

**INTERNATIONAL
NETWORK**

February 2024



**Türkiye - Syria
Earthquake Response**

ONE YEAR REPORT

SUMMARY

On February 6, 2023, a series of catastrophic earthquakes struck southern Türkiye and north-western Syria (NWS), causing **the death of more than 58,000** people in collapsed buildings, displacing millions across both countries, and causing widespread destruction to homes and infrastructure in the region. The earthquake was followed by **78 aftershocks** over the next few weeks, affecting a population of over 18 million in both countries. Occurring in the height of winter, survivors who had escaped collapsing buildings were then at risk of freezing in exposed conditions, and required shelter, food and healthcare. **The need for healthcare support in the affected areas remains critical.** Antibiotics, access to chronic disease medications, mental health and psychosocial support, maternal and pediatric health, were just some of the needs for survivors over the past year.

Médecins du Monde Türkiye, France and Spain were on the ground from day one providing emergency response in affected areas in Türkiye and Northwest Syria (NWS), government controlled areas (GCA) of Syria and in the Northeastern part of Aleppo, Syria. With the support of the MdM International Network, over the past year MdM has provided comprehensive healthcare services including primary health care (PHC), distribution of medicines, provision of sexual and reproductive health care and rights (SRHR) services, distribution of dignity, hygiene and maternity kits, individual and group mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services, protection, case management and support for secondary health care facilities. MdM has been operating both mobile medical units (MMU) to serve hard-to-reach locations and a women and child friendly safe space to reach the most vulnerable populations.

In total, MdM provided **over 425,321 health services consultations through mobile medical units, primary health care clinics and community centres**, as well as case management and dignity, hygiene and maternity kits to earthquake affected populations in Türkiye, NWS and GCA and Aleppo.

Based in Amman, MdM France, has been working in Syria since 2008. Through partnerships with local medical NGOs, MdM France indirectly support a network of primary health care centres (PHCCs), Mobile Medical Units (MMUs) and community centres, in Syrian government-controlled areas (GCA).

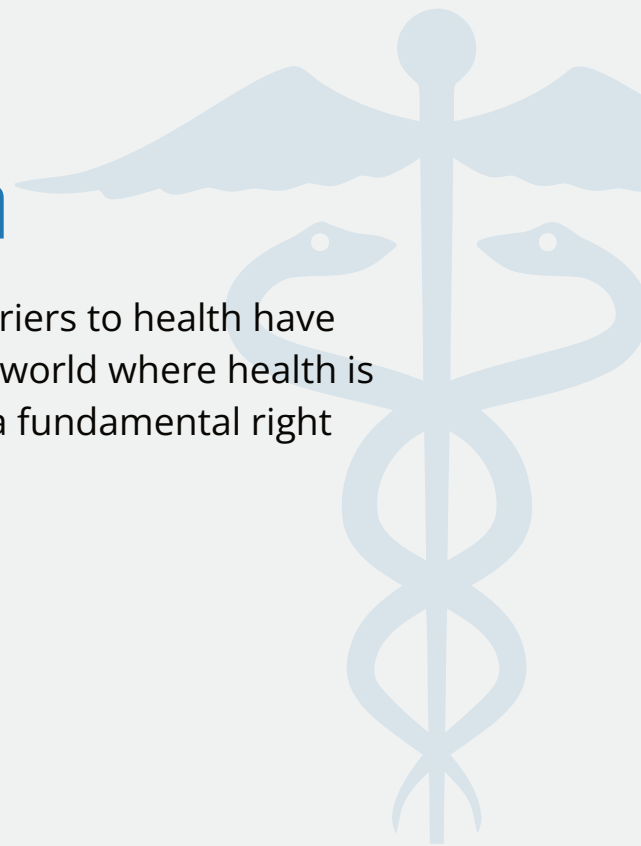
MdM Türkiye, a registered Turkish NGO, has provided health services to vulnerable and displaced people in Syria and Turkey since 2016. From its Antakya office in Hatay province in Türkiye office, it directly operates **9 cross-border health facilities**, mobile units and supports a surgical hospital in West Aleppo and Idlib in NWS. In Turkey, MdM Türkiye provides protection and health services to refugees and undocumented migrants in Manisa, Izmir, and Hatay.

