

KAHRAMANMARAŞ, TÜRKİYE EARTHQUAKE INFORMATION NOTE (21 FEBRUARY 2023)¹

Two earthquakes of 7.7 and 7.6 magnitude hit Türkiye and Syria on 6 February 2023. With an epicentre in Kahramanmaraş, the earthquake caused catastrophic scale of mass destruction in 10 provinces in Türkiye including Hatay, Adıyaman, Malatya, Şanlıurfa, Adana, Gaziantep and Diyarbakır. In this deadliest earthquake of the century, where Türkiye declared a level 4 alarm and state of emergency, more than 42 thousand 310 people lost their lives². 80.000 people were injured and approximately 2 million 200 hundred were internally displaced. Many of the survivors are fleeing the region to other cities as soon as they can bury their loved ones. Numbers are predicted to increase.

Affected millions of people cannot meet their basic needs. They urgently need food and support for heating. Plus, emergency shelter, clean water, and sanitation services. As of February 12th shelter, heating and sanitation services have become a priority.

The affected provinces are home to numerous vulnerable groups including the Roma communities (Doms and Abdals). These communities, which are already disadvantaged in terms of education, health, housing, and job market, are faced with a greater challenge in coping with the consequences of the disaster. Their means of subsistence completely perished as their livelihoods mostly depended on precarious daily jobs such as musicianship and waste collection. As a result of long-lasting prejudices within the society and already existing social exclusion, they cannot access aid mechanisms efficiently. Indeed, mass aid delivery is not fit for disadvantaged groups that are scattered at the margins of society and the cities. Furthermore, their recovery will be more challenging.

There is no official census for Roma in Turkey, so the exact number of affected Roma communities in the disaster area cannot be detected. Based on the reports of Roma grassroots organizations in our working neighbourhoods, 50 to 60 thousand Roma people are estimated to

¹This text was prepared by the Zero Discrimination Association team, based on ongoing communications with regional representatives of the Roma Dialogue Network coordinated by Zero Discrimination Association (ZDA).

²<https://www.sabah.com.tr/galeri/yasam/deprem-son-dakika-20-subat-kahramanmaras-depremi-olu-sayisi-ve-yarali-sayisi-kac-oldu-afad-deprem-vefat-sayisi-aciklamasi/2> (21 February 2023,17.07)

be affected in Hatay, Gaziantep and Şanlıurfa. Moreover, there are approximately 300 thousand Roma people all around the 10 affected provinces by the earthquake.

Since the first hours of the disaster, ZDA was able to directly communicate with the affected communities and coordinate bread and other emergency aid materials distribution thanks to Roma Dialogue Network (RODA) members. As of February 10, requests for assistance have started to come from other affected provinces (Kahramanmaraş, Malatya, Adana, Diyarbakır, and Adıyaman) and those provinces where Roma flee for safety (Mersin, Muğla, Antalya, Niğde and Konya). Based neighbourhood approach, ZDA is closely monitoring the situation of disadvantaged groups especially the Roma and mapping their movement. According to ZDA's assessments, emergency aid needed in the short term is presented below. Assessments for medium-term needs and recovery is in progress.



Figure- 1 ASAM: Updated Earthquake Data

UPDATES FROM ROMA NEIGHBOURHOODS

HATAY	
Last update time:	21 February, 18:00
DAMAGE STATUS	<p><i>12 February</i></p> <p>Most of the Abdals and Doms have lost their houses in Antakya and Kırıkhan. Many fled the region to other provinces. Food and clothing aid reached the region. Available stocks are estimated to last a couple of weeks. Due to the damage in the buildings inhabitants stay outside. There are not enough tents available. They try to take shelter in make-shift tents. Many children and women are affected by the cold. Flu and high fever among women and children are widespread. Those who stayed behind urgently need tents, heating and sanitation services.</p> <p>Antakya is full of debris. All the bodies of the people who have lost their lives could not be removed from the debris yet.</p> <p>Bakeries in the region are not fully functional. ZDA continues food support and is directing institutional support by local governments and public and private authorities to the neighbourhoods.</p> <p>Around 300 Roma people lost their lives but the search and rescue operation still going on.</p>

