



HUMANITARIAN

2023 | ISSUE 81



A STRONG TEAM SAVES LIVES

Since the beginning of the Kahramanmaraş earthquakes, we have been in action with all our strength. We will continue to be in the earthquake-afflicted zones until the wounds are fully healed. We thank all of our donors for their support.



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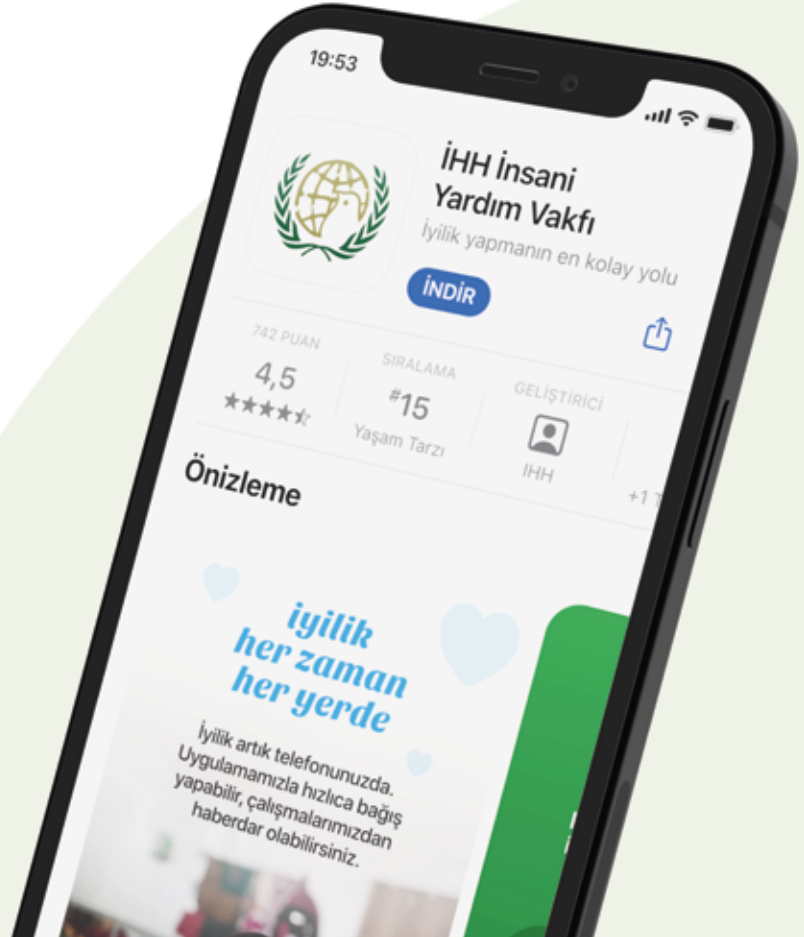
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Secretary General

Now is the time to stand together

Dear volunteers,

The seismic events that occurred on February 6, with their epicenter in Kahramanmaraş, resulted in significant physical and emotional harm. More than 50 thousand people lost their lives and tens of thousands were injured. I wish Allah's mercy on our citizens who lost their lives in the earthquake and a speedy recovery for the injured. May God protect us from such disasters and not let us experience the same suffering again.

From the very onset of the earthquake, the IHH Humanitarian Relief Foundation sprang into action, mobilizing all of its units, notably the search and rescue teams, to respond swiftly and effectively. We mobilized our entire organization to heal the wounds of the victims. Supported by our nation, we have been and will remain engaged in comprehensive efforts in the earthquake-affected region, including search and rescue, food, health, shelter, and psychosocial support, all driven by the motto "Now is the time to stand together."

During Ramadan, we intensified our activities in the earthquake region. Furthermore, we have not overlooked the vulnerable individuals who are awaiting our assistance in crisis-hit regions overseas. We have passed on the donations of our donors to around 5 million people.

We dedicated the 81st issue of our Humanitarian Relief Bulletin to the earthquake. On the following pages, you can take a look at our earthquake relief efforts, our Ramadan activities and news from our Foundation, with reports from our President Bülent Yıldırım and our Board members.

I wish you a good read.

Dr. Durmuş Aydın
Secretary General

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on behalf of the Foundation for Human Rights and Freedoms and Humanitarian Relief, owner *Atty. Fehmi Yıldırım*

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Dilara Durmuş - Tuğçe Durmuş



UN Secretary-General Guterres calls for humanitarian aid to Somalia

United Nations (UN) Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called for “action” to address the humanitarian crisis in Somalia, which he visited for official talks. Guterres pointed out that Somalia was one of the countries most affected by climate change, saying that some 6 million people in the country faced “extremely critical” food problems due to prolonged drought and security issues.

More than 11 million Ukrainian refugees have come to Poland

According to a post on the Polish Border Guard’s Twitter account, the region has experienced a significant surge in migration since the onset of the Ukrainian-Russian war, with over 11 million individuals having arrived in Poland from Ukraine.

Floods in Somalia have displaced 100 thousand people

Floods in southern Somalia in April claimed 21 lives and displaced 100 thousand people. According to a statement from the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance, flooding caused by torrential rains in the drought-stricken Baardhere region of Gedo

in the south of the country has displaced 100 thousand people.

Conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo has displaced nearly 1 million people

According to Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), nearly 1 million people have been displaced in the past year due to the ongoing conflict between the army and rebels in the North Kivu region of eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Over the past two decades, the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo, which shares borders with Rwanda, Uganda, and Burundi, has witnessed a series of attacks and conflicts perpetrated by armed groups seeking to seize control of valuable mineral mines, including gold and cobalt.



Palestinian Center for Human Rights appeals to the International Criminal Court (ICC)

The Palestinian Center for Human Rights called on ICC to “seriously investigate the incidents in this country.” “The killing of a Palestinian child and the wounding of three others in Jericho by Israel falls within the scope of war crimes and crimes arising from the excessive use of force,” it has been said in a statement. The statement called on the international community to “take immediate action to end the crimes of occupation and double standards in the application of international law” and urged ICC Chief Prosecutor Karim Khan to “seriously investigate the Palestinian situation.”

Thousands of civilians have lost their lives due to the attacks in the region.

Israeli army attacked the blockaded Gaza Strip

On May 3, Israeli warplanes flew missile attacks on armed resistance positions in the north, south and west of the Gaza Strip, on agricultural lands in the south, on the cities of Rafah and Khan Younis, and on the Palestinian refugee camp of Muhayyem Shat in Rafah. Explosions were reported to have occurred in the area following the attacks. Israeli forces also raided Haris village in Selfit town in the north of the occupied West Bank.