Through local health authorities, MdM Spain provides essential medical services to beneficiaries affected by the earthquake through six primary health care centres (PHCC) in Kobane (Ayn Al Arab), situated in areas controlled by the Self Administration in the Northeastern part of Aleppo, Syria.



OUR Vision

A world where barriers to health have been overcome, a world where health is acknowledged as a fundamental right



OUR Mission

The Médecins du Monde International Network (MdM) is made of 17 independent health and human rights organisations working on domestic and international projects. Providing care, bearing witness, and supporting social change, MdM continues its mission to fight for the universal right to health.

Through more than 400 innovative medical programmes and evidence-based advocacy initiatives in over 70 countries, we enable vulnerable people and their communities to access quality medical services and fight for universal access to healthcare.

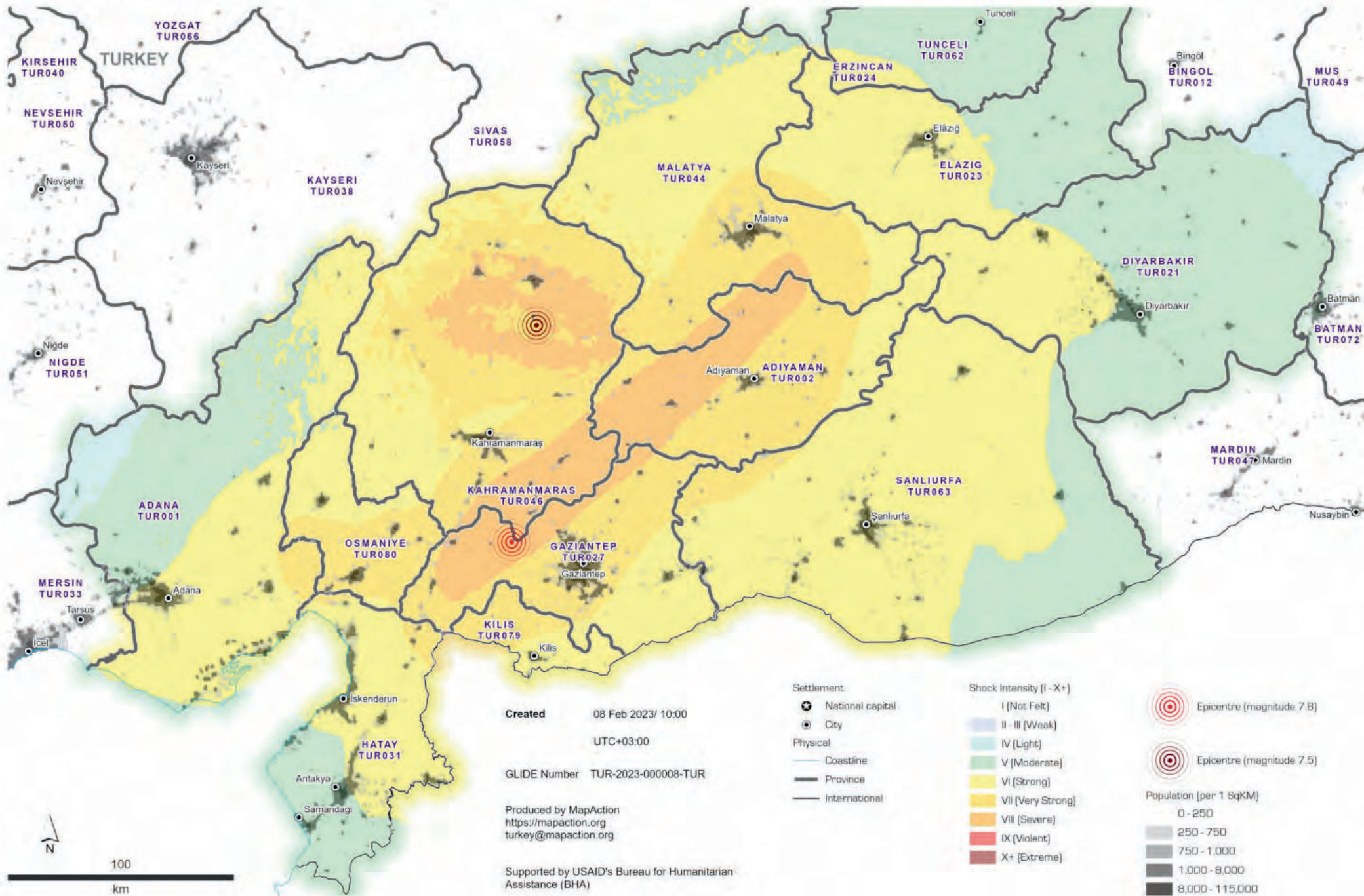
Through our medical supply center in Türkiye, MdM Türkiye also strengthens access to quality medication for humanitarian actions in the region.