	<p><i>21 February</i></p> <p>On 20th February, another earthquake (6.4 magnitudes) happened in Hatay centre. There are new collapsed buildings. There was a migration flow from neighbourhoods populated by Roma in Hatay to another city. However, the migration flow reversed since Roma people couldn't find any place to live or job for sustaining their life in other cities. The shelter is the most urgent need.</p>
URGENT NEEDS	<p>Food and water are constant needs. Food support is the most general support to the region from public and private initiatives; however, this support also will decrease day by day. There is no coordinated support system.</p> <p>On the other hand, tent and heating systems are the most urgent needs since the tent cities are limited and there is not enough tent to distribute to all disaster survivors.</p> <p>Diseases due to the inability to create a hygienic environment and cold weather conditions have increased in children and women. Especially for women, hygiene supplies like sanitary pads are needed. Medical supplies are also needed.</p>

GAZIANTEP	
Last update time:	21 February, 20:00
DAMAGE STATUS	<p><i>12 February</i></p> <p>The houses of most of the Abdal and Dom living in Şehitkamil county have been damaged. They must stay outside for safety. Representatives of grassroots organizations report that 20 Abdals who went to organized camps could not access it. Because these groups had difficulties in meeting their basic needs before the disaster, Dom and Abdals are in a more challenging situation. Especially children and women are in danger of freezing because they do not have enough clothes against cold winter conditions. Plus, they do not have proper tents. Many children and women got flu and high fever.</p> <p>The Roma set up makeshift tents. In some cases, the stoves they use inside these tents caused gas poisoning and fires. They cook their own meals with the foodstuffs support provided by Zero Discrimination Association. Also, ZDA is directing institutional support by local governments, and public and private authorities to the neighbourhoods.</p> <p>Sanitation services and proper tents and heating are urgent needs.</p> <p>Existing institutional aids are too far from the neighbourhoods. They cannot benefit from institutional assistance effectively.</p> <p>The community with bedridden patients underlines the need for some kind of heating and shelter. As they believe</p>

	<p>that they can cope with adversities using their social capital only they do not want to be separated from each other. Therefore, they do not want to use needed facilities far from their neighbourhood.</p> <p><i>21 February</i></p> <p>The same situations proceed. The aftershocks continue in the region. There is no migration from Roma communities in the neighbourhood.</p>
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SANLIURFA	
Last update time:	21 February, 20:00
DAMAGE STATUS	<p><i>12 February</i></p> <p>The Roma communities living in Şanlıurfa are scattered around the city. This prevents the rapid distribution of aid. Although there are no houses destroyed due to the earthquake, serious damages are reported in some neighbourhoods. Due to the warnings, they are not able to enter the houses. As most families make their living from daily jobs, they do not have adequate financial means to sustain themselves. RODA member representatives in the region are trying to distribute food support to different parts of the city. For this reason, they need support for gasoline.</p> <p>Tents are among the primary needs in every region. Grassroots organizations report that many families took shelter in caves. Even though there are facilities in the province they refrain from using them because of the prejudices that they would face from the others making use of these facilities.</p> <p><i>21 February</i></p> <p>People who stayed outside for fear of earthquakes said, "If we're going to die, let's die at home." They started to enter the houses. There is still danger in the region. The community, which is generally musicians and agricultural workers, cannot do their jobs due to the earthquake. This creates the danger of not being able to continue their long-term lives.</p>

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ADANA	
Last update time:	21 February, 20:00
DAMAGE STATUS	<p><i>12 February</i></p> <p>Roma neighborhoods in Adana is in better condition compared to other provinces covered by the report. The damage caused by the disaster is much lower, yet Abdal and Dom groups had to stay outside because of aftershocks. They do not have tents or any kind of shelter. They find it hard to cope with the situation as the weather is very cold, and they lack heating and financial means.</p> <p><i>21 February</i></p> <p>Recent studies warn the Adana region of a possible earthquake. Therefore, for Roma communities, precautions should be taken and especially tent support and heating support should be planned.</p>
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EVALUATION

The poverty and deprivation experiences of the Roma communities consisting of Rom, Dom, Lom and Abdal groups in a vicious circle have recently deepened with the Covid-19 pandemic, which has affected the whole world. Since they were unable to leave their houses during the epidemic, Roma who work in the informal sector, such as musicians, florists, and waste collectors, have been economically unable to satisfy their basic necessities. The distant education system makes it more difficult for Roma children and youth to maintain their economic and social life since they lack access to modern gear such as computers and telephones, internet service at home, and housing with acceptable lodging and working circumstances. During this period, the Zero Discrimination Association carried out community-led social inclusion support in cooperation with local governments, and public and private institutions for the basic needs and services of Roma on the basis of human rights.

The Roma communities, which are trying to recover and stabilize their economic and social conditions, are turning into a much more fragile society than their increased vulnerability during the pandemic period due to the natural disaster experienced. The Dom and Abdal communities, in particular, residing in the southeast Anatolian region, are unable to benefit properly from the resources available since aid provided to the disaster area is restricted and current aid does not reach them. One of the most important causes for this is the discrimination they experienced in addition to their socio-economic status.