334 thousand people displaced in Sudan

On the morning of April 15, armed clashes broke out between the Sudanese army and Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in the Sudanese capital of Khartoum and other towns. According to the Sudanese Medical Syndicate, 730 civilians were killed and 5,550 injured in the clashes between the army and RSF militia in the capital Khartoum and other cities. Paul Dillon, spokesman for the International Organization for Migration (IOM), said that the number of internally displaced persons due to the conflict in Sudan was about 334 thousand.

Support message for Palestine by tens of thousands

Young IHH led a coalition of NGO organizations to express their outrage over the April 5 violent attack on the Al-Aqsa Mosque by Israeli occupation forces. They expressed their condemnation of the attack through press statements held across Türkiye. The press conference in Istanbul was held in the courtyard of Fatih Mosque, with the slogan “Qiyam for Jerusalem”. The statement said, “The Israeli occupation forces have brutally attacked Jerusalem, Al-Aqsa Mosque, and our holy sites this Ramadan. We must continue the resistance and struggle of our Palestinian brothers and sisters around the world.”



Women spoke out on persecution by China on International Women's Day

IHH, the International Union of Non-Governmental Organizations of East Turkistan, the East Turkistan Nuzugum Culture and Family Association and the International Refugee Rights Association held a press conference on March 8, International Women's Day, to raise awareness about the persecution of East Turkistani women by the Chinese government on a global scale. The press statement by Münevver Özyüğü, the head of the Women's Department of the International Union of Non-Governmental Organizations of East Turkistan, said they were faced with a prevalent period of women's rights violations, "women are struggling with the terrible problems of occupation, migration, war, conflict and systematic rights violations in many countries such as Syria, Yemen, Libya, Palestine, Egypt, Afghanistan, Kashmir and Myanmar. Women in East Turkistan have been systematically subjected to major rights violations for 74 years, since the beginning of China's occupation. Another painful fact is that no matter how much Uyghur women suffer and how much they are persecuted, they have no way to make their voices heard. They are confined to open and closed prisons without any time limit or end in sight."



World Orphans Day Iftar at Reyhanlı Education Campus

On the occasion of 15 Ramadan World Orphans Day, an Iftar program was arranged for orphans and their families at the Reyhanlı Education Campus in Hatay, where students from 23 different countries receive education. Speaking at the program attended by approximately 1,000 people, Reyhanlı Education Campus Coordinator Hamza Dinçer said, “Following a somber period in the aftermath of the earthquake, we find ourselves filled with elation as we embrace the advent of the month of Ramadan. Ever since the inception of our campus, we have steadfastly observed the annual World Orphans Day Iftar and this year, yet again, we are delighted to witness an exceptional turnout.”



Erol Battal girls' orphanage opens in Syria

In a collaborative effort between Eğitim-Bir-Sen and local authorities, the Erol Battal Girls' Orphanage was successfully established in the city of Jarabulus, situated in Aleppo. The orphanage, dedicated in honor of Erol Battal, a longstanding associate of Eğitim-Bir-Sen, has been inaugurated, comprising four dormitories, three classrooms, a playroom, a dining room, and an administrative facility. The inaugural event of the orphanage witnessed the esteemed presence of Mükremin Köse, Chairman of Eğitim-Bir-Sen Istanbul Branch No. 1, along with his accompanying delegation as well as representatives from IHH, various non-governmental organizations, a delegation from Jarablus Municipal Council, and dignitaries hailing from the region. Tahir Güzelel, IHH Syria Studies Kilis Regional Coordinator, who delivered the opening speech, said, “Today, once more, we unite in celebration to inaugurate a noble undertaking. We are opening our orphanage which will provide a new shelter for 40 orphans in Jarablus. Here we will meet all the needs of our children. We would like to thank all the donors who contributed to this noble cause.”





KOCAELİ ULUSLARARASI KONGRE

15 Ramadan World Orphans Day

15 Ramadan World Orphans Day was celebrated for the 10th time this year to raise awareness for orphans. Various activities, gift distributions and iftar programs were held on this year's World Orphans Day. Iftar programs for orphans and their families were organized in 37 provinces of Türkiye and 11 districts of Istanbul, with 15 thousand orphans and their families participating. Orphan mothers, refugees and vulnerable families received **58 thousand and 748 clothes for the Eid holiday.**



Big orphan education complex in Niger

Our Foundation opened the Dinç Family Orphan Education Complex in Niger, a West African country. The complex, built on an area of 16 thousand square meters, was constructed in the Kallo region, 10 kilometers from the capital Niamey. The complex, which can be used by thousands of residents of the region, includes an orphanage for 120 orphans, a mosque, an elementary school, a secondary school and a high school with a total capacity of 650 students. The complex also includes a health center, a guest house and an administrative building for the orphans and the people of the region. The opening ceremony of the complex was attended by Özgür Çınar, Turkish Ambassador to Niamey, Allahoury Aminata Zourkaleini, Nigerien Minister of Women Empowerment and Child Protection, Hüseyin Oruç, IHH Board of Trustees Vice Chairman, IHH Board Members Emre Kaya and Reşat Başer, donor Adnan Dinç, foundation managers, local officials and local people.



Support for orphan families in Gaza

During the 2022 Orphan Solidarity Days, an array of impactful projects were successfully implemented, aimed at enhancing the well-being of orphans and their families across diverse regions of the world. In the Gaza Strip in Palestine, 26 orphan families were provided with lighting equipment and 2 orphan families were provided with a tuk-tuk. The orphanage lighting project provided 26 orphan families in Gaza with lighting equipment, including power cables, LED bulbs, light control switches, double battery tongs and batteries.



İyilikte Yarışan Sınıflar Projesi sürüyor

Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı ve Eğitim-Bir-Sen koordinesinde 2013 yılında başlattığımız “İyilikte Yarışan Sınıflar” projesi devam ediyor. Türkiye’nin dört bir yanındaki okullarda eğitim gören öğrenciler, projeye Yetim Sponsorluk Sistemi kapsamındaki 44 ülkeden dilediklerini seçip yetim kardeşlerine gönüllü destek oluyor. Sponsorluk süreci başlatıldıktan sonra sınıflar adına eşleştirilen yetimlerin ülkesi, adı, yaşı ve fotoğrafını içeren “Yetim Özet Bilgi Formu” posta veya e-posta ile kendilerine gönderiliyor. Türkiye dahil 44 ülkedeki 133 binden fazla yetime Yetim Sponsorluk Sistemi ile düzenli destek veren İHH, ayrıca 12 ülkedeki 42 yetimhanesi, 1 Yetim Eğitim Merkezi ve 1 Eğitim Köyü ile de yetimlere sahip çıkıyor.