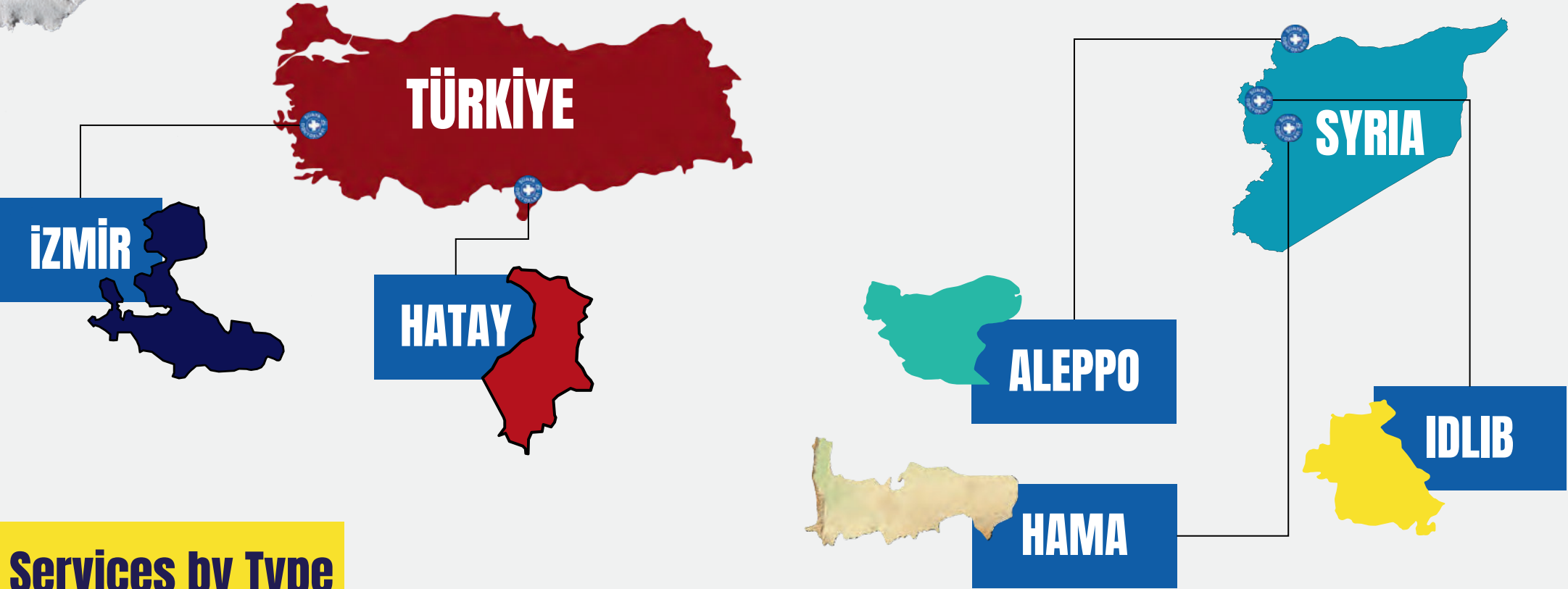


On February 6, 2023, a series of earthquakes struck **southern Türkiye** and **northwestern Syria (NWS)**, causing the death of **more than 58,000 people** and widespread **destruction** in the region.

Médecins du Monde (MdM) provided comprehensive **emergency response** with over **425,321** services through mobile medical units, primary health care centres and community centres, as well as case management, and dignity, hygiene and maternity kits to earthquake affected populations in Türkiye and NWS and GCA of Syria, and in the Northeastern part of Aleppo, Syria.



