



*International Medical Corps is providing healthcare and integrated protection services in affected communities and shelters in Hama and Latakia governorates.*

It's been four months since two devastating earthquakes and a series of powerful aftershocks struck Türkiye and Syria, killing more than 50,000 people and injuring more than 100,000. The 7.8- and 7.5-magnitude earthquakes caused significant damage to more than half a million buildings, completely destroying at least 298,000 and leaving communities in dire need of humanitarian assistance<sup>1</sup>.

According to UN OCHA, more than 3 million people have been displaced in Türkiye alone due to the quakes, 2.6 million of whom are residing in temporary settlements. Half of these settlements are considered informal. These displaced people are expected to continue living in the temporary shelters over the hot summer months, increasing the risk of disease and other health concerns.

In Syria, at least 8.8 million people were affected by the quakes, with more than 5,900 people killed, 11,200 injured and more than 350,000 displaced. According to OCHA, the earthquakes destroyed more than 2,260 buildings and damaged more than 32,000.<sup>2</sup> Many of the displaced continue to live in temporary shelters set up after the quakes.

Tents are not proving to be an adequate solution for sheltering people, with scabies outbreaks being reported due to unsanitary conditions. In Syria, the earthquakes further damaged already impaired water infrastructure, raising the risk of the water supply being polluted with contaminated water. Syria already had been challenged with cholera outbreaks before the earthquakes, making new levels of water contamination even more of a concern.<sup>3</sup>

## FAST FACTS

- The earthquakes in Türkiye and Syria killed more than 50,000 people and displaced almost 6 million.

## OUR FOOTPRINT

- International Medical Corps has been present in **Syria** since 2008.
- We are currently working in 10 governorates across the country, supporting 33 health facilities that in 2022 provided more than 620,000 health consultations and supported 6,850 mental health cases.
- International Medical Corps worked in **Türkiye** from 2012 until 2018, with extensive programs in southern areas (including Gaziantep, Hatay, Kilis, Mersin and Sanliurfa) providing health, MHPSS, GBV, child protection, nutrition and WASH programs.

## OUR RESPONSE

- In **Syria**, we are operating 11 mobile medical units providing primary, emergency and surgical healthcare consultations.
- We have conducted psychological first aid (PFA) sessions in temporary accommodation shelters that have reached more than 5,500 people.
- We have delivered more than 15 metric tons of medications, medical supplies and cholera kits to support facilities in Aleppo, Hama and Latakia.
- In **Türkiye**, we are working with local partners to procure and distribute non-food items and provide food, and health and mental health services, to internally displaced people in camps and shelters.

<sup>1</sup> Türkiye Earthquake 2023 Humanitarian Response Overview, 17 May 2023 - Türkiye | ReliefWeb

<sup>2</sup> Syrian Arab Republic: Earthquakes - Syria Situational Updates - As of 22 March 2023 - Syrian Arab Republic | ReliefWeb

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/humanitarian-crisis-persists-for-survivors-in-turkey-syria-after-devastating-earthquake>

The need for healthcare support in the affected areas is critical, with millions of people displaced. Antibiotics, access to chronic disease medications, mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), wound care, maternal and pediatric health, cholera treatment and clean water are some of the top reported needs.<sup>4</sup> As time progresses, mental health needs are increasing, with MHPSS becoming one of the most needed services. There are particular concerns for pregnant women who have been exposed to high level of stress and are at risk of complications, such as first-trimester loss.

## International Medical Corps Response

In the four months since the earthquakes, International Medical Corps has been working with local authorities and partners to provide essential healthcare services to affected communities by deploying mobile medical units and teams, and by procuring and distributing essential medications, consumables and supplies. Our teams also have also been providing primary healthcare, MHPSS, protection—including child protection (CP) and gender-based violence (GBV) support—and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services.

In **Syria**, International Medical Corps is operating (directly or in coordination with partners) 10 mobile medical units (MMUs), and has deployed a mobile surgical team providing minor and emergency surgeries. We also have supported referrals and provided critical medical supplies to trauma and surgical health facilities.



*International Medical Corps is providing multisectoral support to families and children in affected areas.*

Working with a local partner, our MMUs continue to provide services in camps and shelters for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in and around the Aleppo governorate. So far, the teams have provided more than 19,000 consultations in camps and affected communities. Since beginning support for a physical rehabilitation facility at the beginning of April, the teams have delivered services to almost 400 people. We also have deployed ambulance cars to help transport emergency cases and are facilitating referrals for people requiring specialized medical services.

