

## **Solidarity call with the earthquake survivors in Turkey and Syria**

The heart-bleeding human suffering in Turkey and Syria cannot be explained solely by the massive scale of the two consecutive earthquakes, which impacted ten major cities in Turkey and a vast area in north-west Syria. The enormity of the figures both in terms of casualties and devastation is also a consequence of the state's long-lasting negligence of its duty to take precautions against the threat of an earthquake in the region and its profit-oriented priorities that turned the impacted cities into concrete jungles for the construction sector. According to the latest official figures, the death toll is over 16,000 in Turkey, and the number of injured is over 66,000. Around 14 million people have been impacted by the earthquake. The total number of buildings and houses in the cities and villages impacted by the earthquake is around four million. It is estimated that 400,000 of these buildings and houses collapsed as a result of the earthquake, and half of the remaining 3.6 million are seriously damaged. This means around 4 million people either do not have homes any more or their homes are uninhabitable due to the damage.

The death toll in Syria is reported to be over 3,500. There are thousands of people who are seriously injured. There is not enough equipment in the parts of the north-west controlled by the opposition. People are desperately trying to rescue their loved ones with their own efforts.

The numbers of missing, injured and dead continue to rise.

In Turkey, there are places which have been waiting for rescue teams for over 48 hours. People whose homes are gone do not have tents or temporary shelters and if they are lucky and have a car, they sleep there to protect from the freezing cold. Most of them are faced with the danger of frostbite and hypothermia. There is not enough food, water, electricity, and the Internet coverage is restricted. Phone services are not available at numerous spots. In the region, not only residences but also public and private hospitals collapsed, so did the health provision services. In the streets, there are dead or injured people covered with blankets. In the region, there are also hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees, equally impacted by the disaster and in need of aid. People hear the voices of their loved ones, relatives or neighbours from under the rubbles, but there is no rescue team or heavy equipment or necessary tools to save them. Huge cities look like war zones destroyed by an atomic bomb. People started to raid the groceries and pharmacies because there is no access to food and medicine. The chaos in the region is a consequence of the lack of coordination between the state and civil actors as well as lack of utilization of state resources.

In Syria, rescue efforts are complicated by the American and European sanctions imposed on the Syrian regime, restrictions imposed on foreign aid organizations by the Syrian government and the need to obtain permission from Turkey for the passage of help through Turkey. As a

result, people who even before the earthquake were in need of humanitarian assistance, are now ever more vulnerable.

Those of us grieving deeply for the people in Turkey and in Syria urge everyone to extend their solidarity with the people in the region. We are also aware that solidarity means understanding the political culprits for the scale of the disaster and holding them accountable. The neoliberal government whose policies prioritized construction companies, businesses and their rich clients for decades is responsible for the size of the damage. Having bitterly experienced the fatal consequences of these policies, people in the region are not only in a state of mourning and anguish for their loved ones and lost homes but also in a deep state of anger and rage towards the state and the government. We deeply empathize with their feelings and humbly share their desperation.

Disaster capitalism kills, but solidarity keeps alive!

**NOTE: PSAC901 members affected by the earthquakes in Syria and Turkey can contact [staffpsac901@gmail.com](mailto:staffpsac901@gmail.com) for support options available through PSAC 901 Mental Health and Hardship Bursary.**

If you would like to contribute to the existing campaigns in solidarity with the earthquake survivors in Turkey and Syria, we are sharing a couple of links.

**For a donations**

[ahbap.org](http://ahbap.org)

[The UN Refugee Agency](#)

[IFRC](#)

If you would directly buy a tent or a sleeping bag for the survivors, [the following link](#) has been created by the METU Alumni Association in collaboration with magmaoutdoor.com. METU alumni has been [collecting donations](#) and arranging the logistics of delivery with the help of METU students, academic and administrative staff.

Visit this [information portal](#) created by the METU students to centralize the useful information for donation and assistance available: