



Students in the courtyard of the Hay El-Kherbe all-girls school as classes resumed post-earthquakes. 1 March 2023. Photo: OCHA/Ali Haj Suleiman

Key figures in north-west Syria

4,500+

Deaths due to earthquakes

8,700+

Injuries due to earthquakes

10,600+

Partially or fully damaged buildings

53,100+

Suspected cholera cases

Highlights

- More than 4,500 deaths and 8,700 injuries have been reported in north-west Syria, as of 6 March, since an earthquake of 7.7 magnitude struck Türkiye on 6 February.
- Thousands of people became homeless as more than 10,600 buildings have been completely or partially destroyed in north-west Syria.
- On 20 February, the Syria Cross-border Humanitarian Fund (SCHF) launched the first phase of its Reserve Allocation, valued at \$30 million, to address immediate life-saving needs.
- As of 7 March, a total of 617 trucks loaded with aid provided by seven UN agencies have so far crossed to north-west Syria since the earthquakes.
- Multi-purpose cash, amounting to \$6 million, has been distributed to over 190,000 people in need in north-west Syria as of 6 March.

One month post-earthquakes

One month has passed since a 7.7 magnitude earthquake struck Türkiye and Syria in the early hours of 6

February, followed by almost 14,000 aftershocks. Earthquake survivors are continuing to grapple with the loss of their homes and loved ones in both countries. More than 4,500 deaths and 8,700 injuries have been recorded in north-west Syria alone, compounding what already is a dire humanitarian situation.

For many Syrians, this March also marks their 12th year of living with conflict and displacement. In 2023, Syria remains the world's largest internal displacement crisis. Some 1.9 million people live in some 1,430 camps or self-settled sites in the north-west, the majority of whom are women and children. The earthquakes have caused new internal displacement movements and at least 86,000 people were reportedly newly displaced since 6 February. More than half of them are children.

In search for safety and normalcy

Um Mohammed and her five children are among the earthquake survivors who now live in one of the 77 reception centers in north-west Syria. Their house in Afrin city has fully collapsed, rendering the family homeless and foodless on the streets for two days. She recalled seeing her children turning “blue” from the freezing temperatures in the absence of a shelter.

“We are used to not having food for some days before this disaster. The difference is that we felt safe at home,” shared Um Mohammed.



Um Mohammed and her children in a reception center in Afrin shared with other families. March 2023. Photo: HFOs.

While the living situation in the reception center is “better than the streets,” the mental health toll continued to take visible effects on her children. For instance, her 13-year-old daughter has not spoken or taken a shower for ten days due to the shock.

Um Mohammed looked at her daughter and asked: “What can I do? There is no solution. All can do is stay with my kids.”

Outside of camps and reception centers, glimmers of normalcy can also be seen in pockets of districts. Many schools in Idlib for instance have resumed their classrooms but many teachers and students are still recollecting the moment of the disaster.

Maya is a fourth-grade student at an all-girls school in Harim. She returned to the classroom in the last week of February but noted that “things are not the same.”

“Half of my friends are gone and some are still in the hospital,” said Maya. She recounted how they used to sit together in the schoolyard to share stories, eat chips and finish their homework together.



Maya, a 4th-grade student at an all-girl school in Harim, shared that she lost friends to the earthquakes. 1 March 2023. Photo: OCHA/Ali Haj Suleiman

Unlike some other schools in Harim, the Hay El-Kherbe school remains mostly physically intact. Khawla Dalil, the school's principal, noted that some 170 out of 300 students have returned so far but many continue to face anxiety and fears. The school has provided some psychosocial support to students but behind each activity, there is still a sense of "sorrow" lingering in the classroom.

"Two teachers and 20 students were victims of the earthquakes," said Khawla. "The children go out and play but we still feel the pain in their hearts."

Supporting dignified living conditions

While immediate needs are still critical at this time, the humanitarian community is also calling for attention to medium and long-term needs. On 20 February, the [Syria Cross-border Humanitarian Fund \(SCHF\)](#) launched the first phase of its Reserve Allocation, valued at \$30 million, to address immediate life-saving needs. Once this allocation is completed, a second phase, valued at least \$20 million, will be launched to address life-sustaining needs in the medium term.