OUR POST-EARTHQUAKE RESPONSE



Services by Type



Medication



Primary Health Care



Hygiene Kits



Psychological Support



Protection



Sexual & Reproductive Health and Rights



CONTEXT & HUMANITARIAN NEEDS

Türkiye

The February 6 earthquakes were **the most powerful to hit the country since 1939**, with its epicenter around Gaziantep first then Kahramanmaraş, and extended down through Hatay province which lay on the fault line. **More than 15 million people live in the 10 earthquake affected provinces affected in region** which is also home to over **a million Syrian refugees**. Thousands of buildings collapsed, trapping people under rubble. In response to the catastrophe, the Turkish authorities announced a three-month state of emergency and centralised the emergency response through the National Disaster Response Platform (AFAD).

Hatay was the most affected province in Türkiye as it is located on the fault line. **An estimated 75,000 buildings and homes** were destroyed. A year on from the disaster and debris removal continues.

Survivors left Hatay to go to other provinces such as Izmir in Western Türkiye, while the most vulnerable continue to live in camps in Antakya city and **hard-to-reach rural areas** in the province. The local authorities in Hatay have begun to relocate populations from tents to formal container cities. However, the need for decent shelter overwhelms the capacity. In particular, many of the Syrian population still live in informal tent areas with limited access to services. These areas are hard to reach and require **mobile medical units**. Urgent needs include ensuring access to **PHC, medicine, and psychological support for people exposed to trauma**.





In addition to its work in the earthquake zone, MdM Türkiye has provided relief to earthquake affected people displaced to Western Türkiye, notably Izmir province, which saw a significant arrival of Syrian refugees. Since the earthquake only a minority returned to the cities where they were registered. At the same time, many more from the earthquake regions stayed in Izmir without proper documentation and are at risk of being detained and deported from Türkiye.

In Izmir, MdM Türkiye works with earthquake displaced refugees who work as agricultural workers. These people often live in unofficial tented settlements in rural areas away from the local authorities. These settlements have limited to no running water or sanitation, with numerous health and protection risks including GBV and child labor.

Ongoing needs

There are many health and protection-related risks, especially for the most vulnerable groups, such as children, women, the elderly, and people with chronic diseases and people with disabilities (PwD).

Women and children are disproportionately affected due to their specific vulnerabilities. Unemployment, limited access to basic needs and massive mental health issues and trauma is a health and protection risk for Gender-based Violence (GBV) which are increasing.

A lack of privacy caused by poor and overcrowded tent/shelter conditions, GBV incidents such as domestic violence, sexual violence and sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment, child labor and early marriage, are likely to increase in the region. Moreover, problems with access to basic needs such as safe water and sanitation facilities, has resulted in the spread of communicable diseases such as scabies, lice, and cholera in the region, as well as in many individuals suffering from physical and mental issues.

Public and private health services cannot meet the needs. According to the Turkish Medical Association, **12 State hospitals in the province have been damaged with only 5 hospitals fully functioning one year on.** Another **10 hospitals are partially open.** In addition, many health workers living in the province were injured or deceased, further decreasing the local health system capacity and causing migrant health centres and most family health centres to become inactive.

Although rural and urban hospitals are becoming partially functional a year after the earthquake, public services in Hatay have not returned to their initial capacities in the region. The demand for medical services continues to be enormous.

