people. Everyone, especially democratic institutions, should mobilize.

Akp-Mhp government took no measures

The AKP-MHP coalition is in power. The AKP has been in power for 20 years, running the state. As it is known, Bakur Kurdistan and Turkey are on a fault line. Therefore, it is a country at risk of earthquakes. Precautions had to be taken for this. But the AKP did not take any action. It does not serve the public. As it is known, taxes have been collected for earthquakes in Turkey for years. But no one knows what happened to those taxes.

The Turkish state used all its means to massacre the Kurdish people in Kurdistan, they spent millions of dollars on this. They developed special warfare, strengthened their allies, strengthened mercenaries, developed and strengthened some special war institutions. They spent all of Turkey's resources on these. That's why they didn't give anything to the people of Turkey, especially the Kurdish people. During their rule, they developed theft, corruption and plunder, and made the rich even richer. They made the people poorer every day. As a result, there was a huge gap between them and the people. We know that many times they changed the laws for contractors, for their mercenaries, they passed laws. They changed the bidding laws so that those at their service would become even richer.

Earthquakes occur in many parts of the world. For example, there are major earthquakes in Japan. We see that in these earthquakes, buildings do not collapse much, deaths do not occur much. Why? Because they deal with it seriously, they take their own precautions. Therefore, there is not much pain when an earthquake occurs. If the Turkish state had taken precautions like Japan, today's suffering would not have happened. Thousands of buildings would not have been destroyed, cities and villages would not have collapsed. Thousands of people would not have lost their lives; they would not have been injured.

Turkey is investing in war

The AKP-MHP collected a lot of money during its rule. In particular, they collect money for the earthquake every year, but we see that that money is not there. Apparently they spent it all on the war. They spent billions of dollars on the war. If they had spent that money for the people, if they had spent it on earthquake measures, if they had spent it on the health and education of the people, these sufferings would not have happened today. All the people of Turkey would live in prosperity. If some have become very rich today and the people have become even poorer, this is the result of the AKP-MHP's policy against the Kurdish people. Because they want to massacre the Kurdish people, for this they invest all Turkey's resources in war.

The AKP-MHP runs Turkey like a company, and deals with people like a cruel boss. They do not take any need of people as a basis for acting, they never act with such a purpose. Therefore, our people, the Turkish people, the Arab people, all the peoples living in Turkey should hold them accountable for this. They should both ask for account and increase their mutual cooperation.

The AKP-MHP declared a state of emergency. The reason they declared a state of emergency was to cover up the earthquake. The government wants to suppress the pain and cries of the people so that these pains and screams do not reach anyone. It also mobilized the press so that no one would hear what was happening. They are developing propaganda to deceive the peoples and the world. They hide many things. They make it look like they are helping people everywhere, but these are lies. The independent media exposed all their lies. They want to prevent the aid sent by people to the earthquake zones, they want to prevent cooperation between peoples. In order to maintain their power, they want to put the aid sent by the peoples and from the world at their service. Therefore, the Kurdish people and the peoples of Turkey should continue to cooperate in every way. They shouldn't let the government get in the way.

Due to this disaster and suffering experienced by our people, we, the executive of the movement, wanted to evaluate the process and the latest developments and to achieve some results on this basis. Because we respect peoples and human life. That's why we don't want to inflict pain upon pain. We evaluated the situation humanely, conscientiously and morally. We call on all our forces engaged in military actions to stop military actions in Turkey, in metropolises and cities. Again, we decided not to take action unless the Turkish state comes against us and attacks us. Our decision will be valid until the pain of our people is relieved and their wounds are healed. Of course, the attitude of the Turkish state will also be decisive in our decision."

HPG reports Turkish attacks on guerrilla areas despite the earthquake disaster

ANF | BEHDINAN | 10 FEBRUARY 2023

The Press Centre of the People's Defence Forces (HPG) released a statement concerning the ongoing Turkish attacks on the guerrilla-held Medya Defense Zones in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq).

The HPG statement on Friday said: “The invading Turkish army continues its attacks amid the quakes that have led to great destruction. Our resistance positions were bombed with banned bombs and heavy weapons. Our forces had to defend themselves against these attacks.

The details of the Turkish attacks are as follows:

Zap region

The invading forces bombed our resistance positions near the village of Sida in the Sheladize sub-district of Amadiya at 11:30 on February 9. Our forces defended themselves and one enemy sniper was killed.

Attacks by the Turkish army

On February 9, our resistance positions around the Çemço region in the Sheladize sub-district of Amadiya and the Sîda village were bombed twice with banned weapons.

On February 9, our resistance positions around the Girê FM Resistance Area, as well as the Çemço region and the village of Sîda were bombed dozens of times with howitzers, tanks and heavy weapons.”

— ★ —

HSM vows to follow the KCK's call for ceasefire due to earthquake

ANF | BEHDINAN | 11 FEBRUARY 2023

The Central Headquarters of the People's Defence Forces (HSM) expressed its support for the call of the Kurdistan Communities Union (KCK) for an immediate ceasefire due to the earthquake in the Turkish-Syrian border area. The guerrillas are ready to support the KCK in its efforts to stop the fighting and thus contribute to alleviating the suffering of the affected population, said a statement by the HSM sent to ANF.

The KCK, the umbrella organisation of the Kurdish movement, to which the PKK also belongs, had called for a cessation of military action in Kurdistan on Friday night. Cemil Bayık, co-chairman of the KCK Ex-

ecutive Council, stated that it was necessary to prevent people from experiencing even more suffering in this affliction. Bayık emphasised, however, that the attitude of the Turkish state would be of central importance in the implementation of this decision.

“Monday’s devastating earthquake with epicentre in Pazarcık is a great disaster. It has caused great damage and our people have suffered many victims. Tens of thousands of people from the Kurdish, Turkish and Arab populations have lost their lives and tens of thousands are still waiting to be rescued from the rubble. We deeply share the pain of our peoples. We wish peace for the dead and extend our condolences to their families and loved ones. To the injured, we wish a speedy recovery.

We understand it as a humanitarian, conscientious and moral duty to ease the pain of our peoples and heal their wounds. The best approach will be to alleviate and overcome the difficulties of these days through unity and solidarity. We also want to support this. Therefore, all members of our defence forces as well as patriotic institutions should rush to the aid of the people and mobilise help. Especially the rural areas and villages, which are neglected anyway and are cut off from any help even now, need urgent support. This is undoubtedly the most important humanitarian and patriotic task at this time. On this basis, we agree with the call of comrade Cemil Bayık in the name of KCK Executive Council and declare that his demands will be met in practice.

In this context, our call is to all associations of guerrillas, fighting groups and self-defence units: all action plans and corresponding activities in the cities and metropolises must be stopped immediately. No military action should be taken in the rural areas either, as long as there are no attacks by Turkish armed forces on our members. This instruction is valid until revoked and it is an essential duty for all legitimate defence forces to strictly follow it.

It is well known that the AKP/MHP regime has been putting all of Turkey’s resources into war for years as part of its genocidal policy in Kurdistan and spending huge amounts in its attacks against our forces and the institutions of our people. This country is ruled by a regime whose members enrich themselves personally in various ways. There is no investment in the lives and security of the people and no expenditure on infrastructure. The result of this policy is suffering for all the peoples of Turkey. The scale of the earthquakes is catastrophic. In order to alleviate the suffering of the people, social solidarity and help from below is needed. In this framework, we respectfully declare that we will fulfill our responsibilities in accordance with the decisions and perspectives of the political will of our people and our revolution.”

— ★ —

Turkey continues attacks against guerrillas despite earthquake and unilateral ceasefire

ANF | BEHDINAN | 11 FEBRUARY 2023

Even catastrophes like the devastating series of earthquakes in the country cannot dissuade the Turkish state from maintaining its anti-Kurdish stance. Despite a catastrophe of apocalyptic proportions with tens

of thousands of dead and injured, the Turkish army continues its warlike aggression against the Kurdish guerrillas unabated - although the latter have suspended their military activities due to the earthquake.

The Press Center of the People's Defence Forces (HPG) reported continued heavy bombardments against guerrilla positions in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq) on Friday.

According to the HPG statement, the initial attacks in the morning targeted positions in the vicinity of Çemço in the Zap region. Not only did unconventional bombs hit the area, but also shots fired from howitzers. "Our forces responded to the shelling on the basis of legitimate self-defence," stated the HPG, and one member of the occupation forces was killed. In the evening, an attack helicopter was targeted by the guerrillas during an attack flight. The aircraft was hit and forced to turn around.

The HPG also reported that the Turkish air force launched three air strikes on Friday against the Girê Cûdî massif, which is also located in the Zap. The surrounding area of the village of Sîda, which borders the guerrilla area of Çemço, was bombarded with artillery from Turkish outposts. In addition, the HPG stated that a fighter has succumbed to his serious injuries, which he had sustained during an attack by Turkish occupation forces in Çemço last Thursday. The full identity of the fallen guerrilla fighter will be released at a later date, HPG added.

— ★ —

HPG: Turkey continues to attack guerrilla areas

ANF | BEHDINAN | 12 FEBRUARY 2023

The Press Centre of the People's Defence Forces (HPG) reported that the Turkish army continues its attacks on the guerrilla-held Medya Defense Zones in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq).

"Our guerrilla forces are in a defensive position and are putting the call of our movement into practice. Despite this, the Turkish army continues to attack the Medya Defence Zones."

According to HPG, Turkish attack helicopters bombed guerrilla positions in Çemço at 9pm local time on Saturday night. The guerrillas defended themselves with heavy weapons, forcing the helicopter squadron to move away from the area in the Zap region. During the day, the positions in Çemço were also attacked 27 times with howitzers and heavy weapons.

Cemil Bayık, co-chair of the KCK Executive Council, has called for a halt to all military actions in light of Thursday night's earthquake, stating: "We have decided not to carry out any actions unless the Turkish state attacks."

The Central Headquarters of the People's Defence Forces (HSM) expressed support for the KCK's call and said on Saturday that the guerrillas were ready to do their part to alleviate the suffering of people.

— ★ —

Turkish drone strikes a car in Kobane

ANF | KOBANE | 12 FEBRUARY 2023

An unmanned combat aerial vehicle (UCAV) of the Turkish state struck a car in northern Syria on Sunday.

According to reports, the attack took place on the way to the Menaz village west of Kobane.

Details about the aftermath of the attack were not immediately available.

According to the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), Turkey has carried out 120 drone attacks and 43 airstrikes by fighter jets against northern and eastern Syria in the past year.

Turkey mainly tries to kill people who are important for stability in the areas of the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES); autonomous administration personnel, members of military structures, politicians. However, the civilian population is also targeted time and again.

— ★ —

Earthquake with epicenter in Kurdistan

Earthquake in North Kurdistan - Live Blog

ANF | 8 FEBRUARY 2023

The number of dead and injured continues to increase. At least 9,057 people have been confirmed dead and 52,979 injured.

08:21

HDP Crisis Coordination Center continues its activities

Teams of 10 people each, sent by the HDP Crisis Coordination Center to Maraş, Antep, Adıyaman and Urfa, carry out search and rescue efforts. The teams sent to the earthquake also communicate with families in need for solidarity.

08:50

09:13

Victims of the earthquake in Adıyaman kept in the hospital corridor

While search and rescue efforts continue to save survivors of the earthquakes that occurred in the Pazarcık district of Maraş with a magnitude of 7.8 and 7.6 and affected 10 provinces, new images and information continue to come from the earthquake zones.

In Adıyaman, those who lost their lives in the earthquake are kept in the hospital corridor in blankets because the morgue at Adıyaman State Hospital was full.

09:55

No access to 90 per cent of villages

In Malatya, 166 people lost their lives and 3,298 people were injured.

Due to the continuous snowfall in Malatya, 90 percent of the villages in Akçadağ, Pütürge and Doğanşehir cannot be reached. It has been learned that the village roads due to the blizzard snowfall were not opened even two days after the earthquake. Serious damage in the villages and neighborhoods and dozens of people were trapped under the rubble.

10:29

AFAD: 7108 killed by the earthquakes

Turkey's Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD) announced that 7,108 people lost their lives and 40,910 people were injured in the earthquakes.

The actual death toll is believed to be much higher as countless scenes have not even been reached yet.

11:17

Amed Urban Protection and Solidarity Platform: Many people trapped under rubble

The Amed (Diyarbakır) Urban Protection and Solidarity Platform released the latest information from the city as follows:

Death toll: 132,

Discharged: 742,

Inpatient: 129,

Intensive care: 38,

Total number of injured: 909

In addition, there are many people who are missing and are thought to be under the rubble. Relatives of those trapped under the wreckage frequently report names and locations through social media.

12:08

Earthquake Expert: Government is responsible for the massacre

Gebze Technical University Civil Engineering Department Faculty Member and Earthquake Expert Savaş Karabulut said that the government is responsible for the catastrophic situation caused by the earthquakes in the country.

Interviewed by MA news agency, Karabulut said that the death toll was much higher than the official figures and held the government responsible for the consequences.

“After all the earthquakes, we saw that only the contractors are punished, but the central government and local administrations bear the main responsibility. Because in the first place, the government allows contractors to build illegal structures and puts the blame on fate and nature after every disaster.

At the very least, buildings in these earthquake areas should have been checked and precautions should have been taken in advance. All buildings should have been checked one by one, risky structures should have been determined and demolition or reinforcement should have been promoted. People are now trapped under collapsed buildings. All the deaths in these earthquakes should be considered as a massacre.”

12:17

HDP’s aid campaign for the earthquake victims continues growing

12:20

Autonomous Administration receives bodies of earthquake victims

The Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES) Health Board Co-Chair Ciwan Mistefa reported that the bodies of north-eastern Syrians who lost their lives in the earthquakes were taken from the Ewn Dadat crossing between Jarablus and Manbij.

It is reported that the bodies have been delivered to their families. So far, 18 bodies have been delivered to the Euphrates Region, 7 to Raqqa and 2 to Sirin.

13:18

Ecological organization: AKP wants to turn the disaster into an opportunity

The Climate Justice Coalition and Ecology Union said that the ruling AKP is trying to turn the disaster caused by the earthquakes into an opportunity.

The Union said that a state of emergency has been declared in the earthquake-affected region to turn the disaster into an opportunity. Under the pretext of the state of emergency, the aid and rescue efforts of civil initiatives are prevented. Peoples of Turkey are left alone to organize rescue efforts since the state has failed to organize and coordinate.”