The continuation of last year's progress on implementing [dignified shelters](#) is critical given that many people are unable to return to their former homes. Over 10,000 buildings have been partially or fully destroyed in north-west Syria. Numerous earthquake survivors are reportedly sharing overcrowded tents, putting them at risk of harsh weather conditions and fire hazards. For instance, on 5 March, a windstorm damaged over 250 tents in Idleb to varying degrees, many of which housed families displaced by the earthquakes. Unlike flimsy tents, which can easily get blown away in storms, dignified shelters have a longer lifespan and offer more privacy and protection to people all year round. By the end of 2022, the humanitarian community has implemented more than 7,200 dignified shelters across north-west Syria.

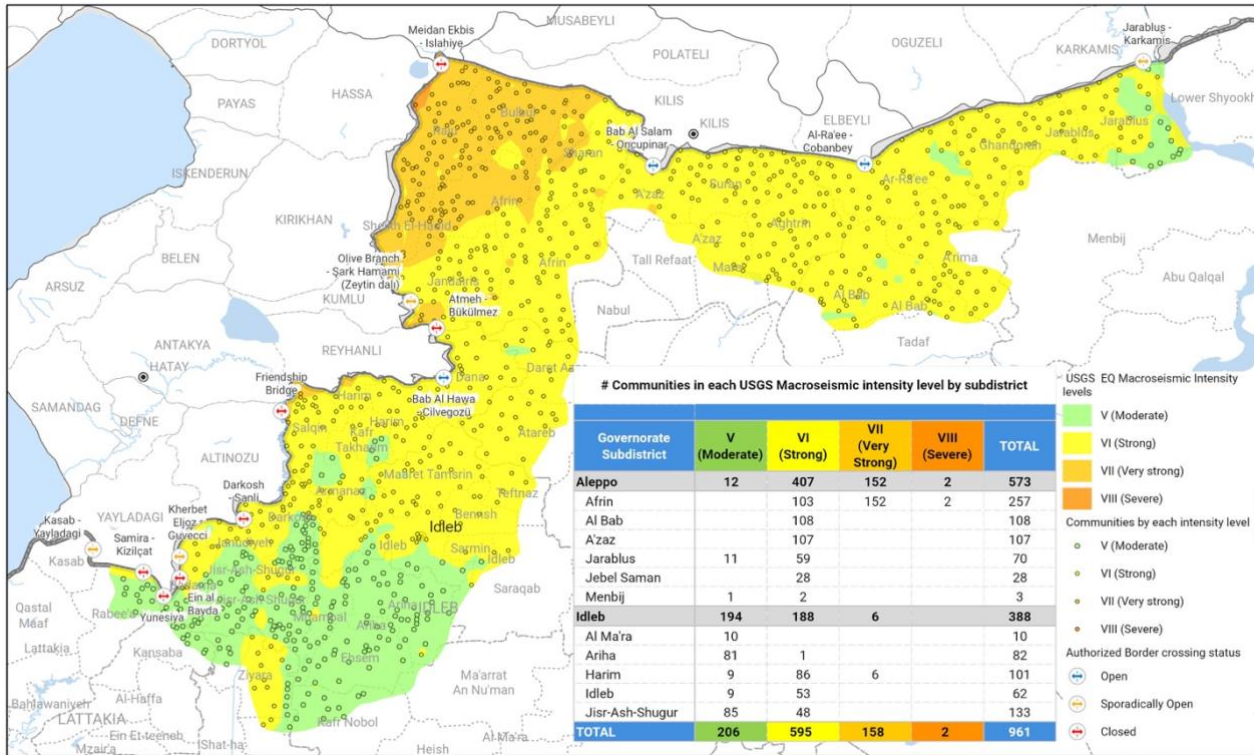


Tents that housed earthquake survivors were damaged by a windstorm in the Ahl al-Khair camp in Jandairis. 6 March 2023. Photo: HFOs

The UN is increasing its presence in north-west Syria with missions occurring on a weekly basis, largely to conduct technical and needs assessments with local partners and affected communities. As of 7 March, 19 UN cross-border missions have been completed since the first interagency visit to Idlib on 14 February. On 6 March, four UN agencies conducted WASH and health assessments in newly established reception centers and collective centers in Jandairis – one of the most affected areas by the earthquakes.