While institutional and individual supports are provided in central places, the neighbourhoods where the majority of Roma dwell are either uninformed of the aid or unable to file a request for aid because the centre is far from the neighbourhood. It has been claimed that Roma who visit common aid locations and request assistance face discrimination and exclusion, and they no longer wish to visit these areas and prefer to return to their neighbourhoods. These neighbourhoods have been able to reach various aids only with the support and guidance of civil society. Nevertheless, without long-term institutional assistance, these communities will be unable to preserve even the most basic of existence.

The dimension of discrimination and prejudice is another dimension of the problems faced by the Dom and Abdal communities in accessing humanitarian aid and support. According to the videos and information received, Dom and Abdal locals, who noticed that tents, water, and food support were distributed in a neighbourhood close to the neighbourhoods where Dom and Abdals live, were beaten and removed from the area when they demanded to benefit from these supports. In addition, we were informed that some neighbourhood headmen did not fulfil their duties and deliberately ignored these neighbourhoods in the distribution of aid. They encountered yet another biased attitude in the pharmacy. It was stated that a Roma person who went to the pharmacy to get medicine for his child was refused entry with the words, "Have you come to steal?"

The assistance of non-governmental organizations working with Roma societies to identify highly inhabited Roma districts and build a rights-based relief strategy is also vital for aid distribution.

In addition to the equitable distribution of existing aid among citizens, steps should be implemented to address any future rights disputes. In the neighbourhoods where Dom and Abdals live intensely, especially citizens whose houses were damaged or destroyed, they are worried that their houses will be taken away and they will be homeless after the damage assessment process, since their title deeds are under the rubble and they cannot access the documents, and most of them do not have such a document. Citizens in the neighbourhoods where Dom and Abdals live are concerned that their homes will be taken away and they will be homeless after the damage assessment process, because their title deeds are under the rubble and they cannot access the documents, and most of them do not have such a document.

Also, based on past experiences, Roma inhabitants have genuine worries about the displacement of local residents and the vertical urban regeneration design that is scheduled to be carried out in the neighbourhoods during the post-disaster period.

It is necessary to change the prejudiced attitudes of the mukhtars, to make them take an active role in the process and to participate in the distribution of neighbourhood needs in a rights-based manner to determine the changing needs of the Dom and Abdal neighbourhoods in the process and to ensure that the necessary aid is easily accessible to these neighbourhoods. At the point of distributing relief, local governments, non-governmental organizations, and the Dom and Abdal community should work together.

To avoid disputes during the process of damage assessment and determining who deserves institutional assistance, it is crucial to create a framework that allows Dom and Abdal people to receive legal support.

Plans for urban redevelopment that may occur in the future should be created by considering the pre-earthquake lifestyles of Dom and Abdal residents and by incorporating the subject in the decision-making processes. The community-centred improvement of the housing and infrastructure issues affecting Dom and Abdal locals should also be able to be supported by the area's renewal utilizing an on-site transformation strategy that takes into consideration the living patterns.

Finally, due to the dynamic structure of the disaster area, the needs change both daily and regionally. Therefore, a flexible working system should be established to carry out monitoring activities regularly and to provide the necessary support for the needs.

SUPPORT CATEGORIES DIRECTED TO COMMUNITIES SO FAR

Food support to Roma communities in Gaziantep, Adana, Hatay, and Şanlıurfa –bread, breakfast items like olive and tomato paste, raw material for warm meal cooking in the region,

Gasoline support for transportation of the support and facilitating the evacuation of Roma survivors from the region,

Tent tarpaulins were provided for Roma communities in Gaziantep, Hatay, and Şanlıurfa to fulfil the immediate requirement for shelter due to weather conditions since high-quality tent manufacture was not adequate and is expensive in the regions.

Zero Discrimination Association (ZDA) was founded in Istanbul in 2009 by a group of activists and volunteers to improve the lives of disadvantaged groups, especially Roma and communities sharing similar disadvantages. Embracing a rights-based approach the association strives to strengthen social cohesion and social inclusion of disadvantaged groups. It also advocates for their rights. In cooperation with other civil society organizations, ZDA carries out activities to improve dialogue between public institutions, Roma CSOs, and Roma communities to prevent rights violations and discrimination experienced by disadvantaged groups, especially Roma and communities living like Roma. ZDA operates in 34 localities in Turkey to support Roma groups and other disadvantaged communities to access and use their fundamental rights.

**FIR
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