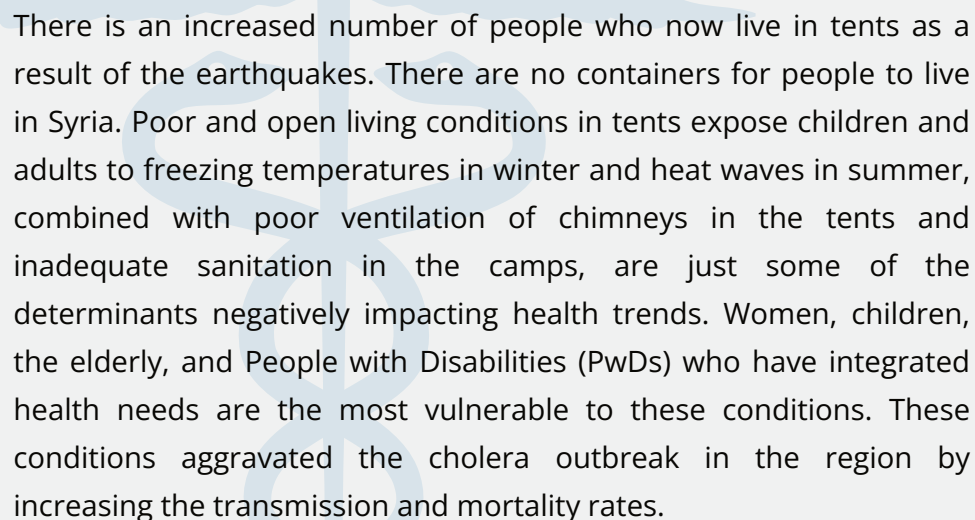
Syria

Syria remains one of the most challenging humanitarian emergencies in the world, with persistent hostilities that have resulted in hundreds of thousands of deaths and triggered one of the worst displacement crises in modern times. In 2023, **15.3 million people** were in dire need of lifesaving health assistance: a **3.2 million** increase from 2022. In Idlib and Aleppo where Mdm works on average **79% of residents are internally displaced people (IDP)** living in rented accommodation or tents.

The humanitarian situation in Syria was further exacerbated by the devastating February earthquakes. **An estimated 2.9 million people** were affected by the February earthquakes, and **more than 300.000 people** had to leave their homes.



Jandairis and Afrin in Western Aleppo and Harim districts in Idlib where Mdm Türkiye works, have the highest density of internally displaced people (IDP) in the country living in rented accommodation or tents with on **average 79%** of the population. These areas were the most affected by the earthquake. Much of the town of Jandairis was reduced to rubble. **Over 8,000 people** were confirmed dead in these three locations, with many more buried under rubble as the necessary excavation equipment was stuck at borders. A further 12,000 earthquake-related injuries were reported.



There is an increased number of people who now live in tents as a result of the earthquakes. There are no containers for people to live in Syria. Poor and open living conditions in tents expose children and adults to freezing temperatures in winter and heat waves in summer, combined with poor ventilation of chimneys in the tents and inadequate sanitation in the camps, are just some of the determinants negatively impacting health trends. Women, children, the elderly, and People with Disabilities (PWDs) who have integrated health needs are the most vulnerable to these conditions. These conditions aggravated the cholera outbreak in the region by increasing the transmission and mortality rates.

In GCA, the already-disrupted health system faced further demands and continues to be at risk of complete collapse in some affected areas as well as for certain life-saving departments and services.

Ongoing needs

The demand for integrated medical and protection services continues to be enormous in NWS, particularly affecting vulnerable groups such as children, women, the elderly, and people with chronic diseases and PwD. New camps established post-earthquake to house displaced people were full by September.

Displaced people who lived in Jandairis town in Afrin region have returned from rural areas but often lived in new camps established in the city as their homes were damaged. In addition, people from other places in the Afrin region are now moving to Jandairis because new camps are set up in and around the town with the anticipation of new services.

In Idlib, IDP camp populations have also increased as people sought safer ground. Moreover, problems with access to basic needs such as safe water and sanitation facilities has resulted in the spread of communicable diseases such as scabies, lice, and cholera in the region, as well as in many individuals suffering from physical and mental health issues.

GBV is endemic and has been further exacerbated by the earthquake due to the increased displacement; disproportionately affecting women and children.

Domestic violence, sexual violence, rape, sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment, unaccompanied minors, child abandonment, child labor and early marriage have all increased in NWS where MDM Türkiye works. Sociocultural factors and particularly the lack of civilian security services in the area undermines efforts to support survivors and improve the protection context.





IMPACT

Türkiye

Twelve months after the earthquake, MdM Türkiye has been providing medical and psychosocial services, both at its safe base in Antakya city and in hard-to-reach locations in most affected districts in the Hatay region (Antakya, Samandağ, Altınözü, Defne, and Kırıkhan districts), as well as in the rural areas of Izmir province.

In many areas, MdM Türkiye has been the only NGO providing essential primary and mental health care to the earthquake affected people. In total, MdM Türkiye has provided **2,645 kits** and **33,450 health services** including case management to earthquake affected populations in Türkiye.