13:59

HDP Co-Chair Sancar visits earthquake survivors in Mersin

HDP Co-Chair Mithat Sancar and a party delegation visited the survivors of the earthquake who were brought from Hatay to Mersin on Tuesday. Speaking during his visit to Mersin City Hospital, Sancar said: “There are many unidentified injured people and children whose families cannot be determined. Our crisis coordination and health team deal with all of them. There is a serious organizational problem in the region. The situation is getting worse. Our colleagues are trying to help to solve the lack of coordination. We are trying to solve the problem together with institutions.”

14:30

Toğrul: People are rescuing their relatives from rubble with bare hands

Speaking to ANF, HDP Antep Deputy Mahmut Toğrul said: “There are two problems: those trapped under the rubble and the problems experienced by survivors. We visited Pazarcık, Nurdağı, İslahiye and their villages. These three districts have been destroyed completely. The buildings that have not collapsed are badly damaged.”

Toğrul continued: “We saw how expert teams failed to reach the area for search and rescue efforts. People are trying to rescue their relatives from the rubble with their bare hands. They are hungry and thirsty because there is no internet, electricity, water and, most importantly, there is no natural gas and people are freezing. Everyone is on the streets, while some take shelter in their cars. They can't even meet the most basic needs. Our people say that there is no water, there are no tents delivered to the region. Natural gas and tents must be provided urgently, as well as water and bread.”

The HDP MP added: “The AKP-MHP government and the state remained under the wreckage caused by the earthquakes. There is no organization. Our people's aid efforts are also blocked. There is a serious obstacle to social solidarity. There is a catastrophic disaster here.”

15:27

The government chases social media users

The AKP-MHP government, which has failed to rush to the aid of the earthquake victims, is now chasing social media users. The government has restricted Twitter in the aftermath of the earthquake. 18 were detained and 5 jailed over their posts on social media.

15:43

Unidentified bodies will be buried

The Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD) announced that bodies of the unidentified earthquake victims will be buried after a 24-hour waiting period after their DNA, fingerprints and photographs are taken.

16:19

Images from the neighborhood of Fatih, in Pazarcık district of Maraş.

16:28

Twitter restricted in Turkey

Real-time network data shows Twitter has been restricted in Turkey on Wednesday. The filtering is applied on major internet providers and comes as the public come to rely on the service in the aftermath of a series of deadly earthquakes.,

16:36

Minister and governor flee from earthquake victims in Adıyaman

Turkish Minister of Transport, Adil Karaismailoğlu, and governor Mahmut Çuhadar, were met with public reaction in Adıyaman, one of the regions badly hit by Monday's devastating earthquakes. Footage from the ground shows the minister and governor fleeing the area in the wake of the reactions of earthquake victims. On the third day after the earthquake, there is still no rescue effort to rescue people in most of Adıyaman.

17:58

HDP deputies visit earthquake victims in Adıyaman and Malatya

HDP deputy Alican Önlü visited earthquake victims in Adıyaman and Garo Paylan in Malatya.

Alican Önlü stated that the district of Gölbaşı suffered major damage, with dozens of buildings destroyed on every street. Önlü pointed out that the death toll is much higher than the official figures and criticised the state's failure in rescue work.

MP Garo Paylan stated that not a single building is left standing in Malatya's Ören district with a population of 2,500 people. "There is a serious shelter problem. Electricity and water must be provided urgently," he said.

In the meantime, the aid transported by the HDP to earthquake areas is distributed to victims through the deputies of the party.

HDP issues urgent call for solidarity to international organizations and institutions

ANF | ANKARA | 8 FEBRUARY 2023

Feleknas Uca and Hişyar Özsoy, HDP's co-spokespersons for Foreign Affairs issued a call to international institutions and organizations after the earthquake.

The statement said: "We send this message at a time of deep pain and sadness. The whole world has been stunned by the terrifying images following Monday morning's earthquake of magnitude 7.8 – one of the worst in the region's history in Turkey.

This was followed by a second 7.7 earthquake in the middle of the day. We are all in mourning for thousands who are known to have died, and fearful for the tens of thousands more who are injured or are buried under the rubble. And many of us are waiting for news from friends and family. Even when we hear that people have survived, we can't stop worrying. Vast areas are unsafe with buildings liable to further collapse. Hundreds of thousands of people have been left in need of basic shelter, warmth, and subsistence in bitter winter weather."

The statement added: "Our party has stopped all activities so that we can devote all our energy to helping in the work of rescue and survival. We have set up a central coordinating committee to facilitate our work, and our regional election coordinating centers have been turned into crisis coordinating centers. Our deputies and administrators have gone to the worst affected areas, and our youth are actively involved in the urgent task of search and rescue. We are calling on all those whose homes have not been damaged to take in people who have been left without shelter. We know that our communities will come together, and our greatest strength is our human solidarity."

The statement continued: "The sheer scale of this disaster has forced world leaders to demonstrate their humanity, with offers of help coming from many governments. And when they have moved on, we know that we will still be able to rely on the support of diverse solidarity networks, humanitarian organizations and individuals everywhere. Thus, we call on all international institutions, governments, organizations and individuals to bear a hand to get over this incredible pain and rebuild shattered lives and communities. Please urgently mobilize all kinds of support and solidarity networks and resources at your disposal."

Manbij Military Council helps families staying in tents after earthquake

ANF | MANBIJ | 8 FEBRUARY 2023

Tents were set up in every region of Northern and Eastern Syria to protect the citizens from the dangers of a possible earthquake.

The Democratic Civil Administration of Manbij and its Rural Regions set up tents for many citizens.

Manbij Military Council provided fuel and food aid to families staying in tents.

Burkan El Qibê, a commander of the Martyr Dersim Brigade affiliated to the Manbij Military Council, said: “We provided fuel for our people to warm up and met their food needs. We are always ready to serve our people. Because it is our duty to protect and help them. We are ready for any emergency.”

The SDF said that they “stand ready to provide immediate assistance to overcome the earthquake aftermath in all Syrian territories, including providing relief support and sending rescue teams to the disaster-stricken areas.”



Sancar: In Antakya and Samandağ, I saw no state, only suffering and destruction

ANF | HATAY | 8 FEBRUARY 2023

Peoples’ Democratic Party (HDP) co-chair Mithat Sancar visited the Antakya and Samandağ districts of Hatay, which were devastated by the earthquake. Together with Sancar were HDP deputies Tülay Hatimoğulları, Züleyha Gülüm, Hüseyin Kaçmaz, as well as HDP Hatay, Adana and Mersin provincial co-chairs and party members. Sancar said that the destruction in the neighbourhood of Armutlu in Antakya was horrendous.

Sancar said that Antakya was completely abandoned to its fate, and added: “We saw many destroyed buildings in the regions we passed. But there was no rescue work. People remained on the streets. There is no shelter, heating, bread or tents. In short, there is no state, no government here. It is painful. There is anger and solidarity is the only opportunity we have.”

Call for solidarity

Sancar said that the dimensions of the disaster were enormous. “The earthquake is a natural disaster. But it is the administrations that turn it into a social destruction and humanitarian tragedy. If precautions were

taken in advance and if emergency aid and response efforts were organized quickly, there would be no such great loss of life. Our current task is to increase solidarity.”

— ★ —

Thousands of citizens from Şêxmeqsûd and Eşrefiye take shelter in tents set up by General Assembly

ANF | 8 FEBRUARY 2023

Shelters were set up to protect citizens after the earthquake thanks to the cooperation of Şêxmeqsûd and Eşrefiye neighbourhoods General Assembly, YPG and communes.

People said they were afraid to return to their houses damaged in the earthquake, and found refuge in the shelters set up by Şêxmeqsûd and Eşrefiye neighbourhoods General Assembly, YPG and communes.

Dijwar Nûman stayed in tents in Afrin Park in the Eşrefiye District. He told ANHA: “I was sleeping at home when the first earthquake struck. I awoke to the sounds of women and children crying. Everyone was out in the street. We left our homes in the early hours of the morning and we haven't been able to return yet.”

We are afraid of going into our houses

A citizen named Nesrîn Mistefa, who lives in an Aleppo neighbourhood controlled by the Damascus government and took shelter in Afrin Park after the earthquake, said: “I live on the second floor of a building. The house shook violently in the early hours of the morning. I immediately ran out with my kids. We don't know where we're going now.”

Nesrîn Mistefa said that many buildings close to her home were destroyed and added: “We are afraid to return to our homes. We don't know what will happen to us. We will stay in Afrin Park until the situation is clear.”

According to the Şêxmeqsûd and Eşrefiye neighbourhood Health Council, 6 people have lost their lives and 50 citizens have been injured due to the earthquake so far.

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Afrin and Shehba Autonomous Administration calls on Damascus to lift embargo

ANF | 8 FEBRUARY 2023

Afrin and Shehba Cantons Democratic Autonomous Administration members made a statement demanding to end the embargo imposed by the Damascus government to allow aid to reach the earthquake victims.

Co-chair Cemal Reşid read the statement made in the Serdem Camp square in Ehdas district.

Reşid expressed his condolences to the families of those who lost their lives in the earthquake and wished the injured a speedy recovery. He said that the citizens living in the Afrin region suffered a lot from the earthquake and added that 10 people were injured, 2 of them seriously, in Shehba. The injured were taken to hospitals in Aleppo.

Reşid noted that the embargo imposed by the Damascus government made the living conditions of the people twice as difficult, making it impossible to find fuel and medicine, along with basic goods.

Reşid said: “As the Democratic Autonomous Administration of Afrin and Shehba Cantons, we helped the victims with all our means, despite the heavy embargo imposed on us. We call on the government to allow human rights organizations to get through and to lift the embargo so that aid can be delivered to the victims.”



Turkish government exploits the earthquake

ANF | 8 FEBRUARY 2023

The earthquakes in ten provinces in Turkey, whose epicentres were the districts of Pazarcik and Elbistan in the province of Maraş, killed thousands of people and the number of people trapped under the rubble is unknown. Even two days after the earthquake, there are settlements that no government aid has reached yet. People are trying to rescue those trapped under the rubble with their own resources. But instead of strengthening civilian disaster relief and planning further relief measures for the earthquake victims, the Turkish government declared a state of emergency (OHAL) on the second day after the quake.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan said in an address to the nation: “The scale of the earthquake disaster and its impact make it imperative for us to take extraordinary measures. We are declaring ten provinces where the earthquake occurred as disaster areas. We have decided to declare a state of emergency in the ten provinces most affected by the earthquake for a period of three months, based on the powers granted to us by Article 119 of the Constitution, in order to ensure that search and rescue and subsequent

work can be carried out quickly. We will complete the necessary steps for this in Parliament as soon as possible.”

It is to be feared that Erdoğan will exploit the earthquake and the imposition of a state of emergency to prevent opposition forces in particular from organising urgently needed self-help in the affected areas. Thus, Erdoğan wants to use the earthquake disaster as a pretext to let the upcoming elections in the Kurdish areas take place under state of emergency conditions.

Shortly after the first quake, civil society organisations, political parties and the civilian population in the affected areas organised aid with their own resources, while the responsible state authorities initially remained inactive. With the imposition of the state of emergency, self-organised aid is prevented or severely restricted.

Furthermore, it is also to be expected that the state of emergency will severely restrict reporting from the earthquake areas and thus conceal the devastating effects of the disaster and the failure of state emergency aid. Especially in the Kurdish areas, the experiences after the severe earthquake in Van in 2011 have justifiably led to a high level of mistrust in the state disaster relief, and it is also evident after Monday's quake that the deployment of the rescue forces is insufficient and the provision of relief goods for those affected is questionable.

Turkey is in the middle of an election campaign, which is why it is especially important now for Erdoğan and his AKP/MHP government to silence critical voices. Especially with regard to the extent of the destruction and the number of victims, the official reports and eyewitness accounts and the statements of those affected diverge widely. While the government pretends to have the situation under control, people from the disaster areas report that they have not yet received any help. Images and reports from the people on the ground, NGOs and opposition parties are unwanted and are now to be prevented by the imposition of a state of emergency.

The question is already being asked more and more loudly whether the extent of the destruction caused by the quake could not at least have been limited by more stable construction methods. It is common knowledge that Turkey is an earthquake zone and that there have been repeated quakes in recent years. Criticism is levelled at the fact that, in recent years, new buildings in particular have been constructed to such a poor quality that they collapsed like houses of cards during an earthquake. This is said to have particularly affected the housing estates of the state building authority, TOKI.

The Minister of Environment, Urbanisation and Climate Change, Murat Kurum, said, “We will not allow any coordination other than through government disaster relief.” Donations in kind and cash will also only be allowed to be collected through AFAD. With this justification, the relief goods collected by NGOs for the earthquake victims are confiscated.

People in North-East Syria in need of aid after deadly earthquake

ANF | 8 FEBRUARY 2023

The severe earthquake in the border region of Turkey and Syria also affected the regions of the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES). In addition to Turkish-occupied Afrin, the cantons of Shehba and Kobanê were also affected. In the self-administered districts of Sheikh Maqsoûd (Şêxmeqsûd) and Ashrafiyah (Eşrefiyê) in northern Aleppo, at least six people have died and eleven others injured. The exact number of victims is unclear as recovery operations continue.

On Monday night, Turkey attacked with artillery the village of Tel Rifat, which is located in the earthquake-affected region of Shehba. Xalid Derviş, the AANES representative in Germany, said: “We strongly condemn Turkey's attacks. They come in a situation where many people have lost everything due to the earthquake. At this time, people should help each other and not fight wars.”

At the international level, humanitarian support for the victims of the earthquake is underway. Many countries have already pledged millions in aid.

“We have not received any aid from abroad so far, neither from Germany nor from the European Union. But the situation in northern and eastern Syria is dire. There is a lack of shelter, food and medicine. Humanitarian aid must not be politicised and should reach the people quickly,” Derviş said.

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No rescue effort introduced in most of Adiyaman yet

ANF | ADIYAMAN | 8 FEBRUARY 2023

The scale of the devastation from the two earthquakes is gradually becoming clearer. no rescue effort has been yet introduced in many places, especially most of Adiyaman, Maras, Elbistan and Hatay, which were seriously affected by the earthquakes.

Hatice Akdağ, from the HDP Crisis Coordination in Adiyaman, spoke to ANF about the current situation on the ground. She stated that they established an aid network by their own means, but no teams were there to rescue people from the debris. She said: “The HDP has established a crisis coordination desk in the city centre, but we haven't accessed the districts yet. Because most of our administrators here are themselves the victims of the earthquakes. There are serious organizational problems in that respect. We need both manpower and a warehouse for the materials sent by people from other provinces. We are experiencing some difficulties, but we are trying to overcome them through our coordination. HDP MPs Abdullah Koç, Şevin Coşkun and Kemal Bülbül are here with us. At the same time, we are visiting the local people with our delegations and direct the aid trucks coming from other provinces.”