With increasing needs related to health, protection and MHPSS—particularly for those living in shelters and camps—International Medical Corps also has deployed an additional mobile medical team (MMT) for six months to meet health and mental health care needs in Hama and Lattakia. The MMT includes a range of specialists—including staff skilled in internal medicine, pediatrics, gynecology and health education—as well as pharmacists, case managers and data managers. The team has introduced hygiene-related outreach sessions to help mitigate the increasing risks of waterborne diseases such as cholera, as well as other diseases that might arise in crowded shelter settings. We have organized all operations in coordination with local stakeholders, and other UN or NGO teams, to avoid duplication of services and ensure that International Medical Corps is delivering services in shelters and areas that are most in need.

To support functioning healthcare facilities, International Medical Corps is meeting with local authorities, physicians and administrators at public hospitals and primary healthcare facilities to identify needs to support surgeries for earthquake victims, and to address immediate gaps in supplies, medications and equipment caused by increased patient caseloads. The need for reconstructive surgery for victims is expected to increase throughout the year, as patients are stabilized. For example, International Medical Corps is helping an operating room in a trauma hospital in Lattakia increase its surge capacity for reconstructive surgeries by procuring and delivering critical equipment, including a ventilator, a patient monitor and an arthroscopy set.

Additionally, International Medical Corps is continuing to support the Ministry of Health (MoH) by procuring and delivering essential pharmaceuticals, medical supplies and equipment for healthcare facilities in Aleppo, Hama and Lattakia. Our team has so far delivered more than 15 metric tons of pharmaceuticals, medical supplies and cholera kits to support operating facilities in the target areas. International Medical Corps also is coordinating with the MoH to ensure that the items are distributed to facilities most in need. Our teams are procuring additional cholera kits, dignity kits, trauma supplies and consumables (including gauze and bandages), walking aids and pharmaceuticals that will be delivered to relevant locations in the coming weeks.

Given the multisectoral gaps and needs in the region, International Medical Corps' MMUs and MMTs include specialists in MHPSS, protection and nutrition to provide integrated, comprehensive support to patients. International Medical Corps is relying on MHPSS specialists and a cadre of trained community health workers (CHWs) whom we have trained in psychological first aid (PFA). Given the increased levels of stress and anxiety within the affected communities, International Medical Corps has provided four mobile PFA units with specialists in psychosocial support, CP and GBV who are providing services to IDPs in and around the Aleppo governorate, in addition to four MHPSS mobile clinics.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.directrelief.org/2023/03/follow-the-data-crisisready-shares-emergency-response-models-for-turkey-syria-earthquakes>

International Medical Corps also is continuing to operate a 24-hour MHPSS hotline, along with six centers that provide services from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., including weekends, in affected areas in the north of Syria. The mobile teams are providing free case management, mental health consultations, community-based activities, outreach and awareness-raising, referrals and psychotropic medications to anyone in need.

International Medical Corps' GBV and CP teams also are providing group activities for and consultations to vulnerable women, adolescent girls and children who currently are living in temporary shelters and camps. Services include running awareness-raising sessions, providing safe spaces where children can express their fears and emotions, and distributing games and toys for children. International Medical Corps' Nutrition team is providing support to earthquake-affected communities in and around the Aleppo governorate as part of our MMUs. Over the last month, the team provided support to almost 1,400 pregnant and lactating women and children, as well as sessions for infant and young-child feeding in emergencies, supplies for nutrition and screening for malnutrition.

Finally, our WASH team is working closely with local authorities and other NGOs to procure additional supplies—including drinking water, hygiene kits and dignity kits—to support IDPs living in shelters and camps. Damage to water and sewage lines because of the quakes has been reported across the affected areas, increasing the risk of disease outbreaks. To mitigate risk, our WASH teams are working closely with local authorities to install latrines, provide clean water and distribute hygiene kits. In addition, International Medical Corps is planning on providing MoH clinics in Aleppo and Hama governorates with solar energy systems to increase the sustainability of service, even in the event of future shocks.

In **Türkiye**, International Medical Corps is working with local partners to support IDPs by procuring and distributing essential non-food items, including clothing, towels, blankets, hygiene kits, drinking water and water purification kits. We are also working to deliver mobile primary healthcare, supplies and MHPSS services in affected areas.

Through Yeryüzü Doktorları, we have supported three primary healthcare facilities offering integrated mental health care services, providing 6,393 health consultations in Gaziantep, Hatay and Kahramanmaraş. In partnership with International Blue Crescent, International Medical Corps has distributed drinking water, nutrition packages, winter clothing and canned food in Gaziantep (Islahiye), Kahramanmaraş (Elbistan) and Kilis, and will provide physical rehabilitation services in Islahiye (Gaziantep) and Elbistan (Kahramanmaraş). In partnership with MSYD-ASRA, International Medical Corps is distributing non-food items to people in shelters, including blankets, food baskets, diapers, towels and hygiene kits, and will expand to provide physical rehabilitation services in Hatay.