CZN Burak met with children affected by the earthquake

Amidst the aftermath of the earthquake, one prominent figure who emerged as a beacon of assistance for the impacted provinces was the renowned chef Burak Özdemir, or CZN Burak. Özdemir embarked on a journey with his caravan, commencing in Istanbul and concluding in Hatay, where he graciously served hamburgers to the children in need. Özdemir and the children also flew kites at the playground set up by Young IHH. On site, Young IHH teams distributed cotton candy to the children.



Leadership training for female NGO managers

The International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA) conducted a four-day training on “Leadership in Humanitarian Assistance” for female managers of NGOs, including IHH. The training program covered topics such as the basic concepts of humanitarian assistance and leadership, women’s rights, roles and responsibilities in humanitarian assistance, advocacy and policy, and influencing and leadership skills. The training was attended by 20 female representatives from various NGOs working in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Libya, Lebanon, Palestine, Syria and Türkiye.



Foreign students mobilized for earthquake region

Under the leadership of the Sefire-i Alem Association, more than 50 students from 19 countries made an exemplary effort to support those affected by the earthquake. In the workshops set up in the building of the association, the students prepared sarma and manti to be sold at the IHH charity sale. The generated revenue from the sales of these products will be allocated towards the realization of the envisioned container project in Kahramanmaraş.





Mobile soup kitchen and relief supplies for Ukraine

IHH sent a mobile soup kitchen from Istanbul to Ukraine, which is currently under attack by Russia. The soup kitchen has the capacity to provide two meals a day for 30 thousand people. A few weeks before the departure of the mobile soup kitchen, three aid trucks were sent to the region with food packages, hygiene packs, baby diapers and generators.

We participated in the events of the Geneva Peace Week and the European Cohesion Week

We participated in the European Cohesion Week event in London and the Geneva Peace Week event in Geneva. The European Cohesion Week event in London focused on ethics and compliance programs. Executives and professionals from different sectors and organizations shared their knowledge and experiences. More than 300 participants attended the two-day event. At Peace Week in Geneva, participating organizations shared their knowledge and experiences on various topics related to peacebuilding.





Food Security Sector We participated in the Global Partners Meeting

We took part in the Global Partners Meeting of the Food Security Sector in Rome, which the Global Food Security Group organized. At the meeting, the topic “2023-2025 Strategy of the Global Food Security Sector” was extensively discussed. During the three-day event, participants exchanged ideas in sessions and meetings. During the program, our Foundation’s experience in food security was shared with the representatives of other institutions.

We participated in the Ethics and Compliance Summit

Our foundation participated in the Ethics and Compliance Summit organized by the *Society of Corporate Compliance and Ethics* (SCCE) from March 20 to 22 in Amsterdam. More than 300 representatives from various sectors and organizations were present at the summit, which featured more than 50 sessions. During the three-day summit, current issues in ethics and compliance, climate policy, and artificial intelligence were discussed



We held the “2nd Balkan NGO Meeting” in northern Macedonia.

We held the “2nd Balkan NGO Meeting” in Skopje, the capital of northern Macedonia. Within the context of the meeting, an “International Project Writing Training Certificate Program” was conducted, attracting active participation from 60 individuals representing 29 non-governmental organizations hailing from 10 countries in the region.

Osman Atalay, member of our Board of Trustees, said in his statement on the program, “At the meeting, which we organized for the second time this year, we also held a certified training program for non-governmental organizations in the Balkans to improve themselves in international project writing. The Balkan NGO meetings are a cooperation program that allows Balkan NGOs to show solidarity with each other, strengthen the exchange of knowledge and experience, and jointly seek solutions to problems while enabling institutions to renew and develop themselves, through what we call innovation and R&D,” and added that they planned to hold the meetings in all Balkan countries in the coming years.

The training covered R&D and innovation processes, SWOT analyses, project preparation techniques, applications to organizations providing project funds and grants, review of sample project designs, and practical demonstration of project management phases. At the end of the program, certificates were given to the participants.





Konya Alaeddin Keykubad dormitory opened in Syria

IHH Konya Branch built a dormitory for male students of Damascus University, which opened in the 2015-2016 academic year in the city center of Azaz. The Konya Alaeddin Keykubad dormitory in the city of Azaz in Aleppo, Syria, consists of 40 dormitories, a multipurpose hall, and an administrative room. The dormitory will accommodate 320 male students. The opening ceremony was attended by Prof. Dr. Emrullah Eken, Vice Rector of Konya Selçuklu University, Prof. Dr. Ramazan Altıntaş, Dean of the Faculty of Islamic Sciences of Selçuklu University, Ecevit Öksüz, Secretary General of Necmettin Erbakan University, Ahmet Keleşoğlu from Necmettin Erbakan University, Prof. Dr. Kamil Güneş from the Faculty of Theology, Dr. Hasan Hüseyin Uysal, IHH's Konya President, IHH Board of Trustees Member Muhammed Hanefi Kutluoğlu and his accompanying delegation, NGO representatives, Azaz Local Council delegation, and dignitaries of the region.



Coat aid for children in Syria

The group “Quran and on the Way to the Sunnah”, operating under the motto “A Project Every Month”, delivered coats to 6,255 children in different regions of Syria in cooperation with IHH. In a statement on behalf of the group “Quran and on the Way to Sunnah,” Ali İhsan Ergin revealed the successful implementation of the project “We Warm Innocent Hearts in Idlib.” He disclosed that the realization of this project was made possible through the donations collected during the month of December. Ergin expressed his joy that the project could be completed in a short period of time to protect children from the cold in the cold winter days, saying, “We have provided the necessary funds to provide coats to children in Syria as planned in a short period of 23 days.”



15 humanitarian aid trucks sent off to Syria

IHH Ümraniye Representative Office sent 15 trucks of relief goods to Syria as part of the winter campaign that we launched under the slogan “Goodness is cold-proof”. The farewell ceremony for the trucks took place in the central garage of Ümraniye Municipality.