Akdağ added: “A significant amount of the wreckage remains intact. Neither AFAD (Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency) nor state officials have come here. There is no official here. People are trying to survive or rescue others by their own means. Manpower is urgently needed here. We need more people to deliver these aids and to establish dialogue with people because our volunteers here are victims themselves.”

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Twitter restricted in Turkey in the wake of devastating earthquakes

ANF | 8 FEBRUARY 2023

Network data confirm the restriction of Twitter on multiple internet providers in Turkey as of Wednesday 8 February 2023. The incident comes as authorities raise concerns over disinformation online, although no formal explanation has been provided.

Real-time NetBlocks metrics indicate that Twitter has been restricted by means of SNI filtering on major internet providers TTNNet and Turkcell, and subsequently by other operators, with aggregated reachability statistics collected from an initial set of 40 vantage points. This class of disruption can be worked around using VPN services.

A series of deadly earthquakes shook southern and central Turkey on Monday, with thousands of casualties reported. The incident has also had an observable impact on internet connectivity in affected regions, although that impact is distinct from the filtering which has been implemented intentionally at the ISP level.

Turkey has an extensive history of social media restrictions during national emergencies and safety incidents. These have been implemented variously on the basis of national security, to prevent the sharing of harmful images, or to prevent the spread of alleged disinformation.

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Günay: The government left people to die

ANF | AMED | 8 FEBRUARY 2023

The HDP (Peoples’ Democratic Party) Spokesperson Ebru Günay held a press conference in Amed (Diyarbakır) on the latest situation in the earthquake area.

“From the very beginning, we have been working in the cities hit by the earthquakes. First, a Crisis Coordination Centre was established in our Headquarters. Crisis Coordination Centres have also been estab-

lished in our districts and we have started to work very actively in the field, said Günay, who further stated the following:

Currently, more than 40 of our deputies are in the earthquake regions together in 8 separate delegations. At the same time, our Co-Chair Pervin Buldan came to Diyarbakir on the first day and then went to Adiyaman. Yesterday, our Co-Chair Mithat Sancar first went to Hatay, and today he is holding talks in Adana. We have been trying to rescue people under the rubble together with our people.

So far, our party has delivered aid to the earthquake victims by 93 trucks. More aid is prepared by our municipalities. However, aid trucks organized by our Silopi Municipality were threatened by the district governor and security forces. Another district governor confiscated the aid trucks prepared by our Patnos Municipality. We all know that the government is trying to prevent social aid and solidarity by organizing activities from a single centre through AFAD (Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency).

The government has not removed any debris since the first day. Health teams are not able to enter the cities, and corpses are kept on the streets. Yesterday, I was in Adiyaman and saw a dead body lying in a garden, wrapped in a curtain. There were voices from under the rubble, but there were no aid teams, no cranes, no AFAD, no digging tools. There were only survivors trying to rescue their loved ones. There is a humanitarian tragedy in Adiyaman, Pazarcık, Islahiye and Hatay. The government is taking advantage of the earthquakes by collecting all the aid through AFAD and declaring a state of emergency.

The earthquake did not kill any of our citizens, the imprudence of the government killed them. We appeal to the government; our organization and solidarity are enough to help our people. Just get out of our way. The AKP government should fade from the scene between earthquake victims and society as soon as possible and solidarity should be allowed through. We know that the AFAD has not reached any earthquake area or debris for days.

The Head of the Geology Chamber says that they conducted studies, prepared reports and warned institutions, including the presidency, and none of them was taken into account. A Ministry of Disaster, Emergency and Climate Change should be established in Turkey as soon as possible, and necessary preparations should be made for possible disasters, especially in a country like Turkey, which is found in an earthquake zone.

Yesterday, the AKP turned the crisis into an opportunity and decided to declare a state of emergency (OHAL). In fact, OHAL was announced to prevent solidarity among the people, all kinds of aid, search, and rescue volunteers from entering the affected areas. We will never accept it. Our stance on this issue is always clear. We will remain in solidarity with our people. We are a party which knows that solidarity under all circumstances will save us and make us strong. If you remember, Turkey survived great disasters such as the Van earthquake and the Marmara earthquake. It was the work of non-governmental organizations and parties that saved people. But the AKP government is now trying to prevent this solidarity. Our Crisis Coordination desks are carrying out their work.

We are now trying to organize aids and deliver them to earthquake victims. Our volunteer teams are carrying out activities in all cities. We are facing a tremendous catastrophe. We will heal our wounds together. These wounds cannot be healed with a war budget.”



Earthquake victims in Antep: No one has come to our aid

ANF | ANTEP | 8 FEBRUARY 2023

In the Güzelvadi neighborhood in Antep, some families have erected a makeshift tent on a playground in an attempt to cope with the challenging conditions in the wake of two devastating earthquakes on Monday.

Speaking to ANF, resident Halime Taştan stated that their situation is catastrophic, and that there is neither drinking water nor bread. "No one has come to our aid," said the woman, whose family consists of 15 people and needs at least a real tent.

Another woman, Meryem Xan, sits with her child on her lap in front of a self-constructed shelter. Xan comes from the northern Syrian region of Afrin, which was occupied by the Turkish state in 2018. She has been living in Antep for a few years.

"No help has arrived here," stated Xan, whose family has built a shack out of plastic bags and boards. "The children are still small, and we have nothing to eat. There is no drinking water either."

Karasu: Society should rely on itself, not on the state

ANF | BEHDINAN | 9 FEBRUARY 2023

The number of victims of the earthquakes in Northern Kurdistan, Rojava, Syria and Turkey continues to rise. While thousands have already been reported dead, countless people are still trapped. There is little hope left for most of them. Meanwhile, the AKP/MHP regime has declared a state of emergency and is trying to use the relief efforts in its political interest. Mustafa Karasu from the Executive Council of the Kurdistan Communities Union (KCK) issued a statement on the earthquake and the resulting situation.

"The Turkish state is trying to hide its own failure"

Karasu first wished the injured a speedy recovery and offered his condolences to the families of the victims in Turkey and Kurdistan. He accused the Turkish state of continuing to conceal the extent of the disaster and said: "It was indeed a very severe earthquake. The losses are great. There has probably not been an earthquake like this in Kurdistan and Turkey for centuries. The authorities are trying to gloss over the scale of the earthquake. The death toll is under reported. Of course, we too want there to be fewer deaths and less destruction. But we need to reveal the facts so that society and humanity can develop a stronger solidarity. Tens of thousands have lost their lives. There are just as many injured. Tens of thousands of homes have been destroyed. To hide this reality is to whitewash the scale of the earthquake. It weakens serious actions that need to be taken because of the earthquake. Doing something like this to avoid panicking people is wrong. In fact, the Turkish state is trying to hide the truth about itself in this way. The Turkish government is trying to hide its responsibility in this disaster. It is trying to hide the fact that it has not taken

measures against destruction caused by earthquakes. We strongly condemn this action.” Karasu underlined that the AKP/MHP regime is thus trying to ease its own situation. He called on people not to be deceived by the regime and to mobilise help at all levels.

“AFAD itself collapsed in this earthquake”

At the same time, Karasu criticised the lack of aid in the region and accused the disaster management agency AFAD of being only a “sham institution”. He continued: “The destruction is huge. But the governmental organisation called AFAD is not able to provide enough help. AFAD itself collapsed in this earthquake. It turned out that AFAD is just a show organisation. If there had been a small earthquake, AFAD might have been able to show that the agency was doing something, that it was doing its job. But now more than ten provinces, including cities in Turkey, but especially in Kurdistan, have been destroyed in this earthquake. Thousands of villages have been destroyed and devastated. AFAD, of course, is not in a position to respond to this. It lacks the organisation to do so. This state does not provide funds for it and does not invest in building such organisations. The regime is only concerned with making its own clientele, its supporters, rich. There were no provisions at all. After the 1999 earthquake, the earthquake tax was introduced, and ten billion dollars were collected. With this tax, AFAD could have been better built. The municipalities could have been better equipped in this regard and then disaster response would have been possible in such a situation.

It is not easy to help with such disasters from a distance. The municipalities should be strongly organised in this respect at the local level. Because they can intervene immediately in case of a disaster. But AFAD was set up just for show and has now collapsed. AFAD has no presence anywhere. Maybe some people have been sent to one or two provinces. Is that enough? How are they going to reach ten provinces, hundreds of towns and thousands of villages? AFAD is not in a position to do so, either organisationally or at the level of its resources.

“The state itself is buried under the earthquake”

The state itself has been buried under the earthquake, it has collapsed. The state is responsible for the deaths. Because people are saying on TV that there are no forces from AFAD there, no help is being organised. What will happen? Aid will come in three or four days. Help will come from all over the world. But the important thing is that local rescue teams are mobilised right now.”

Karasu criticized the fact that the revenue from the earthquake tax was embezzled and distributed among the regime’s supporters, saying, “They supposedly built roads or other things with the money. This is a crime. The money was confiscated under the law for precautions against the consequences of earthquakes. It is a crime to take money for something else. Quite apart from the legal issue, it is a moral crime.”

“State institutions cannot overcome such disasters”

Instead of relying on the failing state, society itself should build solidarity, said Karasu and continued: “Such disasters and calamities are overcome by the solidarity of society. State institutions cannot overcome them. Throughout history, people have overcome such earthquakes and disasters through the solidarity of neighbourhoods and their surroundings. Now there is a centralised state. Some fake institutions have been

created. When the disaster happened, these collapsed. The state is helpless in the face of such disasters. This is obvious.”

Karasu accused the state of also hindering social solidarity, saying that civil society transport of tents, blankets and relief goods to the crisis areas is repeatedly stopped. Despite its failure, the state is trying to concentrate the aid on itself in order to capitalise on it, said Karasu, and accused the state of claiming that its own resources in disaster management were sufficient. The state, he said, branded anyone who asked for help abroad as a traitor. “Now, however, the state has had to open its doors to the international community because it is helpless itself. The nationalist propaganda has now collapsed.”

"Solidarity and organisation of society is crucial"

Karasu continued: "The solidarity and organisation of society is the crucial thing. Society finds a real solution. We have to understand that. The potential of society lies in healing all kinds of wounds. The people of Kurdistan are organised and conscious. They are taking action themselves against the consequences of the disaster. We should not expect too much from the state. The state was not established for society, it is a structure to exploit society, to oppress it. The Turkish state in particular is an authoritarian, fascist system. It is a war regime. Some of the earthquake money was spent on road construction, some was spent on war.. The state boasts of its military might, its drones and its means of war. But in an earthquake, it cannot save the people. It cannot heal their wounds.”

“Society should organise its own solidarity structures”

Karasu warned of the low temperatures, sometimes below -15 degrees: “The first few days are crucial. The weather is very cold at the moment. But everywhere we look, they say the aid from AFAD or other agencies has not arrived. At most, it’s for show. AFAD goes to one or two buildings in a city and does salvage work. What about the other buildings? Hundreds of apartment blocks collapsed. Maraş, Elbistan, Afşin, Narlı, Göksun, Malatya, Adıyaman and the surrounding villages were all destroyed. Most of the old houses collapsed. So, who will do the rescuing here? The organisation of society is attacked, solidarity is prevented and criminalised, but the state itself nevertheless does nothing. This cannot be so. Against this background, instead of complaining and without waiting for the state, society should organise its own solidarity structures everywhere. We say this to show the reality of the state.”

“Solidarity without distinction necessary”

Regarding the damage and deaths in Northern Kurdistan, Rojava, Syria and Turkey, Karasu said: “Our people should be in solidarity everywhere, in North Kurdistan, in Syria, in Rojava. Without differentiating between Arabs, Turks, Kurds and Syrians, the Kurdish people should help and stand by all disaster victims.”

“Diaspora from areas west of the euphrates must show responsibility”

Talking about his own experience in the region, Karasu said: “I know the area very well. I know the landscape and the way the houses are built. I know how impassable and cold the region is in winter. In the past, vehicles could not drive to our villages for six months. They could only be reached by sledges. And now the destruction in Afşin, Elbistan, Pazarcık, Narlı and their surroundings, in places like Doğanşehir,

Akçadağ and Adıyaman, is really huge. Yes, there was also destruction in Urfa and Amed (Diyarbakır), but the destruction is greater west of the Euphrates. Therefore, I think that our people's solidarity with the people living in these areas at the epicentre should be especially great and that these areas must be rebuilt. Many people from Pazarcık, Elbistan and Afşin who live in Europe can support the reconstruction. A large part of our people in south-western Kurdistan emigrated to Europe after the Maraş massacre [1978]. Some of them also live in the big cities. They did not show solidarity immediately. Today, they should heal the wounds and rebuild the destroyed villages. They should make the region a place to live again. They have this responsibility.”

“No one should be left hungry and unprotected”

Karasu stated: “There are no relief workers in the villages, there is no solidarity. Only between the neighbouring villages has there been some solidarity. Now everyone is in a bad situation. Everyone has to deal with the disaster themselves. Of course, the neighbouring villages, the well-preserved and the less destroyed villages should help the others. There are already appeals. All civil society organisations and democratic forces in Turkey are calling for this. We have also done it. People should, if they have the opportunity, take in those who have been affected by the earthquake. No one should be left hungry and unprotected. Everyone should share their food. Everyone should share everything. And of course, from places where there are no earthquakes, from Marmara, the Aegean, from everywhere help must flow to the areas. Aid should also come from the Black Sea.”

Karasu called for support for the reconstruction of the region, saying: “The Kurdish people and the peoples of Turkey should set an example of solidarity as one. Fraternity becomes evident at such moments. It is in such moments that the importance of living together is shown, it is in such moments that humanity is shown.”



Labor and Freedom Alliance: We will overcome this disaster together

ANF | 9 FEBRUARY 2023

The Labor and Freedom Alliance made a written statement about the earthquake in Kurdistan.

The statement said: “The peoples of Turkey are experiencing a disaster rarely seen in history. The earthquake devastated 10 provinces of our country, as well as in Northern and Eastern Syria, Syria and Lebanon, causing the death of thousands of people. Thousands of people are still under the debris. Our surviving citizens are waiting in the streets in these harsh winter conditions.”

‘Government left people to die’

The statement noted: “First of all, we feel the pain of our citizens who lost their lives in the earthquake, and express our condolences to their relatives and our people. Our pain is great! We are in deep sorrow! We are mourning!