The cross-border aid operation is continuing to scale up and sustain assistance. Since the earthquakes, more than 600 trucks loaded with aid provided by seven UN agencies (FAO, IOM, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNHCR, WFP, WHO) have crossed to north-west Syria using three border-crossings: Bab Al-Hawa, Bab Al-Salam and Al Ra'ee. But cross-border support extends beyond physical aid to program support of essential services and cash assistance. On 7 March, a new [cholera vaccination campaign](#) was launched, led by WHO and UNICEF, targeting 1.7 million Syrians above one year of age. The humanitarian community has also supported more than 190,000 people so far with multi-purpose cash valued at \$6 million in total.

Impact, Needs and Response



Earthquake-affected communities in north-west Syria and border-crossings (as of 15 February 2023)

Impact

- **At least 3 million people** affected by the earthquakes are in the Idleb province.
- **More than 4,500 deaths and more than 8,700 injuries** due to the earthquakes have been reported in north-west Syria, as of 6 March, according to the Health cluster.
- **At least 148 cities and towns** in north-west Syria have been affected by the earthquakes. The districts with the **highest number of deaths and injuries**, as of 6 March, are Harim, Afrin and Jebel Saman. Two-thirds of all injuries were reported in Harim.
- As of 6 March, **more than 1,800 buildings** have been completely destroyed and **more than 8,700 buildings** have been partially destroyed. Some 57 per cent of partial and fully destroyed buildings were reported in Harim and Afrin.

Humanitarian needs

86,000+

New internally displaced people (IDPs)

57%

Of new IDPs are children

280,000+

People in need of shelters and NFIs

55

Damaged health facilities

- **Priority needs: Winterization, shelter and multi-purpose cash support** were cited as the top priority needs, according to a REACH [rapid assessment](#) involving 604 communities.

- **Markets have remained relatively resilient following the earthquakes:** A new [Joint Rapid Assessment of Markets](#) has been released by REACH.
 - Assessed markets across north-west Syria broadly remain open. In the vast majority of assessed communities, vendors reported that either all vendors were operating or only a few shops were closed
 - Sub-districts such as **Harim, Jandarais and Sheikh Al-Hadid**, which were heavily impacted by the earthquakes, reported limited or no availability of basic food items.
- **Internal displacement:** The Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) cluster has reported that at least 86,000 people have been internally displaced in north-west Syria since the 6 February earthquakes. 57 per cent are children.
 - ✓ The top two locations reported with new IDPs are Salqin and Jandairis.
 - ✓ As of 4 March, the CCCM cluster reported that there are 77 reception and collective centers in north-west Syria, 50 of which were newly established post-earthquakes. According to a preliminary analysis, 62 per cent of the new reception centers have inadequate services and will be prioritized for immediate response.
- **Shelter and NFI needs:** The Shelter/Non-Food Item (SNFI) cluster estimated that 280,000 people in north-west Syria are in immediate need of shelter and NFIs support due to the earthquakes.
 - ✓ The most urgent needs are tents and other temporary shelter units, NFI kits, basic and winter clothing, and heating fuel. Adaptation of collective shelters and minor repairs to damaged buildings are also urgent requirements.
 - ✓ The SNFI cluster reported that there has been a clear increase in prices reported for shelter rehabilitation implementation. This must be taken into account in activity planning and when estimating further funding appeals for the earthquake emergency response.
 - ✓ Challenges in procuring items in Türkiye or locally in north-west Syria due to the high needs, inflation and increase in prices are recorded. Furthermore, concerns were raised about potential difficulties to get sandwich panels across the border into north-west Syria.
- **Access to healthcare:** At least 20 per cent of 604 assessed communities by REACH reported that they do not have access to healthcare, notably in the Badama and Harim sub-districts.
 - ✓ At least 55 health facilities have been damaged, as of 6 March, according to the Health cluster. 15 health facilities have been suspended.
 - ✓ Over 570 cholera cases and 23 deaths were registered in north-west Syria as of 5 March.
- **Border closure is escalating health needs:** Before the quakes, around 30 medical cases used to cross from north-west Syria to Türkiye on average per day. However, this capacity has been affected.
 - ✓ Procurement of medical supplies is increasingly challenging.
 - ✓ Psychological first aid (PFA), case management and safe service points are overwhelmed with rising needs in the earthquakes' aftermath.
 - ✓ Patients in north-west Syria with complications, such as cancer and kidney issues, are left with little to no option for treatment.
- **Education services resumed in the Idleb area on 25 February.**
 - ✓ 20 schools are reportedly being used to host IDPs (1260 households): 12 of these schools are in Afrin, Jandairis and Souran, and eight are in Idleb.
- **WASH needs putting people at risk of water-borne diseases:** Top WASH needs of persons displaced by the earthquakes include water, water tanks, latrines, hygiene items and sewage infrastructure.
- **Age, gender, diversity:** Accessibility issues were registered for the disabled and the elderly.
 - ✓ **Gender-based violence (GBV):** 10 out of 93 previously available GBV service points were put out of function due to devastation by the earthquakes. As a result, the capacity to deliver assistance through dignity kits and cash-based interventions has been hampered.