At the ceremony, which was attended by Ümraniye District Governor Abdulaziz Aydın, Ümraniye Mayor İsmet Yıldırım and Ümraniye Deputy Mufti Hasan Kargı, Mehmet Kesmen, IHH Istanbul Chairman, said that one-third of houses, at least half of hospitals and schools in Syria had been bombed due to the war. Kesmen said, “Currently, 13.5 million people in Syria are in need of humanitarian aid. Over the past 12 years, IHH has delivered about 26 thousand trucks full of humanitarian supplies to Syria, consisting of various humanitarian supplies, from basic food to clothing, from medicine to hygiene products.”



54 thousand loaves of bread delivered daily to camps in Syria

In cooperation with the *Human Charity* Organization and with financial support from the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance, 54 thousand loaves of bread are distributed daily in the camps in Syria. Selim Tosun, media officer for Syria activities at IHH, said that thanks to this project, the region would be supported economically and those in need would be able to receive bread for free.

Tosun elucidated that the project was executed in four distinct phases. Initially, wheat procurement from local farmers in the Idlib region marked the commencement of the endeavor. Subsequently, this wheat was skillfully processed into flour at a nearby mill situated within the same region. The resultant flour was then utilized to craft Syrian bread, which was packaged in six-packs and distributed among the camps.







“Am I really alive?”

The question of İrem, who was rescued after hours of work in Antakya, described the magnitude of the earthquake: “Am I really alive?”

File: Ahmet Fatih Madanoğlu

What happened?

On February 6, 2023, two earthquakes with a magnitude of 7.7 and 7.6 in central Kahramanmaraş shook 11 provinces where millions of people live. More than 50,000 people lost their lives in these disasters. The earthquake also caused great destruction in the Syrian cities of Aleppo, Idlib, Latakia and Tartus. According to the United Nations, the earthquakes in Syria killed more than 4,500 people and injured more than 8,700 people.



The earthquakes destroyed most of the houses and buildings in the region. Immediately after the earthquake, a large number of search and rescue teams, firefighters, medical personnel, and volunteers were mobilized for rescue operations. Tents and containers were and continue to be erected to meet people's sheltering needs.



BÜLENT YILDIRIM
Chairman



“We will keep working until the wounds are healed!”

We are faced with a very big earthquake. Both the nation and the NGOs have learned great lessons from the work that has been done so far. The response was very quick. In my assessment, our country exhibited the swiftest and most efficient response to this disaster when compared to responses globally.

When we started these activities, there were very few organizations operating in this field. Now their number has increased significantly. IHH also formed its own search and rescue teams in all cities across Türkiye. We took action immediately after the earthquake. We immediately initiated our operations, focusing particularly on the 11 heavily affected cities and their neighboring regions.

We have government institutions and other non-governmental organizations here. These are days of unity. We will work hand in hand in this time of unity. People responded to this disaster both in Türkiye and in Syria. Those who are doing well in Syria are bringing aid to Türkiye, and those who are doing well in Türkiye are bringing aid to Syria. We are trying to heal these wounds with a sense of solidarity that transcends borders.

We made a call from here to the entire world. Especially in the Arab world and in Far Asia, we have been involved in so many collaborations and efforts for years. Whenever they experienced a disaster, they had us by their side. We told them that today it was Türkiye that needed help. We told them not to leave us alone and we got good results. Aid organizations in numerous countries quickly mobilized. They asked us for a list of needs. We provided them with the necessary information. Foreign students who had previously studied in Türkiye also participated in these activities. They are working in their own countries and they say, “We will stand by these people who welcomed us once.” Türkiye is not alone, we have seen this. Because our people have provided a lot of aid and have won the hearts of people. They have won the love of societies and they are being rewarded for it.

A consciousness has been created. Bridges between humanity have been established through solidarity. We can say that this is really Türkiye’s soft power. We will continue to work until the wounds are healed in all regions.







iHH

neler yapıyor?

- The earthquake region's top priority is ensuring a constant and consistent supply of relief materials to the affected people, considering that the disaster has impacted millions of individuals. IHH has been building its disaster management capacity since 2009. The logistics centers it has set up enable it to provide rapid assistance in the event of a disaster. In the two earthquakes in Kahramanmaraş, IHH disaster management teams were on the scene from the first moment and worked with all their might, rescuing hundreds of people from the rubble and providing immediate aid to millions.
- IHH extends its support to the region by organizing emergency relief under a few categories and implementing long-term solutions. These categories allow IHH to act quickly and in a coordinated manner:
 - Logistics centers
 - Soup kitchens
 - Aid trucks
 - Housing solutions
 - Psychosocial support







LOGISTICS CENTERS

Logistics centers are vital to the rapid collection, management, and distribution of relief supplies and equipment during disasters. These centers perform critical functions such as reaching disaster victims, providing health services, meeting basic needs, and supporting crisis teams.

IHH maintains its coordination of earthquake operations through 22 logistics centers, including facilities in Hatay/Reyhanlı and Kilis. These centers serve as crucial hubs for delivering humanitarian supplies to those in need in both Türkiye and Syria. Materials transported by relief trucks are taken to the logistics centers, sorted and then sent to the affected regions.

YAKUP IŞIK*Board Member Responsible for Syria Affairs*

“There will be more need for support from volunteers”.

I was in Gaziantep when the earthquake hit. I quickly went to our co-ordination center in Kilis. It is a logistics center with a warehouse, kitchen, and bakery on a 17-acre site. The disaster area was very large, and the weather conditions were very bad. Right after the earthquake, we quickly put together a crisis team at the center and devised a plan. Under IHH, we came together and initiated our activities focused on search and rescue, nutrition, and providing shelter. We made efforts to address humanitarian needs by responding to demands from the crisis desk. We utilized large food cauldrons in the center to provide meals for the earthquake victims. On the first day, at 10:00, we distributed soup to 10 thousand people. We distributed hot meals to about 25 thousand people every day.

In the provinces where there was a shortage of electricity and gas, there was a need for bread because the bakeries stopped working. So there was a need for bread. And what we did was we took the bread we baked in Syrian bakeries and gave it to the people in need in Türkiye.

Trucks with humanitarian aid arrive at our center from all over Türkiye. We put together provisions such as fruit juice, cake, water, bread, formula, wet wipes, cheese, jam and honey into ration packs and distributed them to the disaster victims.

Our staff and volunteers in Kilis and Reyhanlı suffered many losses. Nevertheless, they continued to come to the center and work for other disaster victims.

The earthquake also had an impact on Syria. We set up our crisis desk there and commenced our operations. With nearly 200 of our friends, we met the urgent needs of disaster victims in Syria.

Our friends are currently visiting the tents in the earthquake zone and determining the needs of the families. And we are trying to meet those needs. We need more time. We need to be with the disaster victims for at least one more year. Once the debris removal is completed, the public's interest in the region is likely to diminish. That is when the earthquake victims will need more support from volunteers.