We have great anger against this government, which has left our people to die for three days in the face of this nationwide destruction! The AKP-MHP government did not even step into the cities hit by the earthquake in the first 24 hours. This regime has left our people to die.”

The statement continued: “Instead of organizing interventions and aid, the government wants to protect itself, not our people, with the declaration of a State of Emergency. The peoples of Turkey are well aware of how the government turns crises into opportunities at the expense of the lives of our citizens. With the declaration of the state of emergency, the AKP-MHP government wants to close the cities, cut solidarity networks by preventing aid as well as correct information. It prevents journalists from going to the regions. What needs to be done is not to declare a state of emergency, but to promote social mobilization!

As the Labor and Freedom Alliance, we declare that we do not recognize the State of Emergency and the pressures it will bring in this process where every hour is of extraordinary importance for life.”

The statement concluded: “Today, more than ever, we need to defend society. We call on the state to mobilize all its means to defend society and life. The resources of the people should be used for people, not for the survival of the government! This is the only demand of our peoples today! All obstacles put by the government are crimes against people and against life. We fully believe that our people will share their labor with earthquake victims and open their homes to their brothers and sisters. We will continue to expand solidarity, defend life, and stand by our people on the field. No pressure and authoritarian decisions will be able to stop us from being on the side of our people. Together we will overcome this tragedy.”

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Journalists detained while covering earthquake have press cards confiscated

ANF | 9 FEBRUARY 2023

Mezopotamya Agency (MA) journalist Mahmut Altıntaş and JINNEWS journalist Sema Çağlak were taken into custody on Wednesday while covering the consequences of the earthquake in Birecik (Bêrecûk), in Urfa (Riha). The journalists were detained by police who questioned their journalist's identity. The two reporters were getting information about the rescue work going on in a collapsed building where 21 dead people had been found.

The police detained the journalists on the grounds that they did not have a turquoise card.

After getting a health report at the district state hospital, the two journalists were taken to Birecik Police station for questioning.

The journalists were asked questions such as “Why did you come to Birecik?”, “Who gave you the journalist card?” Altıntaş and Çağlak were eventually released but their press cards were confiscated.

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AKP-MHP policies are killing

ANF | 9 FEBRUARY 2023

The earthquake that occurred in North Kurdistan is causing more and more pain. On the fourth day after the earthquake, pain and death, sadly, increase. The people who lost their lives are at least 12,873. Tens of thousands of people are still under the rubble.

The policies of the AKP-MHP government have a big responsibility in this catastrophe.

Many people are under rubble in Adyaman (Semsûr), bodies on the streets

In Adyaman (Semsûr) there are still many people under the debris. The bodies, which were taken out of the rubble, are kept in hospital and school corridors as well as on the streets. In the city where tents have not been set up yet, earthquake survivors spent the night in front of the fires they lit in front of their ruined houses. People carry out rescue work by their own means.

Many people are under rubble in Pazarcik (Bazarcix)

It is stated that more than 800 people have lost their lives and thousands of others have been injured in Pazarcik (Bazarcix) and its villages. At least 50 percent of the city was destroyed and many people are still under the rubble.

The crisis desks and help centers of Cemevis and the Peoples' Democratic Party are working hard. Aid teams came from Amed, Çewlik and surrounding cities.

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Internationalist Commune of Rojava: A natural disaster, inseparable from its political implications

ANF | 9 FEBRUARY 2023

The Internationalist Commune of Rojava said in a statement on the earthquake in Kurdistan, Syria and Turkey that "the natural disaster is inseparable from its political implications."

The statement said: “From the Internationalist Commune of Rojava we are extremely touched by the tragedy of this earthquake. Our thoughts are with all the families who have been hit hard, whatever their origin. Where we are, we have felt the earth shake, but without the dramatic consequences that other regions are experiencing. If borders mark lines that are sometimes unbridgeable, the connection between people is not. Here, in the north-east of Syria/Western Kurdistan (Rojava), there are thousands of people who have a strong relationship with others elsewhere in the country, but also especially with the people of southern Turkey/Northern Kurdistan (Bakûr).

We believe that emotions should not make us forget to take a political look at the situation. What is happening today is not a natural event disconnected from the way society is organised, with nationalist and racist fault lines dividing peoples, with a capitalist economy that favours profit over well-being, with nation-state policies guided by short-termism and electoralism. Many voices are being raised at the moment to appeal to feelings of solidarity, to universalist values. We support these appeals, but we do not accept putting aside the socio-political context in which these events are taking place. Past, present and future responsibilities cannot be erased under the guise of a humanist vision that has never existed in the eyes of political regimes in the nation-states of the region and the rest of the world. The mainstream media is rightly moved by the situation, but the same media was silent not long ago about the suffering of these same people and will probably be silent again in a few weeks.”

The statement continued as follows:

Geographical and political context

“The 7.8 magnitude earthquake that took place during the night of February 5-6 has already claimed more than 12,000 victims and, unfortunately, this number is likely to increase significantly in the coming hours. The most affected regions are mainly Kurdish populated areas on both sides of the Turkish-Syrian border. Historically neglected and oppressed by Ankara (such as in Maraş), under Turkish and Islamist extremist occupation in northern Syria (such as in Afrin), having experienced Assad’s brutal repression (such as in Aleppo) or currently living under Turkish bombing (such as in Tel Rifaat). In addition, there are thousands of refugees who have fled the numerous fights that have destabilized the region for decades. This catastrophe is therefore all the more acute as the populations have been experiencing economic and political difficulties for a long time.

The current majority media treatment is another glaring example of the invisibilization of the Kurdish people. Few media outlets have taken the trouble to point out which peoples live in the affected regions. The idea is not at all to make this natural disaster identity-based, as nature does not make cultural distinctions, but rather to keep it linked to a human and historical reality which alone allows us to really understand the ordeals that people are going through. A real solidarity can only exist by taking into consideration the ins and outs of this reality.

Anything but a surprise and much more than a natural disaster

This earthquake is far from being the first to hit the region. The region is at the crossroads of three tectonic plates, which makes it a place prone to earthquakes (for example, Turkey has experienced no less than 230 earthquakes exceeding a magnitude of 6 during the twentieth century, 12 of them exceeding a thousand victims). Historically, there have been many disasters, the most recent of which was in 1999 and resulted

in almost 20,000 deaths. Being aware of this reality allows us to realize that the current regime has done everything but carry out a preventive policy in this matter, despite the important European aid provided for adapted urban plans. For years now, specialists in seismology have been warning about the imminent risk of dangerous plate movements without the government reacting.

This is all the more scandalous when one knows the close links that unite the AKP party and Erdogan himself with the construction sector, as well as the more pharaonic projects that have been carried out since his accession to power. The cases of corruption are innumerable (both in terms of public/private contracts and the use of poor quality materials and non-compliance with standards), opponents of these projects and journalists who have tried to shed light on these cases are languishing in prison by the dozen. The Gezi Park protests in Istanbul are an example that involved large sectors opposed to urban gentrification, mega-projects and environmental destruction. They illustrate the damage of an economic policy focused on increasing consumption and centralizing urbanization that does not take into account popular aspirations and creates a social divide.

In the Syrian regions, the destabilization and the after-effects of years of war are still very much alive. The regime in Damascus, with different international allies than Ankara, has nonetheless proven, over the last decade, to be ready to do anything to stay in power. If the Rojava autonomy experiment is tolerated, it is only because of the strength, determination and sacrifice it has shown.

Aid ineffectiveness and repression of subversive voices

As illustrated by countless testimonies (shared through social media and contrary to the Turkish government propaganda, many areas are abandoned to their fate. In many places (such as Gaziantep), no aid had arrived in the crucial 12 hours following the earthquake. The ineffectiveness of the aid provided is partly structural, voluntary and due to the geopolitical context. Today, on Turkish social networks, the number of comments calling for a lack of interest in the death of Kurdish people, including young children, is chilling. The Turkish government has already issued clear threats that any criticism of the measures taken would be considered a form of treason and would be suppressed (a hotline has been set up to report such 'subversive' acts). The criminalization of the opposition, which has been going on for years, will only be increased by a desperate regime that reinforces a discourse of so-called unity that is in reality an exacerbated authoritarianism: *'if you criticize, you are against us and therefore against the nation'*. A few hours ago, Twitter was simply closed in Turkey.

In Syria, among the areas most affected are the ones under Turkish occupation and in the hands of Islamist mercenaries. This implies local disorganization and an increased difficulty sending aid. The AANES has announced that it wants to provide aid to the areas adjacent to those it administers, while the Assad regime wants to monopolize international aid. The embargo situation in Rojava is an element that is all the more felt in these moments. The Turkish army does not seem to have decided to observe any truce despite the disaster. The region of Tel Rifaat, hit by the earthquake, for example, was bombed again last night (Tuesday, February 7).

Instrumentalization and invisibilization versus self-organization and internationalism

The priority is, of course, emergency relief. However, it is already necessary to be attentive to the way in which this catastrophe will be used for the upcoming elections (next May) but also to see what lessons will

be drawn from it. When such a disaster occurs, the wounds and needs do not disappear along with the media attention. Lives and homes are destroyed. Reconstruction is a long-term process that goes beyond concrete alone but should involve prevention and building local capacity to respond to such earthquakes.

It is likely that Erdogan and Assad are already making plans to try to take advantage of this in one way or another (such as the increased criminalization of opposition parties, like the HDP). It is likely that this will be done in line with a national unity that is only a facade to preserve their power at the expense of the people's interests. The first signs suggest that this will unfortunately not have a calming effect on the war and repressive aims of regimes that can only hold on because of it. If today's situation requires a rapid and unilateral reaction, this spontaneous solidarity must not be diluted as quickly as it is manifested, leaving free rein to policies that have had catastrophic effects on the lives of the majority of the populations now so severely affected.

We believe that this earthquake is symptomatic in many ways of the deleterious effects of the paradigm of the nation-state, which is the enemy of local autonomy and decentralized self-organization, of a capitalism that never seeks the long-term well-being of the people but feeds on crises and conflicts. The region that is so badly affected today is also the place where an authentically democratic political model has been tenaciously built for a decade. This model is a threat to the powers that be, which is why it is being attacked from all sides.

Today, as the Autonomous Administration does, we want solidarity to be expressed everywhere and in a concrete way. Tomorrow, when the emotion will have subsided and the cameras will have moved away, we hope that the women and men who live in this region of the world will not be forgotten. This depends on each one of us, this is the essence of the internationalism that inhabits us and knows no borders. To help now to alleviate the emergency is indispensable, to weave authentic bonds of internationalist solidarity for the future is vital.”

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Raqqa Civil Assembly distributes food to victims of earthquake

ANF | RAQQA | 9 FEBRUARY 2023

Raqqa Civil Assembly Social Affairs and Labor Committee distributed food to the citizens who have to stay in tents because their houses were damaged in the earthquake that hit North Kurdistan, Turkey, North Syria and Syria on Monday.

Thanks to the help of many people in the city, the Social Affairs and Labour Committee of the Raqqa Civil Assembly was able to prepare and distribute food.

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Hatay residents: Alevi neighborhoods receive no aid

ZEYNEP KURAY | HATAY | 9 FEBRUARY 2023

Earthquake survivors have been left to their fate in Hatay, one of the cities devastated by Monday's earthquakes. The Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD), which claims to have delivered aid to every point hit by the earthquakes, has not arrived in Hatay. The people have struggled for days without electricity, water and hygienic materials and tried to pull their relatives out of the rubble. Since no construction equipment was not sent to the region on time, many people trying to hold on to life by making a sound under the rubble lost their lives. Corpses are kept wrapped in blankets among the ruins in the neighbourhoods since "the morgues are full". Left alone by the state and the government in all respects, people are provided food and supplies thanks to the aid delivered by many political parties and unions, including the HDP, the TÖP, the HDK, the TKP, the TİP, Community Centres and Kaldırac. As a result of the intense efforts by the few search and rescue teams in the region, where construction equipment arrived only 56 hours after the earthquake, many people, including children, were rescued from the wreckage alive.

Speaking to ANF, the residents of Hatay reacted to the official discrimination by saying, "Since we are Alevi, no aid has been delivered".

Wreckage remains, no water-soup provided

The Küçükdalyan neighbourhood, where TÖP aid teams could arrive 48 hours after the earthquake, is one of the areas where no state aid has been provided. A resident, Sami Demir, told ANF that although one of the greatest destruction took place in Küçükdalyan, no state institution has come to the neighbourhood. Demir said: "Although it is the first neighbourhood at the entrance of the city, neither the gendarmerie, nor the police or AFAD have come here. At least 500 people have died in the neighbourhood. I saw my aunt's daughter's feet under the wreckage, but I couldn't do anything. We could have saved a few more lives if they had at least sent a digger. Let alone remove the wreckage, they did not even provide water or soup. I haven't slept for three days. I finally broke the windows of a supermarket in order to bring food to children."

Demir emphasized that aid was not brought on purpose since the Küçükdalyan neighbourhood is an Alevi settlement, like many neighbourhoods where aid is not delivered. "We stopped an ambulance to ask for help, but their response was 'we have a doctor, but we do not have supplies.' My daughter sent me medicine from Mersin. The state did not send us any medicine. Half of the neighbourhood's population consists of old people. Shame on the government. The state is not there for Alevi."

Reaction to the Chp

Demir reacted to the opposition party CHP, which is widely endorsed by the Alevi population. "The Alevi have always voted for the CHP. Why does the party not come to help the Alevi people? They will ask for our votes for the next elections. But we will punish them, they deserve it," he said.

‘We sleep on the streets’

ANF reporters witnessed the same situation in the Subasi neighbourhood where residents are furious, and power is cut. Hüseyin Kuş, one of the survivors of the earthquake, stated that neither the state nor AFAD visited the neighbourhood. Kuş said that his 8-storey building was destroyed, yet no one has offered any help for three days now.

The man’s son, Sergen Kuş, confirmed what his father said: “As 80-90% of Hatay’s population is Alevi, we are not the first priority in terms of aid. This is not new; it has been like this for centuries. No aid, supplies, or tents have been delivered to us. We sleep on the streets; we light a fire to warm up. We have a supermarket, and we keep watch in front of it to prevent looting.”

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State of emergency enters into force as death toll reaches 16,170 in Turkey

ANF | 9 FEBRUARY 2023

Two earthquakes in ten provinces in Turkey, whose epicentres were the districts of Pazarcik and Elbistan in the province of Maraş, killed thousands of people and the number of people trapped under the rubble is unknown. Even three days after the earthquake, there are countless settlements that no government aid has reached yet. Most of the survivors are still trying to rescue those trapped under the rubble with their own resources.