Through its MMUs, MdM Türkiye has reached out to **at least 120 locations** in Hatay and **around 40 tented areas in Izmir province** since the beginning of the earthquake in coordination with the public health directorate.

In the Hatay region, MdM Türkiye doctors provided **32,190 essential health consultations** to **26,531 earthquake-affected individuals** (of whom **25%** were refugee community members). This includes treatment for chronic diseases such as diabetes as well as communicable diseases such as scabies and lice.

Nurses and midwives have also conducted group health education activities on hygiene and SRHR-related topics. Mdm Türkiye midwives have provided around 4,984 SRHR consultations, as antenatal care (ANC), postnatal care (PNC), and family planning activities, and referred patients to Mdm gynaecologists available in the safe space.

Mdm Türkiye PSS counsellors and clinical psychologists provided group and individual counselling to men, women and children exposed to trauma. PSS counsellors conducted PSS group sessions with the participation of **more than 7,100 individuals**. Of these, **21% were Syrians**. The clinical psychologists conducted individual sessions in both safe space and hard-to-reach locations.



Mdm Türkiye also established a Women and Children Safe Space in Antakya district of Hatay province in order to support women's and children's physical and psychosocial well-being.

In the safe space, people particularly at risk of Gender Based Violence (GBV) have been able to access integrated health services including Mdm Türkiye's PHC with the distribution of medicines, SRHR, MHPSS, protection, WASH, and hairdressing services as part of a comprehensive approach.

Mdm Türkiye safe space is conceived to facilitate access to health and protection services to the most vulnerable women and children. In this way, it is easier to identify where/what types of people have health problems and to take remedial action accordingly.



33,450 health consultations to
26,531 earthquake-affected
individuals



4,984 sexual and reproductive
health and rights services in Hatay



PSS group sessions
with the participation of **7,100** individuals



individual mental health sessions with around **600** individuals
by MdM Türkiye clinical psychologists

Syria

MdM Türkiye and France provided medical services to beneficiaries affected by the earthquake through the mobilisation of **MMUs** and **12 primary health care centers (PHCC)** in both government-controlled and non-government-controlled areas in the Aleppo, Hama, and Idlib regions.

MdM provided beneficiaries with **PHC, SRHR, and MHPSS services**, as well as nursing and free medication in PHCCs. MdM provided more than **245,000 consultations** to around (**unique**) **165,000 IDPs** because of the earthquake. As a preventive measure to decrease the spread of hygiene-related diseases, MdM distributed **30,009 kits** in affected areas of Aleppo, Idlib and Hama.

Additionally, within its emergency response to increased needs in the region MdM Türkiye has reopened its PHCC in the NGCA of Idlib staffed by doctors, nurses, midwives, pharmacists, community health workers, psychosocial workers and pharmacists, among others. MdM's medical staff were able to directly provide primary healthcare services directly to vulnerable beneficiaries inside and outside the camps.

MdM-France, via one of its local partners, also supported different health facilities. A donation of 500 trauma kits has been distributed to **27 hospitals in the Idlib governorate**, enabling emergency trauma surgery and elective reconstructive surgery to be provided to around 25,000 patients. 6,880 dialysis kits and related medications were purchased to equip two dialysis units which provide basic and potentially life-saving services, allowing people leaving in the area to not travel to centers much further away, which compromised proper medical protocol follow-up. Finally, minimum equipment was purchased for a PHCC converted to a Maternal and Child Hospital in Aleppo Governorate considering the gaps in services for women and children in the area.



More than **425,321** curative consultations, including PHC, SRHR, and MHPSS



30,009 kits in the Aleppo, Idlib and Hama to displaced populations after the earthquake.

In Kobane (Ayn Al Arab), situated in areas controlled by the Self Administration in the Northeastern part of Aleppo, Mdm Spain , working through Local Health Authority (LHA), extended PHC, including SRHR, and MHPSS services to beneficiaries. Additionally, nursing services and free medication were offered in PHCCs. In total, Mdm provided 146,871 consultations in the Kobane area in the earthquake response. As a preventive measure to reduce the spread of hygiene-related diseases, Mdm Spain distributed 4,209 kits comprising hygiene, SRH, Dignity, and trauma kits in Kobane. To address more serious health issues, Mdm ensured medical referrals to secondary health facilities (hospitals and maternity services) from all three PHCCs, facilitating 1,034 cases with the addition of ambulance services in all PHCs.