SOUP KITCHENS

Soup kitchens, which play a vital role in providing food and water to disaster victims during emergencies, also serve as a source of long-term aid and support in the aftermath of disasters.

After the earthquake disaster, IHH set up soup kitchens in 14 different locations in Türkiye and four mobile soup kitchens in different regions. At these centers, hot meals are cooked for tens of thousands of people every day. Through our soup kitchens, we have distributed more than 4 million servings of food to citizens to date. In addition, we have distributed more than 343 thousand loaves of bread and 300 thousand servings of hot food and soup in Syria.





AID TRUCKS

The dispatch of aid trucks to disaster areas plays a crucial role in swiftly delivering essential necessities like food, water, medicine, blankets, clothes, and tents to the victims in need.





Thanks to the generous contributions of philanthropists from all provinces of Türkiye and around the world, IHH has dispatched 932 aid trucks and lorries to the region, providing much-needed assistance to the victims of the earthquake. So far, more than 1.8 million bottles of water, more than 907 thousand pieces of clothing, more than 330 thousand hygiene kits, 125 thousand diapers, 50 thousand baby food, 242 thousand blankets have been delivered to people in need.



“You were the first ones to get here”

As we got on the vehicles at half past ten, we were well aware that the journey ahead would be arduous and lengthy. We were going through snowy mountain roads, but the people in the mountain villages needed help. Since we were going to several villages, we had to take a lot of supplies with us. We loaded the all-terrain vehicles and set off.

We reached Akçalı village at 11:00 a.m. In front of the condolence tent erected in the garden of the old village school, the villagers warmly welcomed us as we arrived. Several houses in the village had been destroyed in the earthquake. Since the shops in the city center were closed, they had difficulty in accessing even basic needs. We delivered the ration packs we had brought to the village headman and left the village.

Then we went to Yazıbaşı village. We distributed food, winter clothes and toys to children and chatted with the people of the village. We saw how just being remembered in difficult times makes people happy. They kept saying “God bless you, I am glad you came”. We continued our warm conversation over the tea they kindly offered us. We left the village after receiving the blessings of an elderly lady, Hatice, who said, “Come my son, I baked warm bread.”

We saw a lonely house built at the foot of a hill below the village of Yazıbaşı. As we approached the house, Bedri met us on the road with his smiling face. They had been without electricity for 10 days and their food was low. “No one came here because we are far from the village. You were the first to come.” said he. Having heard this sentence in other cities I had visited after disasters, it always served as a poignant reminder of the reasons that compelled us to embark on these challenging journeys. Maybe we were on our way because of Bedri’s prayer. Everything else was just small details of the story. After delivering the food and hygiene packages, we left for the next village.

When we reached Düzağaç, we had been on the road for about four hours. We stopped to rest for a while. People living in the neighboring houses came to us immediately. Like everywhere else, they would not let us go without having a cup of tea first. We delivered the stoves, food packages and blankets we brought to those in need. Children were very affected by the earthquakes that continued one after another. We knew that the easiest way to put a smile on their faces was to give them toys. We gave the last toys left in our car to a very sweet girl who came to meet us here with her father. Gurbet was the last smiling face of our five-hour village visits.

Serdar Gürçay
Adıyaman, 2023





HOUSING SOLUTIONS

The issue of housing in earthquake-prone areas can be addressed through the use of non-permanent structures that can be rapidly constructed in the aftermath of a disaster. These structures can usually be tents, prefabricated buildings or containers.



IHH initiated the establishment of container neighborhoods to fulfill the need for shelter in the affected areas. Container houses, equipped with two rooms, a bathroom, a kitchen, and a toilet, were delivered to families in need on suitable lands with proper infrastructure. These container homes come furnished with white goods, sofas, tables, kitchen utensils, and a heating system. Furthermore, the neighborhood also benefits from the presence of a health center, prayer room, and kindergarten, which have been established to provide essential services to our earthquake victims.

To date, 1,100 containers have been installed, and 2,725 tents have also been delivered to earthquake victims.







MUSTAFA DEMİR

Board Member Responsible for
Domestic Aid Efforts and Logistics



“These efforts would have been fruitless if they were not based on volunteerism”

We were always preparing for the Istanbul earthquake, the great Marmara earthquake. But this was the first time we saw such a big disaster. We set out as soon as we received the news of the earthquake. From the first hours, we focused on food aid. Because we knew how important a hot soup, a hot meal on that winter day was for the disaster victims. We made efforts to determine the locations for setting up our soup kitchens, planned the activities we would carry out, and made an urgent call to Türkiye. We began strategizing and organizing the logistics of in-kind aid materials in our cities. We determined where we would accept the supplies and where we would distribute them.

Shortly before the earthquake, we had initiated preparations for Ramadan aid. Our logistics team was about to start working in Kilis for the rations we would distribute in Anatolia when the earthquake struck that morning. We immediately started to deliver the food packages to the families in need in the earthquake zone.

We needed volunteers here a lot. Our objective was twofold: to establish a functional system for the soup kitchens and to meticulously plan the logistics of in-kind aid materials for distribution to families in need. At this juncture, our young people demonstrated remarkable dedication to the cause. They became involved in the coordination of activities. Likewise, the ladies in charge of the women's branches came from different cities and lightened our burden considerably. These efforts would have been very fruitless if they were not based on volunteerism.

Since the first day of the earthquake, we have distributed and continue to distribute hot meals to approximately 2.5 million people. During Ramadan, we reached 1,500,000 people with sahur and iftar meals at 19 locations in 6 cities. In addition, we delivered 1,000 trucks of in-kind aid materials from across the country to families in need in the earthquake zone. We prioritized the delivery of hygiene packages, food packages, clothes, textile materials, household goods, etc. to the region.

Our operations are executed in the following order: Primarily, we diligently ascertain the delivery of emergency humanitarian aid supplies to vulnerable families; subsequently, we efficaciously administer nourishing hot meals; and lastly, we undertake the task of executing shelter operations. We are in the process of establishing container communities in conjunction with temporary shelters and tents. In this process, our infrastructure preparations also continue. We established a neighborhood of 1,100 containers for earthquake victims.





PSYCHO-SOCIAL SUPPORT

In addition, IHH diligently endeavors to furnish psychological support and essential intervention to those impacted by the earthquake. In this pursuit, IHH's objective is to foster community participation and promote volunteerism, empowering individuals to discern the needs of earthquake-affected families, initiate measures for resolution, and cultivate self-reliance. In alignment with this mission, IHH collaborates with volunteer psychologists who are proficient in administering psychological therapy to disaster victims. They respond to treatment requests through on-site, online, and face-to-face sessions.