Instead of strengthening civilian disaster relief and planning further relief measures for the earthquake victims, the Turkish government declared a state of emergency (OHAL) on the second day after the quake. The measure entered into force after approval by members of the parliament on Thursday.

According to latest figures announced by Erdoğan on Thursday afternoon, the death toll from Monday’s earthquakes has risen to 16,170, and the number of those injured to 64,194. He reiterated that earthquake victims would be provided with 10,000 TL each.

It is to be feared that Erdoğan will exploit the earthquake and the imposition of a state of emergency to prevent opposition forces in particular from organising urgently needed self-help in the affected areas. Thus, Erdoğan wants to use the earthquake disaster as a pretext to let the upcoming elections in the Kurdish areas take place under state of emergency conditions.

Furthermore, it is also to be expected that the state of emergency will severely restrict reporting from the earthquake areas and thus conceal the devastating effects of the disaster and the failure of state emergency aid. Especially in the Kurdish areas, the experiences after the severe earthquake in Van in 2011 have justifiably led to a high level of mistrust in the state disaster relief, and it is also evident after Monday’s quake

that the deployment of the rescue forces is insufficient and the provision of relief goods for those affected is questionable.

Turkey is in the middle of an election campaign, which is why it is especially important now for Erdoğan and his AKP/MHP government to silence critical voices. Especially with regard to the extent of the destruction and the number of victims, the official reports and eyewitness accounts and the statements of those affected diverge widely. While the government pretends to have the situation under control, people from the disaster areas report that they have not yet received any help. Images and reports from the people on the ground, NGOs and opposition parties are unwanted and are now to be prevented by the imposition of a state of emergency.



Earthquake survivors left to their fate in Elbistan

ANF | 9 FEBRUARY 2023

The Elbistan district of Maras province was severely devastated by the two earthquakes on February 6. Search and rescue efforts in the district are mostly carried out by volunteers. Nearly 3,000 buildings and residences were demolished, and 70% of the district was destroyed completely. While search and rescue efforts continue in only a small part of the destroyed buildings in the district centre, 70 percent of the debris remains intact.

Citizens are desperately waiting for their relatives to be removed from the rubble. Survivors find no shelter in the district where the temperature has dropped to minus 15.

Villages devastated

All the buildings on Malatya Street have been demolished. There is no reliable information about how many people remain under the wreckage, how many lost their lives, and how many are missing. In the meantime, the situation in the villages is getting worse. Survivors in the villages could only receive the aid delivered by the volunteers. While the roads of many villages are closed, no organization has reached the rural areas so far. Villagers interviewed by MA stated that there were still many trapped under the rubble, and the corpses have not been buried yet.

While the morgues in hospitals, cemevis (Alevi place of worship) and private health institutions in the city are completely closed, some corpses are kept in separate sections in hospitals. The city cemetery is already full. In the face of procedures before the burial of the bodies kept in hospitals and other institutions, people must wait for a long time even to bury their dead relatives.

No water provided

Survivors are given hot soup distributed only by voluntary organizations and some municipalities' aid trucks in the district centre. They could not even reach drinking water for two days. 500 people took shel-

ter in the Cemevi. Basic foodstuffs and necessities are distributed to the public in warehouses set up in the Cemevi and in many wedding halls.

Survivors in the district urgently want tents for heating up.

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HDP Crisis Coordination: The government is trapped under the rubble

ANF | ANKARA | 9 FEBRUARY 2023

The Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) has set up a crisis coordination centre due to the earthquake in Turkey and North Kurdistan and informed at a press conference in Ankara about the work done so far and the deficits on the ground. Mahfuz Güteryüz, Emirali Türkmen, Habip Eksik and Sultan Özcan took part in the press conference at the party headquarters on Thursday.

Speaking about the work of the Crisis Coordination Centre, Güteryüz said: "We work continuously 24 hours a day. Our crisis coordination centres on the ground are working non-stop and can be reached by phone around the clock. We try to reach everyone who needs help in the earthquake areas and immediately inform the disaster management authority AFAD of the need."

Due to insufficient rescue teams, tens of thousands of people are still under the rubble of the collapsed buildings. We are angry. We feel the anger of our people in our hearts," Güteryüz said, adding: "The interventions are insufficient, people have been left to their fate."

"The government is lying"

Güteryüz further stated the following:

"What is happening in the earthquake region is in stark contrast to what the AKP/MHP government says. The reality is quite different, it is worrying and appalling. There are districts, villages and settlements that have not yet been reached and where not even the slightest help has been provided. Our crisis coordination centres are receiving many, many calls. Our colleagues are constantly on the phone. According to the information we have, thousands of people are under the rubble. Unfortunately, the death toll is rising with every minute that passes. Interventions are totally inadequate and people under the rubble are literally abandoned to their fate.

We find that AFAD is very inadequate here. In addition to our crisis coordination units and delegations that have travelled to the earthquake zone, we are also organising direct assistance on the ground. Our colleagues and party youth are participating in active rescue work to free people from collapsed buildings. We have prepared an emergency list of materials needed in the earthquake zone, which we have strongly and widely publicised through our social media accounts and will continue to do so. As a result of these an-

nouncements, we have been building solidarity networks to heal the wounds of the earthquake together. We continue to expand this network with support from home and abroad.

“The result of wrong urban planning and fatal greed for profit”

So far, hundreds of trucks and vans from our relief centre have reached the earthquake zone or are on their way. We would like to share with the public that we are working with a staff of two thousand volunteers on the ground. From the first moment of the earthquake, hundreds of reports of collapses and fatalities were sent to AFAD and the local authorities. We are dealing with a government that does not involve civil society and political parties and wants to centralise everything but is unable to do so. We need to express a clear and unambiguous truth: The government is trapped under the rubble. We are dealing with a government that sees death as destiny and threatens the public. Global experience shows us that natural disasters are not fate. The deaths that occur after disasters are the result of wrong urbanisation and a system based on profit. We do not accept that they come now and say what we can do, it is just fate.

“Not fate, but murder”

Is it fate to squander the earthquake taxes collected and invest in multi-lane roads? Is it fate not to listen to science and take precautions against an obvious disaster? Is it fate to award construction contracts to favoured contractors and erect buildings in inappropriate places? Is it part of destiny to invest in guns and tanks and spend billions of dollars on war, but disappear when it comes to clearing the rubble? Is it part of destiny to build shopping centres in places designated as earthquake zones? No, a million times no! That is why we say this is not destiny, it is murder.

“We can heal this wound together”

All our efforts are aimed at preventing new losses and overcoming these dark days together through growing solidarity. We can heal this wound together. The declaration of a state of emergency is an open admission that the state is buried under the rubble. The earthquake has shown us the importance of local democracy and decentralisation. The centralised state structure has collapsed.

Our task today is to strengthen social solidarity networks against the profit-driven economy and ruthless order. Yesterday we launched a solidarity campaign under the slogan ‘Now is the time for solidarity’. Our aim is to bring together citizens who want to show solidarity with the earthquake victims and build a long-term bridge between them. We are trying to manage with our bare hands and our existing manpower.”

Priority problems: shelters, hunger, dead bodies

When asked about the priority and urgent problems received by the HDP Crisis Centre, Güteryüz replied: “The most priority issues at the moment are the problem of shelters, the problem of hunger and, since yesterday, unfortunately, the problem of collecting the bodies. This is a big problem that is in front of us. We are trying to solve these problems on the ground with about two thousand people. But we don’t have many resources and forces to remove the debris and ease the pain of the families waiting for their bodies. Construction machinery and technical equipment are needed for this. We are trying to manage it with our bare hands and the available manpower. But let me say it again, we are trying to follow up this work both

on the ground and at our headquarters with a large army of volunteers. We are carrying out this work not only with our party members and staff, but also with other NGOs and various political parties. Professional associations and trade unions like TMMOB, KESK and DISK are on the ground, and we are trying to coordinate this work with them.”

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Ankara and Damascus block aid deliveries from AANES

ANF | 9 FEBRUARY 2023

The Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES) has accused the governments in Ankara and Damascus of blocking aid deliveries to the Syrian earthquake zones. An aid convoy with around 100 vehicles, including dozens of tankers with fuel as well as trucks with food, drinking water, medicine and warm clothing is currently waiting in the village of Umm al-Julud between Manbij and Jarablus for permission to cross the informal border between the autonomous region and the Turkish occupied zone, said the executive council chairwoman Bêrivan Xalid in Raqqa on Thursday. The Kurdish politician demanded unhindered access to the Syrian earthquake zone. Urgently needed aid for the civilian population must reach the earthquake victims quickly and directly, regardless of political and ideological differences or war-related interests, she said, adding: “Emergency aid must not be politicised.”

Meanwhile, the total death toll following the devastating earthquake in the Turkish-Syrian border region has risen to almost 20,000 in both countries. In Turkey alone, at least 16,546 people died and more than 66,000 were injured, according to the latest figures. In Syria, 3,317 people have died and more than 5,000 others are injured, according to the latest figures. The 7.8-magnitude earthquake with its epicentre in the province of Maraş shook the Turkish-Syrian border region early on Monday. It is feared that the number of victims will continue to rise.

In Syria, five provinces were affected by the quake: the jihadist-controlled Idlib, the Turkish-occupied region of Afrin and the areas around Aleppo controlled by the Assad regime. The quake was somewhat less devastating in the three provinces of Latakia, Tartus and Hama, which are also under regime control.

In Afrin, the district of Jindires was hit particularly hard. Rescue teams from the Turkish state are searching for people trapped there. However, they mainly take care of the trapped relatives of the jihadists who settled there after the occupation five years ago, while the original population is neglected. This also applies to the medical care of injured people in the hospital wards in the Turkish occupied zone.

In the self-governing districts of Sheikh Maqoud and Ashrafiyah in northern Aleppo, six people were killed as a result of Monday’s earthquake, including several young children. Fearing aftershocks, 1,200 families have fled to the Shehba region, where hundreds of thousands of internally displaced people from Afrin have been living since 2018. They are being cared for by AANES in reception camps and in villages in Sherawa district, which is not yet fully occupied by Turkey. However, the humanitarian situation in Shehba has been extremely precarious for months anyway due to an embargo imposed by the Assad regime. Part of the humanitarian aid held up in Manbij is also supposed to arrive there.

Meanwhile, AANES has reiterated its call on the United Nations (UN) to work for the immediate opening of all border crossings into Syria. “The international community must influence the governments in Ankara and Damascus to open more border crossings as quickly as possible and to ensure that urgently needed aid reaches the people in the disaster area,” said Bêrivan Xalid. In particular, the Syrian-Iraqi border crossing Til Koçer (Al-Yarubiyah) must be opened immediately for humanitarian aid deliveries, she stated.

The Til Koçer border crossing, controlled by the Iraqi army, was closed in 2018 at Russia’s insistence by a decision of the UN Security Council. Even now, the Assad regime and Russia, as Syria’s protecting power, are blocking the opening of the border crossings. Bab al-Hawa is the only open border crossing from Turkey to Syria out of the original four. Today, six trucks with aid from the United Nations crossed the border. However, these are aid deliveries that were already planned before the earthquake and were only delayed by it.

In the meantime, the Kurdish Red Crescent, Heyva Sor a Kurd, and the Euphrates Region Health Board provide health services to the people of Kobanê in aid tents.

Each of the 6 health teams organized by the Euphrates Region Health Board has medical personnel specialized in internal diseases, heart and children.

Three ambulances were allocated to Heyva Sor Kurd and six others to the Health Board to serve the citizens in the tents.

While emergency teams help the people with limited opportunities and medicines provided by the Health Board, no humanitarian organization has delivered aid to the region so far.

Nihad Çol Beg, emergency service member of the Euphrates Region Health Board, said: “We have been mobilized since the first day of the earthquake. Medical personnel are ready for emergency situations and to protect the public. Unfortunately, no state or organization has helped us so far.”

Çol Beg added: “Six medical teams are checking the tents in the evening. Each team consists of medical personnel specialized in internal diseases, heart, gynaecology and children. Sick people are being treated in ambulances.”

The Autonomous Administration of the Euphrates Region has set up six tents in Kobanê to provide health services after the earthquake in the region. The earthquake injured three people in Kobanê and 57 people in North and East Syria.

KESK: The state was completely absent from the beginning of this catastrophe

ANF | MARAS | 10 FEBRUARY 2023

Providing information about the situation in Pazarcik (Bazarcix) in Maraş, KESK co-chair Mehmet Bozgeyik said: “There are still people under the rubble. No intervention was made. They are waiting for the next building to be demolished. Nearly 80 hours have passed and families are waiting for a miracle. The same happened in Hatay, Malatya and Adıyaman: the state and AFAD intervened insufficiently and late.”

Bozgeyik stated that they have started working on 8 February but faced obstacles in sending the teams of democratic mass organizations, trade unions, professional organizations and political parties to the area.

Bozgeyik continued: “From now on, it is necessary to take very intensive measures, especially in terms of health, food, shelter and hygiene, but there is no Red Crescent in sight. I also look at Islahiye, Nurdağı, Narlı and Pazarcık. There is not one Red Crescent tent, no soup kitchen. The soup kitchens have been set up by the municipalities in the cemevis thanks to Alevi associations and the unions.”

Discrimination is made

Bozgeyik said: “There is a huge disaster, but we are again faced with the discriminatory policies of the state. We learned from the people that although many villages were destroyed, especially in Narlı, the tents were distributed in a discriminatory way. Not enough tents and necessities were sent by the state, especially to Alevi and Kurdish villages.”

Instead of a state of emergency, the state should have declared a disaster area

Bozgeyik continued: “A state of emergency has been declared. In fact, the government should have declared a disaster area. The state started to use the state of emergency with bad intent. Social media bans and restrictions were imposed. There is pressure on the press. The state of emergency should be abandoned. What we saw is that the state collapsed. After all, Turkey is an earthquake zone. It is not the first time we have experienced an earthquake. We have faced hundreds of earthquakes in the history of the Republic. The Van earthquake, the Marmara earthquake, the Bingol earthquake, the last Izmir earthquake.

We hope that from now on, they will at least carry out the next process in a correct and democratic way, taking into account the warnings of our democratic mass organizations.”

Ferhat Pala: We need more things for children in Pazarcik

ANF | 10 FEBRUARY 2023

Ferhat Pala, one of the HDP Van youth council members involved in helping the earthquake victims in Pazarcik, said that many buildings were destroyed and the people were left unattended. Pala added: “The situation is deplorable. We are trying to deliver the aid that is available from here to the peoples and villages.”

The young HDP activist, said that they need heating tools, diapers, baby food and blankets, and added that the incoming aid is not enough for people.

Pala said: “I am specifically addressing our people here. As soon as they can, they should send food, biscuits, especially things for children. Since it is winter and the weather is cold, there are also needs such as blankets, tents and stoves.”

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Death toll from earthquakes rises to 3,383 in Syria

ANF | 10 FEBRUARY 2023

The death toll and the number of injured keeps increasing on the fifth day after the earthquakes that devastated North Kurdistan and Syria on Monday.

So far, 2,300 people have lost their lives and 2,950 more people have been injured in the regions occupied by the Turkish state and its mercenaries. It is reported that the death toll is very likely to increase, since many people are still trapped under the rubble.

The Minister of Health of the Damascus government, Dr. Hesên Muhammed El Habash, reported that 1,347 people lost their lives and 2,295 people were injured as of yesterday. The figures reported only cover the areas controlled by the Damascus government.

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HDP MP Bülbül in Adıyaman: Failure to reach trapped people on time led to a great tragedy

ANF | ADIYAMAN | 10 FEBRUARY 2023

Speaking to ANF in Adıyaman, one of the areas most affected by the earthquake in Turkey, HDP (Peoples' Democratic Party) MP Kemal Bülbül said: “In Adıyaman there are thousands of rubble and ruins. Under

the rubble are countless human lives. Unfortunately, these people were not reached in time and therefore a great tragedy occurred. Even now, there are reports that sounds can be heard from under the rubble, which is very difficult at this time. We try to direct different teams there. From the beginning, there has been no help from the governor, the disaster management agency AFAD, the municipality or any other government agency in terms of material and moral support or removal of the debris. Moreover, not only has there been no help, but also the media is almost ridiculously giving the impression that everything is going smoothly, and that the government is successful in this regard.”

People feel insecure and abandoned

Bülbül pointed out that the rubble has still not been cleared and that most people have lost their lives because of the delay in the recovery work: “There are still corpses under the rubble. The second problem is hunger, the third is thirst, the fourth is communication and the fifth is the lack of a method to make people feel that they are not left alone. Therefore, society feels extremely insecure and abandoned. What should people do who have lost their relatives, children and parents? Should they surrender to the pain, or should they protest? Gradually, the situation comes to a point of severe mental breakdown. During our visit to the hospital in Adiyaman today, the doctors there explained that most of the earthquake victims had lost organs and limbs. Some had to have their arms amputated. The main reason for this, they said, was the delay in search and rescue. The most affected districts are Gölbaşı, Besni and Çelikhan. These are the places that are on the fault line. The villages have not been reached yet, even the district towns have not been reached properly. No help has reached there. As HDP, we met with the mass democratic organisations here as soon as we arrived and formed a coordination and crisis team.”

No stable buildings left

Bülbül said that he was in Mardin at the time of the earthquake and people from Maraş and Adiyaman told him about it in great panic. “We immediately set off from Mardin to Adiyaman and stopped in Kahta on the way. Six buildings in Kahta had collapsed. We visited the hospital around eight in the morning. In the emergency room, we were told of 17 dead bodies. Then we came to Adiyaman and the scenario was one of tragedy. There are no stable buildings left. The remaining buildings are badly damaged and unusable.”

An even greater tragedy

Speaking about the crisis team that was immediately set up, Bülbül stated: “The crisis team consists of the HDP and democratic mass organisations. These organisations were very well organised. We set up two collection points, one at the Cemevi (Alevi place of worship) in Yenimahalle and the other at the Hisar Wedding Hall in the Kayalik neighborhood. This is where we send the arriving trucks with relief goods. From these points, the goods were distributed. Since yesterday, the Çınar Municipality has been there and has set up a kitchen in the courtyard of the Cemevi. Since yesterday evening, we have been able to eat something warm for the first time. Food, clothes, blankets and similar things were distributed from the trucks. The most urgent needs at the moment are generators, tents, construction machinery and cranes to be able to lift the rubble. As Kurdish people, we have experienced great tragedies and massacres, but this is an even greater tragedy.”

Bodies wrapped in blankets buried in mass graves in Adiyaman

ANF | 10 FEBRUARY 2023

Adiyaman is one of the cities most affected by the two devastating earthquakes on Monday. Images obtained by Mesopotamia News Agency (MA) show victims buried in mass.

A digger driver, who went to the city voluntarily from Silopi district of Sirnak released two videos showing a cemetery where dead bodies were buried. The first video shows 10 bodies wrapped in blankets, placed side by side, in the graves dug by a digger.

The second video shows many graves covered by earth. It is seen that the graves are marked only by stones and numbers.

Buried with clothes

The digger driver who provided the videos said: “We came here as a group of 7 people the day before. We are here to work as digger drivers. There is nobody in charge of the machines here. Neither AFAD (Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency) nor the gendarmerie are present here. We've been burying bodies since the day before. We are mentally down. I won't be able to bear it any longer. They pull bodies from the rubble, wrap them in blankets with their clothes and bury them. There is no one left alive here. They have all died. No one knows who was removed or who was buried.”

Afad's statement

In a previous statement, the state-run AFAD said that the relevant governorships and institutions-organizations were instructed by a Ministry of Interior notice issued on February 7 to maintain uniformity during identification and burial services. Therefore, bodies are buried after their DNA, fingerprint sample and photographs are taken following a 24-hour waiting period.

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Turkey blocks aid delivery to earthquake survivors in northwest Syria

ANF | 10 FEBRUARY 2023

30 fuel tankers arranged by the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria to be delivered to the earthquake survivors living in the areas occupied by the Turkish state have been blocked at the Umm al-Julud border crossing between Manbij and Jarablus since yesterday.

Despite the repeated calls by the Autonomous Administration, the Turkish state does not allow humanitarian aid to be delivered to the regions in question.

Ciwan Mela İbrahim, Co-Chair of the Autonomous Administration Press Office and a member of the crisis desk, told ANHA: “We are still waiting at the Umm al-Julud. So far, no one has come to receive the aid we are trying to deliver.”

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MP İpekyüz: There is a very urgent need for tents and heating in Adiyaman

ANF | ADIYAMAN | 10 FEBRUARY 2023

After two major earthquakes in Maraş, the situation in Adiyaman province is gradually getting worse. HDP deputy Necdet İpekyüz, a member of the HDP aid teams, told ANF that the city has been destroyed completely, insisting that survivors desperately need more tents.

İpekyüz said: “The problems in Adiyaman are increasing. First of all, there is still no organization and coordination. People are trying to meet their daily needs in great confusion. Because there are no officials who could take care of the problems. Mostly, voluntary initiatives are helping people. They seek shelter despairingly. The death toll is already too high in Adiyaman. It’s now a miracle to pull a survivor out of the rubble. People are looking for equipment to bury their dead relatives.

The city has collapsed. It turns into a ghost city at night because there is no electricity. Under freezing temperatures, people seek shelter in their cars. Heating is a huge problem as there is no electricity or natural gas. No hot meal.”

‘Tents, heating and portable toilet-bath needed’

İpekyüz called for more tents to be delivered to Adiyaman, as she underlined the inefficiency of state-appointed municipalities.

“We see once again how state-appointed municipalities have failed to provide public services. HDP’s municipalities in Silopi and Çınar, where no trustees have been appointed, opened two kitchens. They provide services to the public in an organized manner.

I would like to make an announcement through your news agency regarding the aid received: It is better not to send second-hand clothes anymore. The issue of bread should only be dealt with by crisis centres. No need to send drinking water. We shouldn’t send help without coordination. Central coordination should be contacted. The most urgently needed stuff: preparation of tents, containers and parcels in a proper manner. Also, cleaning supplies and food. In addition, it is necessary to urgently send detergent, soap, and women’s hygiene products. The biggest problem, I repeat, is that we need more tents. We also need stoves. And of course, another biggest problem is mobile toilets and bathrooms.”

‘Epidemics may erupt’

“People are still dealing with the debris and damaged buildings. There are threats to the health of those who were affected by the earthquakes and who were rescued from the debris. It is necessary to think about those with chronic diseases, pregnant women and children. Moreover, it is necessary to help people who can get sick because of the freezing weather, the disabled, the elderly, the homeless and those who are left alone.

Since the debris is not removed, shelters are not built, and hygiene is not provided, the city is now turning into a dumping ground. The wreckage should be removed, and streets be cleaned with outside support because the local government has collapsed. If these are not removed, epidemics may erupt.

Despite all this, the only thing that keeps people surviving is the culture of solidarity. There is significant support from Batman, Hakkari, Van and Doğubeyazıt provinces. However, it is very important that they are organized well.”



People of Elbistan call for help: “Get our dead out of the rubble!”

ANF | MARAS | 10 FEBRUARY 2023

The search and rescue efforts in the Elbistan district of Maraş are progressing very slowly. Far too few forces are active, and people have neither tents nor any other supplies. People are waiting in front of the rubble for news of their relatives. Many have lost hope. They demand that at least the dead finally be taken out of the rubble. People have been living outside since Monday at an average of minus 15 degrees. So far, they have received neither containers nor tents. Therefore, the inhabitants of the district are trying to save themselves from freezing to death by lighting fires.

“We’re freezing to death!”

Meral Döner herself was trapped and she was able to rescue her children from the rubble of their collapsed house. Speaking to the Mezopotamya news agency (MA), Döner said, “Is it something impossible if we ask for at least a scrap of cloth?” I have been struggling to survive in the open with my children since Monday. We are in a terrible situation. Neither AFAD [state disaster management agency] nor the Red Crescent have come yet. We have not received tents or medicine. We are freezing to death. The state does not want to see us and is silent. The women living here are in a terrible situation. My child has a fever, but I cannot find any medicine. My house was destroyed. I pulled my four children out of the rubble with great difficulty, and now I have nowhere to go. There is not even a tent or a piece of cloth for us to sleep in. Volunteers from all over are sending food, but that is not enough. We want a tent or at least a piece of cloth. What are we supposed to do when the state doesn’t even offer us that?”

“There are people under the rubble”

Neriman Yüksek, who was also buried under the ruins of her house, demanded that at least the dead finally be taken out of the rubble, saying: “We are in a very difficult situation. We don’t want food. We want someone to take care of us. Our family members are still under the rubble, they are lying there, and we are waiting helplessly. There are people under the rubble, but nobody cares. We are told that no more sounds are coming from the building, and then they don’t care. We are in a very difficult situation. Listen to us. We want our relatives to be taken out of the rubble, and this is not a big request. Get our dead out of there. On TV they stand and complain that looting is going on, but the people are down and thirsty. There are only volunteers here, the state is not there. Yesterday, when an ambulance came, I asked where it came from, and they said it was a volunteer team. We haven’t even seen the state yet.”

“The state should at least think of the victims for once”

Speaking of discrimination against the people of Elbistan, another resident, Mehmet Şeker, said: “My house collapsed on me, but no one takes care of us. We are outside from morning to night, 24 hours a day, and we warm ourselves by the fire. We have come out from under the rubble, we are not dead yet, but we are going to die of cold here. Help is coming from everywhere, but it is not enough. If there is law and justice, our needs for protection must be met. We are suffering, enough is enough! They have sent all the big units to other places and left us to die. There are so many collapsed buildings, but no search and rescue units are coming to get people out. What is our crime? We are in a miserable situation. They must finally end our suffering. The state must now take care of the victims. The state should at least think about us victims for once.”

“We need tents so that we don't freeze to death”

Ali Yılmaz, who has been staying outdoors since the day of the earthquake, said: “Everyone sees what we are going through in Elbistan. We are a family of ten and we are staying in the open. We have no place to go. No one asks about our situation. Our neighbourhood was destroyed, we lost our houses, but nobody asks about our situation. We are victims and we should be helped.”

A woman named Neriman Karcı said, “We are finished, we are all sick. Nobody helps us and we have no shelter. We want a tent, so we don't die, but they won't give us that either.”

“People are dying but nobody is doing anything”

Boran Varlık, who was injured during rescue work, said: “The buildings collapsed in the earthquake. We called for rescue teams, but no one came. While we were trying to rescue someone from the rubble, we got trapped underneath. There was a fire under the rubble. We called the fire brigade, but no one came. We spoke to a trapped child who was under the rubble for three days, but because no one came, he died. Today we recovered his body. People are dying but no one is doing anything. Body parts have been found for two days, but no one knows who they belong to. We are waiting in fear. Our only request is that these people be taken out of the rubble. There are no tents, no state, no explanation.”

Sancar: What turned the earthquake into a human tragedy is what government did and did not do

ANF | ANKARA | 11 FEBRUARY 2023

HDP co-chair Mithat Sancar visited the chief physician of Etlik City Hospital and received information about the condition of the patients coming from the earthquake zone. Making a statement in front of the hospital, Sancar said:

On Friday, we visited Etlik City Hospital and had a meeting with the Chief Physician. We got information from him about the situation. He told us that there were around 800 wounded who had been transferred from the earthquake area to here.

We cannot consider this a natural disaster. Earthquakes are natural events, but it is the governments that turn it into social destruction and human tragedy. It is the attitude of states, what they do and what they do not do. The government is disturbed by those who have said that the destruction is so great and the consequences so heavy. But everyone can see the immensity of this tragedy. The fact that so many buildings collapsed, of course, is related to government policies. Policies that progress on corruption and lack of control. The lives lost are so many, but this is also due to the fact that the emergency response did not take place in the first two, two and a half days. Yes, there are many casualties. The whole country is in sorrow. Our hearts are also aching. Social solidarity is currently the most effective way to heal wounds and reduce suffering. But the government is trying to prevent these solidarity initiatives. This is one of the worst things he can do.”

Our party is on the field

Sancar said: “Yes, there is a series of evils in this disaster. In the absence of state organization, people tried to help each other by reaching out to each other. Perhaps the most important area in which this power is organized is evil. We see that the government and its supporters can quickly organize around evil. Only society and people themselves will build the good. The way to build goodness is through social solidarity. In order for individuals and institutions to carry out this solidarity in the most effective way, coordination is needed. We are doing our best to establish a civil democratic coordination. Like many others, our party is on the field. We are with our people. We contribute to all kinds of work and aid activities. We will organize the good together. We will definitely overcome the organized evil policies and practices of the government with the good-producing dynamism of social solidarity. It is social solidarity that will heal us, reduce this suffering and heal the wounds. Organizing this in the most effective way is one of our most basic duties.”

