

Fact sheet:

Earthquake and its impact in North and East Syria due to inhumane policy by Turkey and Syria

On February 6th, deadly earthquakes hit northern Kurdistan, Turkey, the occupied regions of North Syria as well as regions of the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria. Up to now, more than 21,000 people have been declared to have lost their lives, tens of thousands were injured and the estimated dead reach up to 180'000. The instrumentalisation of the earthquakes manifests itself through hindrance of aid delivery at borders and check-points in occupied territories, systematic neglect of certain areas and a continuation of aerial bombing attacks by the Turkish occupation state.

Obstruction of aid

Concerning international aid, there is only one border crossing opened between Turkey and Syria, Bab Al-Hawa. Because of damages of this particular road, the traffic is obstructed, stated UN-representative Stephane Dujarric in New York. All other crossings controlled by the Turkish authorities remain closed.

In addition to, the Turkish occupation state continues to obstruct the arrival of aid prepared by the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria to the affected areas of Aleppo and the cantons of Afrin and Shehba. The aid, consisting of 30 tanks of diesel fuel, as a first batch arrived at the Um Jalud crossing located northwest of Manbij, awaiting the approval of the occupied Turkish authorities which have not given approval to cross the occupied lands yet.

The Syrian government, meanwhile, is monopolising international aid and hindering aid reaching peripheral regions by not acknowledging the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria as an actor in the aftermath of the earthquakes.

On February 12, an aid convoy of the Kurdish red crescent was blocked just in front of Aleppo by the Syrian government. They demanded that half the aid as well as an ambulance is handed over to them and stated that all NGOs coming from the North East (Rojava) will have to hand over half of the aid items.

The denial of access to aid for those in need is recognized as a crime against humanity under international law, especially since thousands have died due to the lack of relief.

Looting in Afrin

According to first-hand sources on the ground, Turkey-backed armed groups are taking advantage of the catastrophe of the earthquake and are looting the people of the occupied city of Afrin and the citizens to whom financial aid (remittances) are sent from their children or relatives outside Syria in order to help them. The mercenaries are stationed in front of the exchange centers in the city center and plunder citizens in broad daylight at gunpoint, taking advantage of the earthquake for their interests.

Rami Abdel Rahman, director of the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, confirmed that the Turkish occupation forces expelled the residents of Janders when they asked them for help in removing those trapped under the rubble.

Some sources said that items of relief materials are being sold on stalls in Damascus, Latakia, and various Syrian cities, and on the other hand, aid has not reached dozens of affected villages and towns.

Turkish occupation state continues aerial attacks in North and West Kurdistan

Shortly after the earthquake, on February 7, Turkey and its allied mercenaries shelled the area of Til Rifat with heavy weapons. Til Rifat is a small region of strategic importance in the northern Aleppo governorate, where mainly Kurdish displaced people from the region of Afrin have fled to.

On February 9, from the early morning onwards, warplanes and drones of the Turkish occupation state are flying in the skies of Ain Issa district and the western countryside of the occupied Girê Spi district. According to military sources it is still continuing.

The young Syrian man Ismail Hamdi Al-Abdullah Al-Ajili who tried to cross the border from Afrin to Turkey after the earthquake to save his family under the rubble in Turkey was beaten to death by Turkish soldiers.

On February 12, Turkey bombed a vehicle west of the city of Kobane with unmanned killer drones. At least one SDF member was killed in the attack.

Needed Steps:

- Immediate opening of the border crossings and check-points for aid to reach the affected people
- Closure of the Syrian airspace controlled by the USA and Russia to Turkish warplanes and UAVs
- Immediate end of Turkey's unlawful attacks on Rojava and North and East Syria
- Investigation and punishment of Turkey's crimes
- Immediate end of Turkish occupation of northern Syria (Afrin, al-Bab, Azad, Jarablus, Girê Spî/Tal, Abyad, Serêkaniyê/Ras al-Ayn)
- Recognition of the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES)

How to support

The Autonomous Administration launches the "Together for Humanity" campaign to help those affected by the earthquake.

As the governments of Syria and Turkey are seeing an inflow in international aid, it is of great importance to support structures which work on the ground directly. Send money to Heyva Sor Kurdistanê (the Kurdish Red Crescent) via Paypal.

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