In response to the escalating needs in the region, Mdm Spain implemented afternoon and night shifts staffed by a diverse team of professionals, including doctors, nurses, midwives, pharmacists, community health workers, and psychosocial workers.

The trained midwives in the supported PHCCs provided 25,188 SRH consultations, covering Ante Natal Care (ANC), Post Natal Care (PNC), and Family planning consultations. Moreover, the trained psychologists in these PHCCs conducted 7,784 Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) consultations, addressing issues such as anxiety, enuresis/bedwetting, psychosomatic complaints, acute stress, and sleeping disorders resulting from earthquake panic.

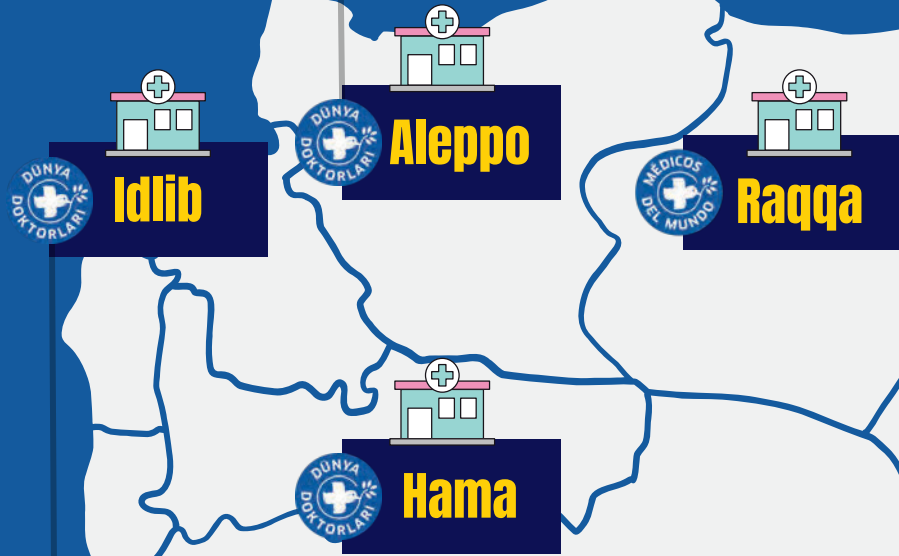
Mdm Spain undertook an extensive awareness campaign on epidemic diseases and earthquake protection instructions, delivering 13,958 sessions through Community Health Workers. Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials, including posters and brochures on mental health awareness, coping with anxieties related to earthquakes, handwashing, effects of early marriage, hygiene, IYCF, scabies, and the effects of drug use and alcohol, were distributed during these sessions.



SYRIA PROGRAMME MAP

Jandairis PHCC & Lab/PCR
Afrin PHCC
Jalma PHCC

Al Doaa PHCC
Al Salam PHCC
Qah PHCC
Kelly PHCC
Sarmada PHCC
Kemmune PHCC







STORIES FROM THE FAULT LINE

“THEY GAVE US POWER TO KEEP OUR HOPE ALIVE AMIDST ALL THIS CATASTROPHE”: STORY OF AN EARTHQUAKE SURVIVOR MOTHER YEŞİM AND HER LITTLE BABY

Yeşim Kapi is a 30-year-old earthquake survivor from Hatay province of southeastern Türkiye. She lives in a village located in Samandağ district, where has been severely affected by the earthquakes on February 6. The massive earthquakes have changed the life of Yeşim and her family forever as they have done for millions of people.

Yeşim has an 11-year-old boy, Eray, a 10-year-old daughter, Cennet, and a 7-month-old baby Zümrüt. Aftermath the earthquakes, she started to live in a tent with her three children and husband.



Before the earthquake, Yeşim and her family all had ordinary lives. Before that night, she prepared their children for school. They expected snow on Sunday night, and there was joy and excitement for the expected snow. At 4:16 a.m., they started shaking. It was winter, and they were sleeping with their children with a stove in the room. When the shaking began, for a moment, they thought it was over, the tremor stopped. But after a few seconds, it started shaking again, very violently. During that moment, they heard all the noises, and everyone was outside. They were wondering which way the house would fall, to the right or to the left.