Mountain villages of Adiyaman cannot be reached

ANF | 11 FEBRUARY 2023

In Adiyaman (Semsûr), one of the cities that suffered the most damage in the earthquake, search and rescue efforts continue, albeit insufficiently, and many mountain villages around the city cannot be reached.

The roads leading to the mountain villages of Celikan, severely hit by heavy snowfall, could not be opened for transportation due to the bad weather. The villages have suffered hugely from the earthquake. A gendarmerie officer in Celikan district said that supplies were thrown to the villages by helicopter, while the Crisis Center established by HDP, DBP and non-governmental organizations received information about some of the villages that have apparently been destroyed.

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Civil Society Solidarity in Armutlu

ANF | 11 FEBRUARY 2023

The earthquake victims were left to their fate in the neighbourhood of Armutlu in the Defne district of Hatay, where the state teams arrived 4 days later.

While civil society organizations rushed to the aid of earthquake victims in Armutlu, state teams started partial debris removal work with insufficient equipment. On the second day of the earthquake, assistance was delivered to the earthquake victims in Armutlu thanks to Civil Society Solidarity initiative, which, two days after the earthquake, established a mobile kitchen and provided people with hot soup, tea, water and aid.

There is a medicine section, a first aid section, distribution as well as mobile vehicles in the tent set up by the organization. Confirmed requests for assistance are responded to immediately.

One of the biggest issues is toilets that were not installed. This, said volunteers, poses a “risk of serious epidemics that may occur in the future. This is a serious shortcoming. We have installed portable toilets since the day we arrived. However, this is not enough. No aid has been provided by the state here.”

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HDP heals wounds in Pazarcik

ANF | 11 FEBRUARY 2023

The HDP and local associations continue the solidarity campaign they started in the Pazarcik (Bazarcix) district of Maraş, the epicenter of the earthquake, at full speed. Many trucks and lorries were sent to the

city from Şirnak, Mardin, Amed, Van, Hakkari, Agir, Istanbul, Konya and many other cities. HDP members, who came to Pazarcik as part of the solidarity campaign, and Amed City Theater, Ma Music, Middle East Cinema Academy Association and many non-governmental organization members deliver the donations to the people.

In addition to the city center, aid is delivered to many rural neighbourhoods. Food and clothes are distributed, in addition to water, bread, baby food, blankets, coats, mattresses and shoes. Volunteers deliver one-on-one aid to citizens. According to the information obtained, more than 30 villages have been reached so far.



Scandal in Osmaniye State Hospital

ANF | 11 FEBRUARY 2023

According to official sources, more than 20,000 people lost their lives in the great earthquake disaster that occurred on 6 February in Kurdistan and parts of Turkey.

The number of people trapped under the debris was 184,000. In Osmaniye, one of the 10 provinces most affected by the earthquake, the dead were left in the corridors. People who were taken to Osmaniye State Hospital with injuries but lost their lives there are left on the floor after being placed in a black bag. Photos taken inside the hospital confirm this. Many dead are left in the hospital garden after being carried on stretchers.



Unnamed source: More than 150,000 people died in the earthquake

ANF | 11 FEBRUARY 2023

Tens of thousands of people lost their lives and hundreds of thousands were injured in the earthquakes that shook Kurdistan and Turkey at 8-hour intervals. The epicenters of the earthquakes were in Pazarcik (7.8 magnitude) and Elbistan (7.7 magnitude), in the province of Maraş.

The earthquake victims have been saying that Turkish state institutions do not provide support and assistance. So much so that some people lost their lives due to hypothermia (decreased body temperature) due to the inadequacies of the Turkish state. According to official statements, there is a terrible inconsistency in the numbers of destroyed buildings and the number of dead and injured. And this inconsistency brings a question to mind: "Is the balance sheet of those who lost their lives hidden?"

AKP-MHP government hides the number of dead

According to the information obtained by an unnamed source from the AKP, the number of people who lost their lives in the earthquake is much higher than the official statements. According to the information provided by the AKP official, the death toll is over 150,000.

Soylu: Remove the debris together with the dead

The same source said that the Turkish Minister of Interior Süleyman Soylu called the provincial and district governorships of the earthquake area and instructed that the debris be removed as soon as possible. When the civil authorities said: “There are still people under the debris. How do we clear them without removing people?”, Soylu allegedly insisted on the instruction to load the debris on trucks and transport it from the earthquake zones. However, it was stated that some of the civil authorities took the work slowly because there could be dead or injured people in the wrecks.



Aid convoys sent by Autonomous Administration to earthquake victims still denied permission to pass

ANF | 11 FEBRUARY 2023

Ciwan Mela İbrahim, co-chair of the Autonomous Administration Press Office and member of the crisis desk, stated that the two humanitarian aid convoys sent by the Autonomous Administration for earthquake victims in northern Syria and Aleppo are still waiting for approval to pass.

One of the convoys is waiting at the Tayihe gate between Manbij-Jarablus and Um Jilud and the other between Manbij and Damascus government areas.

The Autonomous Administration prepared a humanitarian aid convoy of 30 trucks to be sent to earthquake victims in Aleppo and northern Syria on 8 February.

The second convoy of 50 fuel tankers prepared for the earthquake victims in Aleppo has been waiting at the Tayihe gate since Friday.



Afrin refugees in Shehba open their tents to earthquake victims

ANF | SHEHBA | 11 FEBRUARY 2023

Afrin and Shehba Canton Autonomous Administration called on the residents of Aleppo and the region damaged by the earthquake to come to Shehba.

A few days ago, 1,200 families affected by the earthquake in Eşrefiye and Şexmeqsûd were placed in 5 camps (Berxwedan, Serdem, Afrin, Shehba, Veger) in Shehba.

Xelûsi Misto, a member of the Camp Manager Coordination of the Shehba Canton, told ANHA: “After the earthquake, the residents of Eşrefiye and Şexmeqsud in Aleppo moved to Shehba upon the call of the Autonomous Administration.”

According to Misto, more than 1,200 families from Şêxmeqsûd and Eşrefiye have crossed into the region in the last two days. 400 families were settled in Berxwedan Camp in Shehba, 600 families in Serdem Camp and 100 families in Veger Camp.

Misto said that the families coming from Aleppo were welcomed by refugees, and added that they settled in the same tents as the earthquake victims. He also said that camp and commune administrations distribute bread, food, water, beds and other basic necessities to families.

Miso underlined that the limited humanitarian aid was due to the embargo of the Damascus government, and called on it to lift the embargo on Şêxmeqsûd and Eşrefiye and open the roads for humanitarian aid to reach the region.

Misto requested the relevant organizations to help the residents of those neighbourhoods, who are exposed to difficult weather conditions.

More than 750 refugee families from Afrin stay in Serdem Camp, 700 families in Berxwedan Camp, 125 families in Veger Camp in Sherawa district, 108 families in Afrin Camp and 148 families in Shehba Camp.

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Turkey opens border crossing with Armenia after 30 years

ANF | 11 FEBRUARY 2023

To better care for survivors after the earthquake disaster, Turkey has opened a border crossing with Armenia - despite deep enmity with the neighbouring country. According to the press spokesman of the Armenian Foreign Ministry, Vahan Hunanyan, several trucks with humanitarian aid passed the Margara Bridge on Saturday, which leads to the border post in the province of İğdır. The last time this was possible was in

1988 after a quake in the ex-Soviet Republic of Armenia. The land border between Turkey and Armenia has been closed since 1993.

Garo Paylan, an HDP MP of Armenian origin, expressed his delight. “Let's get something good out of this great disaster. Solidarity saves lives!” the politician wrote on Twitter. Earlier, the government in Yerevan sent 27 aid workers to the Turkish earthquake zone to help rescue trapped people. “Regardless of the difficult relations and situation, Armenia has extended a helping hand and declared its readiness to provide humanitarian assistance to both Turkey and Syria,” Foreign Minister Ararat Mirsojan said. The rescue team from Armenia was deployed in the Kurdish province of Adiyaman, which had a high Armenian population until 1915.

Armenia's assistance is significant in several respects given the tensions between Ankara and Yerevan. Around 1.5 million Armenians were victims of a Young Turk genocide that essentially took place between 1915 and 1917. Moreover, Turkey is Azerbaijan's closest political and military ally. Armenia has complained of belligerent aggression on the part of the ex-Soviet republic for decades. Most of the conflict was over the Armenian enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Armenian aid workers are also supporting the search and rescue work in Syria. For centuries, the country has also been home to the Armenian community. Especially during the genocide of 1915, Syria was an important place of protection and refuge for the persecuted minority.

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‘Not the state, but revolutionaries and patriots reach out to earthquake survivors’

ANF | HATAY | 11 FEBRUARY 2023

The Revolutionary Construction and Road Workers Union (Dev Yapı İş) official Osman Ünel spoke to ANF in Antakya district of Hatay, one of the areas worst affected by two devastating earthquakes on February 6.

“We have been here for five days. We took part in search and rescue work during the first two days. We unload the aid trucks delivered here and set up tents,” said Ünel.

“We have run out of feelings, seeing dead bodies all around and people whose lives have been devastated,” Ünel added.

Ünel stated that a few teams of AFAD (Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency) volunteers arrived in Antakya on the third and fourth day after the earthquake, but they lacked equipment and experience. “Apart from them, there was no official team to carry out the work. Revolutionaries and patriots joined the rescue efforts here, making endless efforts to distribute food and water to survivors and to set up tents. Official institutions started coming here only after the third day,” he added.

“Nothing is left of Antakya. There are no stable buildings left, except for a few which are severely damaged. We are of the opinion that the state will depopulate the region, reconstruct it and sell it to others, turning it into a source of profit, as they did in Sur,” Ünal added.



Buldan and Kılıçdaroğlu in Amed: We want to heal the wounds together

ANF | AMED | 11 FEBRUARY 2023

The numbers of dead, injured and homeless following the devastating earthquakes in parts of Turkey and Syria continue to rise. The suffering that has befallen the people in the affected areas is immeasurable. Many have been buried under collapsed houses, many have frozen to death in the cold nights before they could be rescued from the rubble.

And by no means has the dimension of the catastrophe been nearly grasped. On the fifth day after the severe tremors, the situation in Turkey remains chaotic. Those affected complain about the lack of aid and discontent among the population continues to grow. Reports that civilian disaster relief is still being prevented in many places and that the state disaster control is still mainly active in the strongholds of the Islamist ruling party AKP, but too little in the Kurdish and Arab areas, are not abating. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, meanwhile, continues to rail against “lies and provocation”, threatens survivors who loot shops out of necessity because there is no other help available, and plays party politics.

It is a good sign that the opposition parties are putting aside all political differences. In the face of disaster, they are united by unprecedented solidarity. This was demonstrated by Pervin Buldan and Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, the leaders of the HDP and CHP, on Saturday in the province of Amed (tr. Diyarbakir). Accompanied by numerous members of their parties, both politicians visited the area to get an idea of the situation, talked to survivors and met with professional associations and civil society organisations.

“I firmly believe that together we will overcome this disaster and together we will heal the wounds,” Kılıçdaroğlu said during a visit to downtown Amed. The delegations gathered in front of the ruins of an eight-storey apartment building from which a 55-year-old woman was rescued from the rubble in the morning after 122 hours of trepidation. The CHP politician thanked all the rescue teams, AFAD, NGOs and civilian volunteers involved in the recovery and care of trapped people in the earthquake zone, but criticised the lack of quick and coordinated help. In addition, Kılıçdaroğlu pointed to blatant state failure. He stated that all experts agree that the damage caused by the devastating earthquake could have been limited. But engineers did not follow the regulations on earthquake-proof construction and building authorities did not fulfill their duty of inspection, he said.

“The state has acted wrongly and even approved illegal construction,” said Pervin Buldan. The HDP co-chair addressed the trustee administration in Amed and other municipalities formerly governed by her party, which in fact makes decent living conditions impossible. “We could see in all towns administered by so-called trustees that projects for earthquake-proof retrofitting of old buildings were not continued and

risk analyses as well as concretely elaborated emergency plans remained completely disregarded. This would not have had to be the case if our elected mayors were sitting in city halls instead of in jail,” said Buldan.

“Let us forget all political differences for the moment. Times of crisis are also times of solidarity, which heals and unites,” was Kılıçdaroğlu's final word. To heal the wounds of the earthquake and prepare Turkey for possible future earthquakes, he said, everyone must lend a hand and work together shoulder to shoulder. “We can achieve a lot if we stick together and stand by each other,” he said.

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Türk: There is no such thing as a state today

ANF | ADIYAMAN | 12 FEBRUARY 2023

Kurdish politician Ahmet Türk, who lost 17 of his relatives in Adiyaman (Semsûr), one of the cities that suffered the most severe damage from the earthquake that occurred on 6 February, visited the area together with the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) MPs Rıdvan Turan, Feleknas Uca and Sait Dede. Listening to the citizens, the delegation went to the Crisis Coordination Center set up by the Democratic Regions Party (DBP) and civil society organizations.

‘There is no such thing as a state’

Making a statement at the Crisis Coordination Center, Ahmet Türk said: “As all the people I met said, there is no such thing as a state. A State of Emergency has been declared, and this prevents the aid of the people and non-governmental organizations from reaching the victims. This has been done to show that AFAD is taking care of it. They are trying to show efficiency, but I just received information that even the tents that arrived from civil society organizations were confiscated and sent to AFAD. They are trying to make it look like AFAD brought these tents. They are trying to hide from society where the help is coming from. However, we all see this truth. The people know it.”

‘People have organized themselves’

Türk expressed its condolences to people and said: “Our people have been very sensitive to this tragedy. We are watching and seeing it everywhere. People from Kızıltepe, Nusaybin, Cizre, Silopi, Diyarbakır, and the whole region, organized solidarity by themselves.”

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Calgary Shepard deputy calls on Canadian people to help earthquake victims

ANF | 12 FEBRUARY 2023

Tom Kmiec, a deputy from the Conservative Party, Alberta Province, Calgary City, spoke about the earthquake in the Canadian Parliament.

Kmiec said that vital emergency information for victims of the earthquake has been given in seven languages except Kurdish, which is the language most people in affected areas speak. He added that Heyva Sor is an excellent option for people in Canada who want to send help to the victims of the earthquake.



Risk of epidemic diseases increases in Hatay

ANF | HATAY | 12 FEBRUARY 2023

Since the earthquake occurred in Hatay, the lack of electricity and water has created very unhealthy conditions in the city that has turned into debris.