Humanitarian response

4.4 million+

Medical supplies distributed to health facilities

590,000+

People reached with Ready-to-Eat Rations

190,000+

People reached with multi-purpose cash

\$6 million

Value of multi-purpose cash assistance

- **UN cross-border aid operation:** As of 7 March, a total of 617 trucks loaded with aid provided by seven UN agencies (FAO, IOM, UNHCR, UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP, WHO) have so far crossed to north-west Syria since the earthquakes. For more information, [click here](#) to view the cross-border operation dashboard.

 - ✓ The UN resumed its cross-border operation on 9 February following three days of temporary disruption due to damaged roads connecting Gaziantep to the UN Transshipment Hub in Hatay.
 - ✓ As of 14 February, three border-crossing points are opened for UN aid delivery: Bab Al-Hawa, Bab Al-Salam and Al-Ra'ee. On the same day, the first aid convoy crossed to north-west Syria through Bab Al-Salam since 2020.
 - ✓ On 20 February, the Al-Ra'ee gateway was operationalized for the first time. 10 IOM trucks carrying medical and NFI aid to cover the needs of 3,500 people in need crossed.
- **Debris removal:** As of 20 February, seven partner organizations under the Early Recovery and Livelihoods (ERL) cluster have reported debris removal. An estimated 117,652 m² of debris has been removed.
- **Short-term job creation:** 1,250 people have benefitted from short-term work opportunities (emergency employment), reported the ERL cluster. Support was reached mainly in the areas of Idleb, Harim, Dana, Jandairis, and Salqin, including in displacement camps.
- **Rapid protection assessment:** 1,579 key informant interviews were conducted in 259 communities across north-west Syria by 32 Protection cluster partners. Preliminary results showcase a particular lack of specific services targeting youth and the elderly.
- **Multi-sectoral response to reception centers:** The CCCM cluster, in close coordination with OCHA and other clusters, has facilitated the drafting of a multi-sectorial reception center operation checklist to enable a rapid and coordinated response to reception centers. The tool aims to guide cluster members and partners in delivering harmonized assistance.
- **Shelter and Non-Food Item (SNFI):** The SNFI cluster members are responding with emergency shelters and NFIs in affected communities, reception centers, existing camps, and collective centers.

 - ✓ 29 SNFI cluster members have reported completed or ongoing responses.
 - ✓ As of 6 March, more than 55,000 people have been reached with tents. Close to 116,700 people have been reached with the provision of emergency NFIs. Over 9,700 people have been reached with the provision of emergency shelter kits.
 - ✓ An earthquake response strategy has been drafted as a living document and focuses on different response phases, the first one being in line with the Flash Appeal.
 - ✓ The SNFI cluster, in collaboration with RedR UK, has conducted two online training sessions on Shelter Structural Damage Assessments on 24 and 27 February, targeting engineers and technical staff.
- **Food support and cash assistance:** FSL cluster partners are providing emergency response to the food needs of people affected by the earthquakes, including ready-to-eat (RTE) food (which covers the food

needs of a family for one week), cooked meals, emergency cash vouchers and multi-purpose cash (MPC).