“At that moment, all we could think about was death. We thought our house would collapse, and we would die, so we started praying. We began to embrace our children. I had my 7-month-old baby in my arms. We were all crying and praying at that moment because we really believed that we were going to die,” Yeşim tells in sorrow, remembering those seconds.

“When we managed to get out, it was totally chaos. There was no electricity. The entire neighborhood was outside, and we were caught in terrible rain. We started covering and protecting our children. We didn’t know what to do. There were pregnant women and I had given birth recently...” she continues.

All the neighborhood, groups of 40-50 people, stayed around the fire until the morning to get warm in the freezing cold.

“Even now, as we speak, we all talk with fear. It’s as if that moment will come back again,” Yeşim says with fear still in her eyes.

Yeşim’s little baby, 7-month-old Zümrüt, caught bronchitis at that time and she began to search for medical help everywhere in the province. Since all hospitals and healthcare infrastructure were paralyzed in Hatay just after the destructive earthquakes, Yeşim could not reach any medical services.

“Finally, we received news that Dünya Doktorları (DDD)/Médecins du Monde (MdM) Türkiye has been providing healthcare services here via mobile teams. I immediately took my baby to their mobile medical point. They showed great care for my child. Thanks to them, my daughter avoided getting bronchitis completely,” Yeşim states.

Sexual and reproductive health counselors of DDD/MdM Türkiye also held a series of awareness and information training sessions with Yeşim regarding women’s health, family planning, mother-infant education, antenatal and postnatal care, hygiene, sexual health and sexually transmitted infections.

“They gave us that sense of confidence,” Yeşim says, and adds: *“Many of our children were saved from contagious diseases with the intervention of the medical workers who regularly visit us here. Our confidence was restored. Just having someone listen to us, helping us... Even that feeling was so good. They made us feel that way, and they gave us the power to keep our hope alive amidst all this catastrophe.”*

Zümrüt, 7-year-old baby of Yeşim, is now so healthy and got rid of bronchitis now. DDD/MdM Türkiye’s SRH team continues to visit Yeşim and her family regularly to check their needs for medical and reproductive health.



LIFE BETWEEN WAR AND EARTHQUAKE: STORY OF ZAINAB FROM SYRIA

Zainab is a 45-year-old displaced woman in Syria. She has lost her two children during the 7,8-magnitude earthquake that devastated Türkiye and Syria on February 6, 2023. She lives in a tent with her husband.

"We had a good life before the war. We owned the lands and cultivated them. With the war, we have become impoverished. Our lives have completely changed," says Zainab.

"Before the earthquake, we had a house and a relatively good life. Due to the earthquakes, we started to live in tents. And we no longer get water. If we buy, we have water. If we could not afford to buy it, we don't have it," she continues.

Zainab was at her home with her family when the massive earthquakes hit that night. Her children and she were sleeping.

Suddenly, the ground began to shake.

"I was very afraid of the earthquakes in the past. I had some tremors, but not like that," Zainab defines the terrible violence of the quake.

Moments later, the shaking became much stronger. They started screaming and praying to the God.

"We couldn't even try to leave the house. I was completely petrified with astonishment," she tells.





One of Zainab's children was in her arms and other children were near him, as the shaking increasingly became stronger.

Electricity was cut off, and the entire building collapsed.

"I no longer felt anything. I just felt that it was the Day of Resurrection," she continues.

There was no longer any sound from her children...

She started to shouting at them: *"Israa Muhammed, Alaa!"*

But no one answered. *"I noticed that they died,"* Zainab says in sorrow.

"Since that day, we have been completely torn apart. Dünya Doktorları/Médecins du Monde Türkiye is the one who came to support us."

Zainab and her husband receive medical and psychological treatment at the health center of Dünya Doktorları/Médecins du Monde Türkiye in Afrin located in Syria's Aleppo.

"They are nice and good people. When I go to the clinic, I feel much better," continues Zainab, adding: *"I hope one day all people can live in peace and security."*



PARTNERSHIPS AND GRANTS





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