EFFORTS TO HELP ORPHANS

- Among the most heart-wrenching images etched in the aftermath of the earthquake disaster are those of the orphaned children. After the earthquake, two different groups of orphans emerged. One is children who were orphans before the earthquake. And the other is children who became orphans after the earthquake. IHH is committed to both groups. It supports a total of 3,586 orphans in 11 cities affected by the earthquake through a sponsorship system. IHH is committed to diligently nurturing and safeguarding orphans until they mature into resilient individuals capable of standing independently on their own two feet while ensuring their protection from harm.
- Immediately after the earthquake, our teams carried out the following activities:
- In 10 cities, mothers of orphaned children were called by phone and due diligence was conducted.
- Orphans whose houses were destroyed, damaged or who migrated to another city were visited.
- 73 children orphaned after the earthquake were included in the orphan sponsorship system.
- The orphans already encompassed within the auspices of the orphan sponsorship system were visited, and their essential requirements pertaining to sustenance, hygiene, and other necessities were diligently attended to.
- 5,000 orphan children were gifted with clothes for the Eid holiday.
- Our cash aid efforts continue for orphaned families affected by the earthquake.





Chronology of the earthquake

More than 50 thousand of our citizens lost their lives as a result of the earthquakes in the southeast of our country. 2.7 million people were left homeless. More than 24 thousand aftershocks occurred after the earthquakes.