- ✓ Over the last week, 45,886 people have been reached through RTEs distributions. 45 FSL partners reported distributing RTE ration. The FSL cluster reported that around 590,531 cumulative people have been reached with RTEs since the beginning of the response post-earthquakes. Over the last week, 57,417 people have been reached through RTEs and high-energy biscuits distribution.
 - ✓ 14 partners reached 185,819 beneficiaries with one-off emergency MPC grants of 150 USD (designed to cover 1-month basic needs) and 54,700 people received Cash for Food.
 - ✓ 10 partners distributed one-off emergency food baskets to 75,480 affected people who have access to cooking facilities.
- **Multi-purpose cash support:** As of 6 March, 190,225 people have so far been supported with cash assistance by 11 implementing partners (valued in total at \$6 million).
 - **Health:** A 90-day response strategy was developed by Health cluster partners. The plan includes preparedness for outbreaks and continuity of essential services and early recovery.
 - ✓ On March 7, a [cholera vaccination campaign](#) was launched, led by WHO and UNICEF, targeting 1.7 million Syrians above one year of age.
 - ✓ 115 mobile clinics are operational in seven districts, the majority of which are in Jandairis, Dana, Harim and Maaret Tamsrin. This is considered enough to cover post-earthquake needs.
 - ✓ 93 per cent of health facilities are reporting and are functional.
 - ✓ More than 4.4 million medical supplies have been distributed by Health cluster partners to 245 health facilities, as of 20 February.
 - ✓ UNICEF and partners continue to provide Psychosocial Support (PSS) and Psychological First Aid (PFA) activities, reaching 2,254 people in the last 24 hours (including 740 girls and 746 boys).
 - **Nutrition:** The Nutrition cluster has conducted early identification and treatment as well as preventive activities and has an operational presence in 237 communities in 32 sub-districts in north-west Syria. As of 6 March, 107,113 children (under five years old), and pregnant and lactating women, were reached with assistance provided by the cluster.
 - ✓ Over 71,000 children (aged 6-59 months) were screened for malnutrition
 - ✓ Over 35,800 pregnant and lactating women were screened for malnutrition
 - ✓ Over 31,000 caregivers were reached with Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) counseling
 - ✓ Over 3,000 children, and pregnant and lactating women, were reached with high-energy biscuits
 - **Education:** To date, 77,662 children across both the Aleppo and Idleb governorates were reached with activities allowing them to continue learning despite the crisis.
 - ✓ 14,600 children have been reached with teaching and learning materials.
 - ✓ 48,962 children were reached with non-formal education activities.
 - **WASH:** The WASH cluster is continuing to provide desludging and water trucking support and is developing an emergency response plan. A capacity mapping of cluster partners, on available stocks, response plans, presence, warehousing, and speed to respond was completed.
 - ✓ Since the earthquake response began, UNICEF and partners have reached 330,126 affected people residing in 101 reception centers and affected communities with lifesaving WASH supplies and services in north-west Syria. Over 120,895 affected people received hygiene kits.
 - ✓ To respond to the cholera outbreak, WASH field facilitators conducted surveillance activities across 132 communities and 68 camps to identify Free Residual Chlorine level (FRC) as a measure to ascertain water safety. In total, 1,980 water samples were collected.
 - **PSEAH Hotline:** UNICEF and partners have established a functional Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Sexual Harassment (PSEAH) hotline as of 16 February.

- **Funding:** The UN and humanitarian partners are calling for US\$397.6 million in a [Flash Appeal](#) for Syria launched on 14 February.
 - ✓ **The Syria Cross-border Humanitarian Fund (SCHF)** has received generous pledged contributions from donors, including towards the earthquake response. These pledged contributions to the SCHF are worth some \$76 million as of 6 March. OCHA request all donors to complete the pending contribution process for funds to be utilized in time for the Reserve Allocation
 - ✓ On 20 February, a Reserve Allocation, valued at least \$30 million, endorsed by the SCHF, was launched. This first allocation will allow SCHF partners to respond to the immediate needs of affected communities. Once the first allocations are paid, a second allocation will be launched to address mid-and long-term responses.

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To contribute to the Syria Cross-border Humanitarian Fund (SCHF), please [click here](#).

Contact

Madevi Sun-Suon, Public Information Officer - madevi.sun-suon@un.org +90 534 261 6515, OCHA Türkiye in Gaziantep