Health workers who came to the city voluntarily said that the risk of epidemic diseases such as rabies increased. The bodies of the victims left on the streets and the fact that the toilet problem was still not resolved further doubled the risk. Volunteers said that there is enough medicine in the city, but added that the symptoms of the disease increased as a result of the uncoordinated action of the state.

The state's abandonment of the population instead of coordinating aid led to terrible images in the city. Foods with worms and the bodies of dead animals began to multiply in the streets.

Socialists and people are trying to organize aid through their own means. However, irregular distribution began to increase, especially after the political Islamist associations supported by the government came to the city.



Heyva Sor a Kurd calls for “humanitarian corridors” to deliver aid to earthquake victims

ANF | 12 FEBRUARY 2023

The death toll in the Turkish-Syrian border area continues to rise. More than 28,000 people in both countries lost their lives, at least 3,574 of them in Syria. There is still a lack of everything: emergency services, doctors, medication, drinking water and food. In addition, the rescue work is made more difficult by the lack of equipment and winter weather. In addition, access to the Syrian disaster area is extremely difficult due to the political situation. Northern and north-western regions are particularly affected, meaning people living in many places were already in ruins. The Kurdish Red Crescent (Heyva Sor a Kurd) is pushing for the establishment of security corridors for humanitarian aid deliveries.

The Damascus regime is currently blocking emergency aid from the organization based in the north-east of the country with vital supplies for those affected by the earthquake in the Aleppo and Shehba areas. It is required that at least half of the funds be given to the regime - including an ambulance. Otherwise, no transit permit will be granted.

Political calculations are behind this: the ruler Bashar al-Assad’s regime has been using aid deliveries for years to assert its own interests. All other aid organizations active in the areas of the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES) are also affected by the measure.

Appeal to the UN and other aid organizations

“For this very reason, safe corridors are needed to bring humanitarian aid to the earthquake areas in the north of the country,” explained Heyva Sor a Kurd in a statement. Countless people in Aleppo, Shehba and other places are desperately waiting for help and are particularly dependent on medical care. In an urgent appeal to the United Nations and other humanitarian agencies, the Kurdish Red Crescent Organization calls for immediate action.

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HDP visits earthquake victims in Antep: No aid reached the people from Rojava

ANF | ANTEP | 12 FEBRUARY 2023

People’s Democratic Party (HDP) MPs Nuran İmir, Filiz Kerestecioğlu and Muazzes Orhan and other party members visited earthquake victims who are staying in tents in Akdere, Baybahçe and Güzel Vadi neighbourhoods of Antep city.

Many survivors stated that they were having difficulty accessing tents, blankets and heaters. Noting that no one except HDP visited them, one of the citizens said that the state officials did not visit them for two days when they faced starvation and lack of water, adding that other citizens helped them during that period.

Remarking that the state has not delivered any aid to anyone in the region, MP Nuran İmir said, “People from Rojava set up this tent by their own means. Around one hundred people try to live in this small tent. This is a scandal. These people still hope for those trapped under debris to be rescued. We cannot accept these people being left to their fate, facing cold weather. We, as the HDP, are ready to help them and meet all their needs.”

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Basque actress calls for donations for earthquake victims through Heyva Sor

ANF | 12 FEBRUARY 2023

Iztia Ituño, the Basque actress known worldwide as Lisboa from the series *La Casa de Papel*, sent a solidarity video calling for donations for the victims of Monday’s devastating earthquakes in North Kurdistan, Turkey and Syria.

In a video message calling for support for the people of Turkey, Kurdistan and Syria, the Basque actress says:

“I am sending you this message from the comfort of my house to ask you for help. As you know, there has been an earthquake in Turkey, Kurdistan, and Syria. There is help going, but not enough. Especially, there is no help arriving in certain areas. There is one organization, Heyva Sor (Kurdish Red Crescent), which is operating in these areas where most help is needed. Therefore, I ask you to send your contribution and help to this organization.”

Donations to Heyva Sor can be made https://www.paypal.com/donate/?hosted_button_id=ST5BW/WFB7FPGS

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Regime forces ask for half of humanitarian assistance by AANES and Heyva Sor

ANF | 12 FEBRUARY 2023

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) reported that regime forces asked to take over half of the humanitarian aid supplies, which are provided by the Kurdish Red Crescent and the Autonomous Administration to earthquake-affected areas in Aleppo, and the access of fuel trucks in the beginning in return for allowing the convoy to cross into Aleppo. The convoy was blocked at Al-Tayeh crossing in Manbij countryside for over 24 hours.

According to SOHR, regime forces allowed the entry of fuel yesterday evening but did not permit it to cross into disaster-stricken areas in Aleppo.

It is worth noting that civil activists launched a donation campaign on social media in Heseke city to support disaster-stricken areas across Syria. The campaign established four posts in Heseke, collecting financial donations from the residents.

Also, civil activists, with the participation of all associations and organisations operating in Raqqa, launched a campaign sponsored by the Autonomous Administration to collect material and financial donations for providing medical and financial support for the earthquake-affected people. Moreover, residents in the eastern countryside of Deir ez-Zor started to collect material and financial donations to send them to disaster-stricken areas.

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Human Rights Violations

International call for Turkey to uphold rights and freedoms during earthquake response

ANF | 11 FEBRUARY 2023

The International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and allied organisations express their deepest solidarity with those affected and call on the authorities to ensure full respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the aftermath of the earthquake, and to repeal the state of emergency rule while resorting to proportionate measures available under existing laws for emergency response that are fully compliant with international standards.

The statement released by FIDH and its organisations on Saturday includes the following:

“On 6 February 2023, two earthquakes centred in Kahramanmaraş struck Turkey and Syria, killing and injuring thousands of people and destroying entire villages and cities, leaving survivors displaced and without shelter under harsh winter conditions. At the time of publication, official sources put the number of deaths at 20,000, which is expected to rise. Thousands, including members and executives of the Human Rights Association (IHD), are still trapped under the wreck, and awaiting rescue amidst poor coordination and lack of equipment, resources, clean drinking water or heating in the affected regions. Our organisations express their deepest condolences, sympathy, and solidarity to everyone affected by the earthquake and remain in contact with human rights defenders and civil society in the region to identify needs and mobilise support.

Following the catastrophe, on 7 February 2023, President Erdoğan declared a state of emergency in the ten cities affected by the earthquake until May 7, 2023, which came into force on 8 February 2023. The emergency rule was enacted despite the various powers granted to the executive by other legislation in Turkey concerning disaster response, such as the Law No. 7269 on Precautions to be Taken due to Disaster Affecting Public Life and Assistance to be Provided, and the broad, unchecked authority that the presidential system confers upon the president. The state of emergency appears therefore unnecessary and disproportionate in terms of its length to emergency response, and the additional powers it grants to the president carry the risk of weaponisation against civil society and anyone critical of the government’s crisis management, as well as disruption of humanitarian aid and human rights work in affected regions by civil society.

The state of emergency rule grants the executive the authority to further limit movement and communication in the cities affected by the earthquake, with criminal provisions of the State of Emergency Law No. 2935 dated 1983 foreseeing prison terms for those “spreading or broadcasting fake, exaggerated rumours and news with special intent to cause public panic and turmoil”. When announcing the state of emergency, President Erdoğan also referenced “fake news and distortions”, saying that “Our prosecutors are identifying those resorting to social chaos through inhumane methods and are swiftly undertaking necessary procedures.”

Reports of abusive practices curtailing freedom of speech and media freedom that go beyond any reasonable response to the earthquake are already surfacing. On the day of the earthquake, the Radio and Television Supreme Council President Ebubekir Şahin tweeted that “no media institution has the right to make demoralising broadcasts” and that “[the Council] cannot ignore institutions that have manipulative broadcasts in bad faith.” The following day, Evrensel correspondent Volkan Pekal was detained in Adana for “recording without a permission” due to an alleged verbal instruction to ban footage by the governor, and later released. The same day, police prevented journalists in Diyarbakır from reporting on rescue efforts on the grounds that a state of emergency was declared, and also threatened to detain earthquake survivors who were speaking to journalists. On February 7, two journalists, Merdan Yanardağ and Enver Aysever, as well as a political scientist, Özgün Emre Koç, faced criminal investigations for inciting hatred and hostility among the public due to criticism of the government’s earthquake response, with Koç detained and later released.

On 8 February 2023, Mesopotamia Agency correspondent Mahmut Altıntaş and Jinnews correspondent Sema Çağlak were detained in Urfa while taking photographs of destroyed buildings on the grounds that

they do not have press cards given by the Communication Presidency and later released. Later the same day, Mesopotamia Agency correspondent Mehmet Güleş and a search and rescue volunteer he was interviewing were both detained in Diyarbakır after the volunteer criticised insufficient state response to the earthquake. They were both released the next day under judicial control and charged with publicly spreading misleading information under the disinformation law, even though the interview was not published. The Security General Directorate announced on February 9 that 274 people posting “provocative messages on social media that aim to create fear and panic among citizens” were identified, 31 people were detained and nine were arrested. Meanwhile, the government restricted access to Twitter, used widely to coordinate rescue and aid, on February 8 afternoon and lifted the restriction early February 9 after a meeting with Twitter executives where the government made demands concerning “combatting disinformation”. As Twitter was down, media reported that three prisoners were killed on February 7 in the T-Type Prison in earthquake-hit Hatay following a violently-suppressed riot that erupted because prisoners’ demands for transfer to a safe location and communication with their families were not met. The Directorate General of Prisons and Detention Houses of the Ministry of Justice confirmed the killing of three prisoners the next day, stating there had been attempted escapes in both Hatay and the Maraş Türkoğlu No. 1 L Type Prison, with no deaths reported in Maraş. Despite lack of official confirmation, the Human Rights Association documented reports of injuries in Malatya prisons, where prisoners are not allowed communication with their families.

The state of emergency is also impacting rescue efforts and humanitarian aid, as the government has politicised cooperation with local stakeholders despite insufficient centralised efforts. Humanitarian aid by independent civil society organisations, professional organisations, citizens’ initiatives and district mayorships run by the opposition Peoples’ Democratic Party (HDP) and Republican People’s Party (CHP) were prevented from reaching affected areas by governors under the orders of the central government.

The decision takes place against the backdrop of a declining rule of law, shrinking civic space and track record of abuse of emergency legislation in 2016-2018, leading to widespread violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms and harassment against human rights defenders, journalists and dissidents. Several restrictive policies and practices were made permanent after the state of emergency was lifted in 2018. The crackdown on civil society intensified after the adoption of the Law No. 7262 in 2020, which has been used to unlawfully target civil society organisations and, most recently, of the “disinformation law” in October 2022, introducing a prison term for the offense of “publicly spreading misleading information”. Freedom of speech and media freedom organisations have condemned the law, the vagueness of which paves the way for arbitrariness and weaponisation against any government critic.

Moreover, the state of emergency is announced in the period leading up to parliamentary and presidential elections in Turkey unofficially announced to take place on May 14, 2023. The 2018 parliamentary and presidential elections in Turkey held under the country-wide state of emergency rule were marked with the silencing of opposition candidates and independent media, restricting voters and the opposition from fully exercising their right to participate in public affairs and affecting citizens’ right to free and fair elections.

Our organisations urge the authorities in Turkey to repeal the state of emergency rule, to resort to powers conferred under existing legislation designed specifically for disaster response and to ensure that any measure taken in this context is strictly necessary and proportionate to address the current crisis and fully compliant with Turkey’s international human rights obligations. We further call upon the international

community to closely monitor the developments in Turkey and the impact these measures might have on human rights and fundamental freedoms, particularly in the context of the upcoming elections.”



Who Are We?

The International Initiative “Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan—Peace in Kurdistan” was founded in March 1999, a month after Öcalan’s abduction from Kenya and his imprisonment by Turkey. Since its initial foundation, the International Initiative struggled for Abdullah Öcalan’s release from prison so that he can play his rightful role in the establishment of a just peace between the Turkish state and Kurdistan’s Workers Party (PKK). The International Initiative also aimed at contributing to the repairing of the ties between the Kurdish and Turkish peoples, as well as all other peoples of the Middle Eastern regions.

In order to achieve its aims, the International Initiative followed several related paths. Influencing international and national audiences through international campaigns to interfere with Turkish state’s policies towards Abdullah Öcalan has been one of these paths. A second area of work the International Initiative committed itself is the dissemination of Öcalan’s views through art, publications and conferences. Finally, the International Initiative has also been active in raising awareness for Öcalan’s conditions and the human rights violations he faces through reports, fact-finding delegations and lobbying.

Campaigns

The International Initiative organizes signature campaigns to influence the policies towards Öcalan. One such campaign which was launched in 2012 by one thousand preliminary signatories including Gerry Adams, Prof. Antonio Negri, Prof. Immanuel Wallerstein, Prof. Achin Vanaik, and other intellectuals, politicians, MPs, and NGOs from South America, Europe, Asia, Russia, and the Middle East. The campaign reached 10,328,623 signatures and may be the biggest signature campaign for the freedom of a political prisoner that the world has ever seen. It significantly challenged the isolation that was enforced on Öcalan and possibly paved the ways for the peace talks that the Turkish state and Öcalan led between 2013 and 2015.

The International Initiative also organizes video campaigns that educate the public on Öcalan’s life-story, his prison conditions and the demands for his freedom.

Publications

The International Initiative translates, edits and publishes books written by Öcalan in different languages including in English, German, French, Spanish and Arabic.

It compiles brochures from his works on specific topics, such as democratic confederalism or women’s freedom.

It edits books on Öcalan that discuss his main ideas.

The International Initiative also publishes regular reports on Öcalan’s prison conditions and his isolation.

Conferences

The International Initiative organizes biannual conferences and invites scholars, activists, students and politicians to discuss Öcalan’s ideas in order to initiate a conversation between different Movements around the world.

Delegations

Every year on February 15th, which is the date of the abduction of Abdullah Öcalan, the International Initiative organizes a group of internationally acclaimed people to take a trip to Turkey for a fact finding mission and publicizes their findings.

Lobbying

The International Initiative lobbies in the European Council, CPT and other international organizations against the human rights violations against Abdullah Öcalan and his total isolation in İmralı prison.

Art for Öcalan

This campaign aims to express the relationship between Abdullah Öcalan, Kurdish people, freedom and women’s freedom and to educate the wider public on the past and

present of the Kurdish people. The International Initiative has already collected art from Brazil, South Africa, USA, South America, Italy, Germany as well as Kurds from differ-

ent parts of Kurdistan. These works have been printed in postcards, t-shirts and canvas and made available for solidarity sale.

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