7.7

Kahramanmaraş/Pazarcık

Date: 6 February 2023

Time: 04.17

Magnitude: 7.7

Depth: 8,6 km

7.6

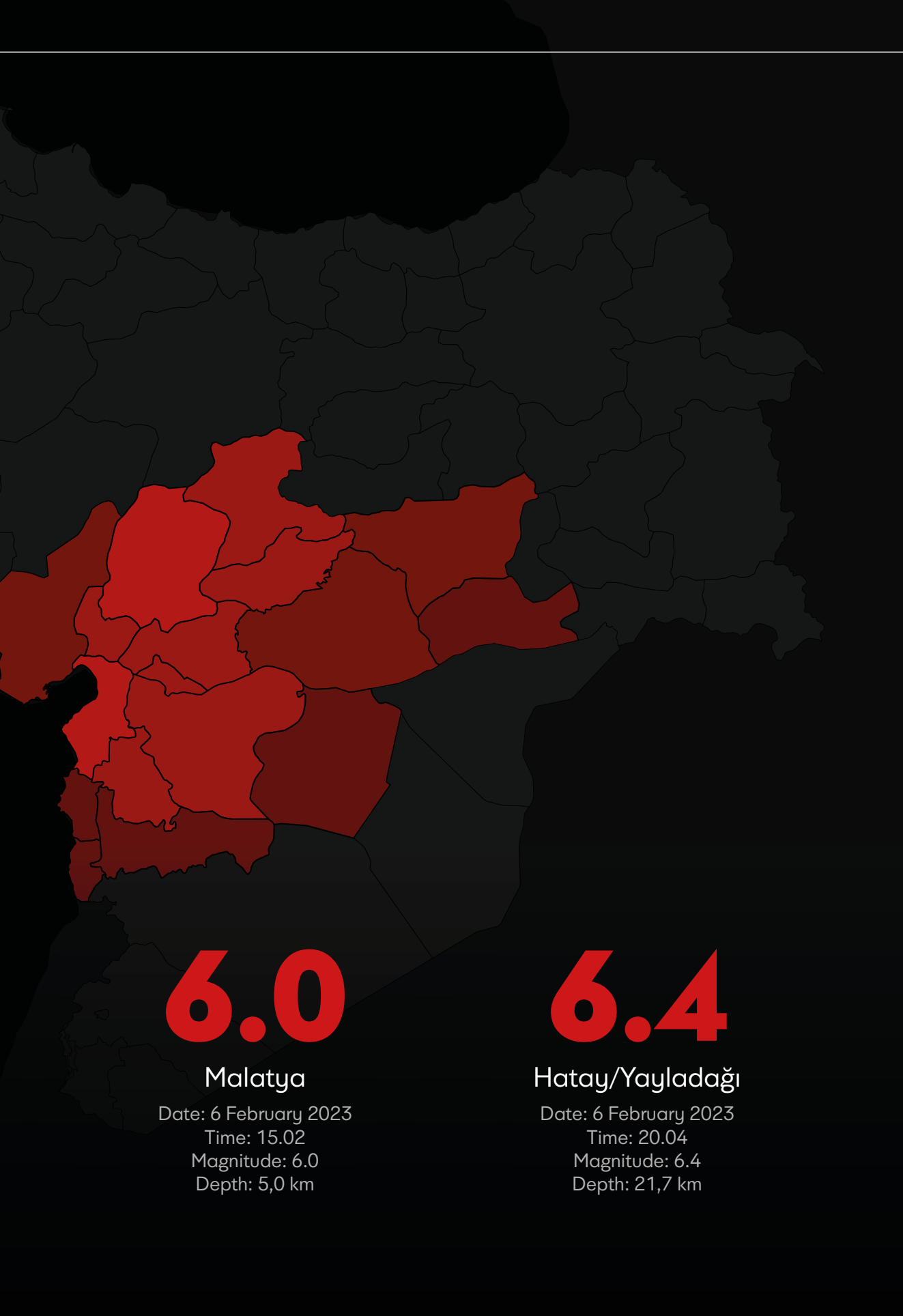
Kahramanmaraş/Elbistan

Date: 6 February 2023

Time: 13.24

Magnitude: 7.6

Depth: 7,0 km



6.0

Malatya

Date: 6 February 2023

Time: 15.02

Magnitude: 6.0

Depth: 5,0 km

6.4

Hatay/Yayladağı

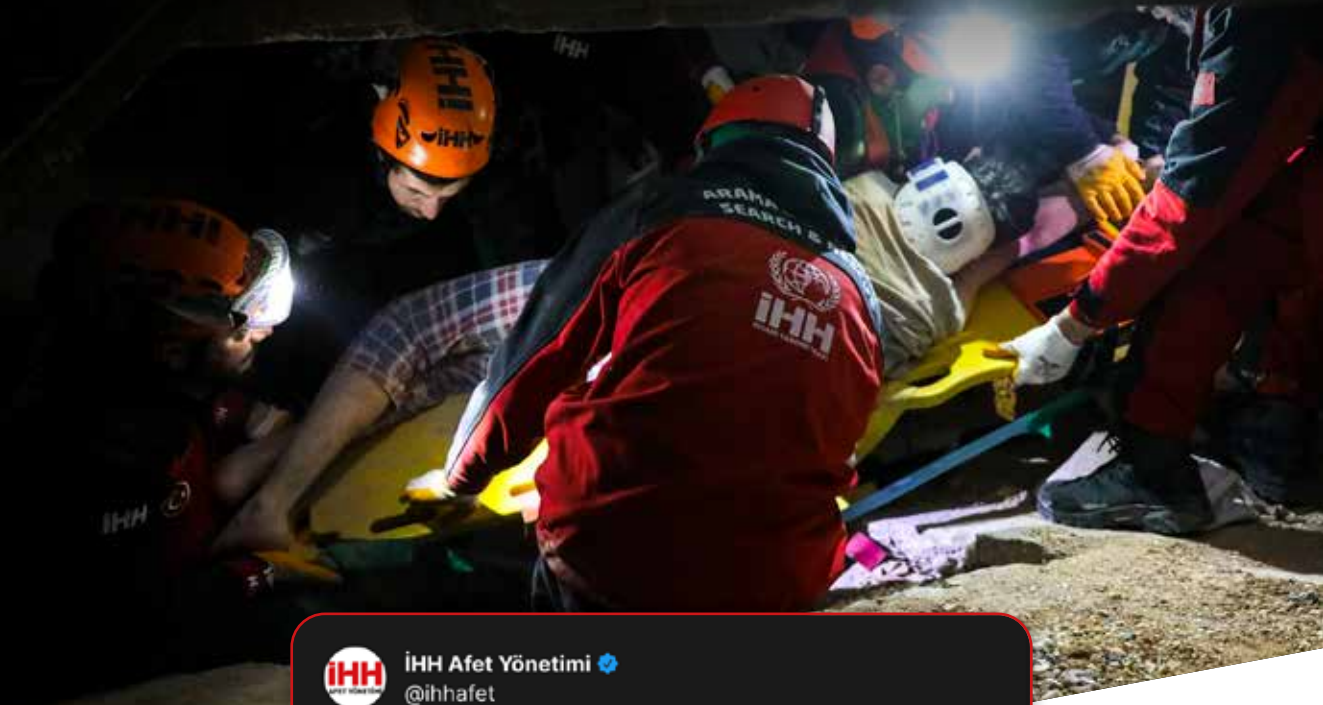
Date: 6 February 2023


Time: 20.04

Magnitude: 6.4

Depth: 21,7 km

HOW DID IHH PREPARE FOR THE EARTHQUAKE?



İHH Afet Yönetimi 
@ihhafet

An #earthquake of 7.4 magnitude occurred in #Kahramanmaraş's #Pazarcık district. Our teams were swiftly sent to the region. We follow the developments.

Wishing a swift recovery and good health to all our citizens impacted by the earthquake.
May Allah protect our country and nation from all disasters.

05:00 · 6 Şub 2023

In addition to search and rescue efforts, our teams promptly assembled vital supplies such as food, medical aid, and shelter materials – crucial necessities during times of disaster. These provisions were readied at logistics centers in Kilis and Reyhanlı, all set to be delivered to those affected by the earthquake.

How could IHH organize itself so quickly after the earthquake?

Since its establishment, IHH has been and continues to be active in many crisis situations such as war, conflicts, earthquakes, tsunamis and landslides in our country and in different parts of the world. Through all these activities, we have gained experience and can continuously improve.

Backed by the trust and support of our citizens, we have so far set foot in 123 countries, knocked on the doors of millions of people, and brought the greetings and trust of philanthropists to those in need. In our unyielding commitment to fostering continuous improvement and advocating for those in need, we have diligently undertaken evaluations at the culmination of each activity.

In 2009, we professionalized our work by creating the Search and Rescue Unit. Along with the necessary training, our unit has judiciously drawn upon the valuable experiences gleaned from


previous activities, utilizing them as a foundation to build upon. It has saved thousands of lives by responding to disasters such as earthquakes, landslides, tsunamis and floods in our country and in other parts of the world.

We led many search and rescue missions in the 1999 Marmara earthquake, the 2011 Van earthquake, and the 2020 Elazığ and İzmir earthquakes. We have strived to enhance our teams and optimize our equipment by analyzing and assimilating the valuable insights gleaned from assessments conducted following both our training sessions and disaster response efforts. We also support team building and disaster awareness through training events in Türkiye and abroad.

Today, our search and rescue teams are ready in 69 cities with more than 2,000 trained search and rescue workers waiting to intervene wherever they are needed.







ÖMER KARS

Board Member Responsible for Disaster Management



“A strong team saves lives”

In light of our country’s geographical location, nestled within an earthquake-prone zone, we are no stranger to severe natural disasters arising from powerful earthquakes and the impact of climate change. In addition, national and international political, economic and social crises create situations that require urgent intervention. In the face of all these crises, civil society organizations bear a great deal of responsibility in addition to state agencies. Therefore, we at IHH act with the awareness that we should be prepared for all types of humanitarian crises. In this sense, we are constantly working to overcome our shortcomings in training, drills, capacity building, etc. We act with the awareness that we should always be prepared; it should not be forgotten that a strong team saves lives. This team is not just a search and rescue team. If we act with the awareness that we as a whole society are part of a team, we will come out of disasters with the least damage.

Immediately after the first earthquake in Kahramanmaraş, the IHH Disaster Management Office instructed teams based in the cities to begin preparations and operations to respond to the disaster. However, since our team members located in the cities affected by the earthquake were also disaster victims, they were unable to carry out operations or initiate relief activities. They were also affected by the disaster, along with their families and loved ones and suffered losses. Notwithstanding the formidable circumstances, our staff and volunteers, found to be in a state of good health, were mobilized to extricate those entrapped under the rubble. Our teams in neighboring cities immediately completed their preparations and began search and rescue operations in the cities and towns affected by the earthquake. Nevertheless, this undertaking proved exceptionally challenging as the earthquake struck during the late hours of the night, amidst treacherous weather conditions, and in the wake of extensive destruction with numerous bridges rendered impassable and roads severely damaged. Due to the unfavorable conditions, most of our teams were stuck on the roads, had serious accidents and some of them were even waiting to be rescued. Despite all these difficulties, some of our teams from Gaziantep, Malatya, Kayseri, Şanlıurfa, Hatay and Çorum reached the earthquake area in the first hours after the quake and some in the early morning hours and started search and rescue operations. Our teams, who had traveled from distant cities, were dispatched to disaster areas by both air and land with their vehicles and equipment.

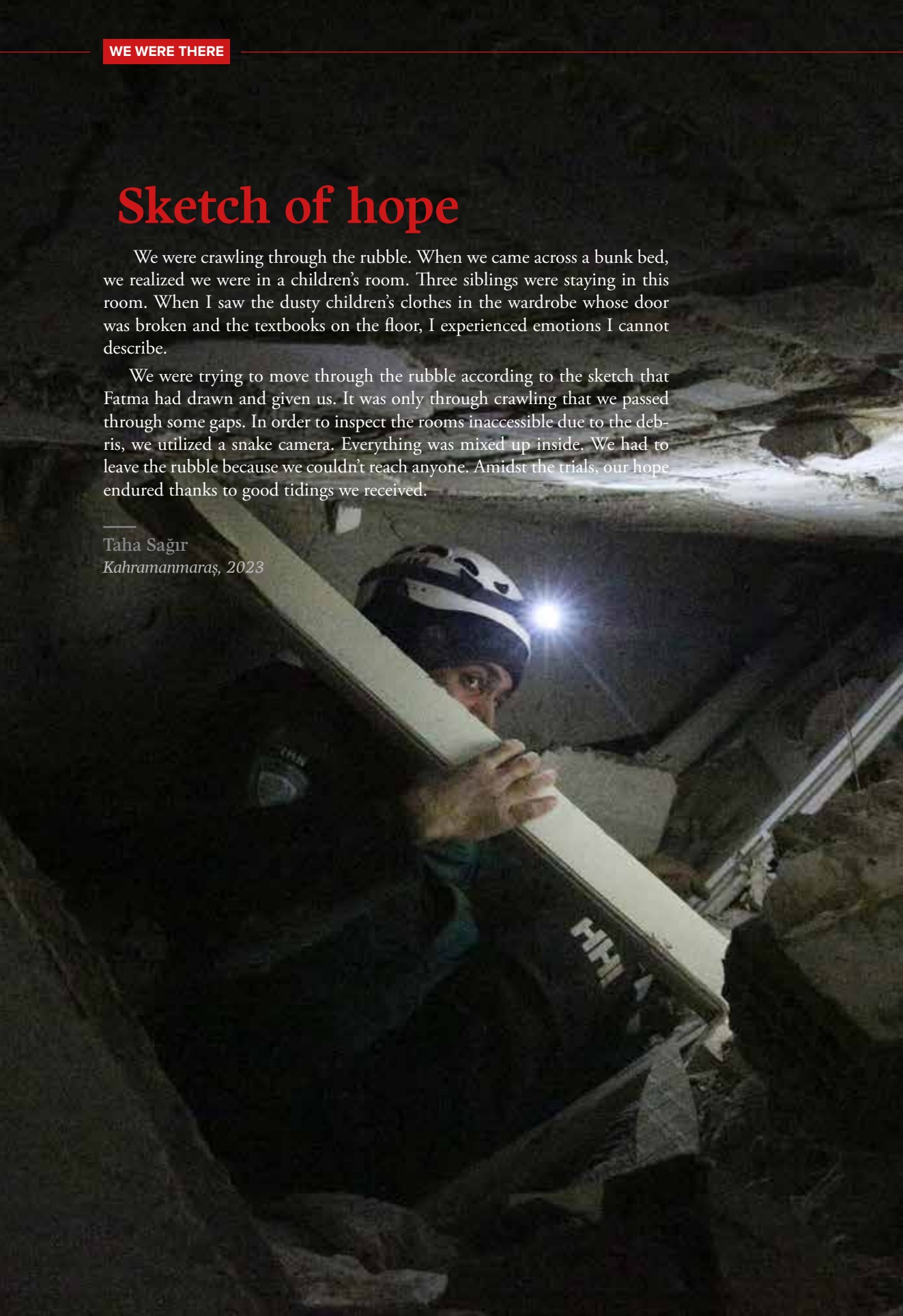
Our teams that arrived in the disaster zones affected by the earthquake conducted search and rescue operations in the rubble in coordination with AFAD crisis management centers. 7,341 search and rescue personnel/volunteers, 3 search dogs and 550 vehicles from 65 different cities worked in Nurdağı and Islahiye in Gaziantep, Doğanşehir in Malatya, Antakya and İskenderun in Hatay, Diyarbakır, Kahramanmaraş, Adıyaman and Adana. Our teams recovered a total of 3,728 people from the rubble, both living and deceased.

Sketch of hope

We were crawling through the rubble. When we came across a bunk bed, we realized we were in a children's room. Three siblings were staying in this room. When I saw the dusty children's clothes in the wardrobe whose door was broken and the textbooks on the floor, I experienced emotions I cannot describe.

We were trying to move through the rubble according to the sketch that Fatma had drawn and given us. It was only through crawling that we passed through some gaps. In order to inspect the rooms inaccessible due to the debris, we utilized a snake camera. Everything was mixed up inside. We had to leave the rubble because we couldn't reach anyone. Amidst the trials, our hope endured thanks to good tidings we received.

Taha Sağır
Kahramanmaraş, 2023









EARTHQUAKE

FOUR DAYS IN THE KAHRAMANMARAŞ

Text: Emre SARICA

Photo: Abdurrahim KİBRİTÇİ

We had come to Kilis to see the harsh conditions in the refugee camps on the Syrian border and to provide winter aid. We were spending the night at the IHH coordination center in Kilis. I woke up to the strongest tremor I had ever experienced in my life. The clock read 04:30. The quake became stronger until I realized what had happened. The earthquake alarm began to echo like a scream.

I got up and ran to my teammate's room. I had difficulty standing. I knocked on the door several times with all my might. When my friend woke up, we left the building together. As we walked down the stairs, we were still shaking. Like everyone else, I was in shock and could not speak, we just waited. I will tell you about the next four days, hour by hour.



1st Day

04.45: The big earthquake is over but the aftershocks continue. Very strong aftershocks. We are standing next to the gazebo in the garden. From time to time, we hear the sound of the earth bubbling beneath us.

05.00: Friends here leave the center by car to ensure the safety of other co-workers in Kilis. We still do not know what to do. Aftershocks continue.

05.30: The personnel in Kilis were brought to the center with their families. Fortunately, no one is missing and no damages were reported.

06.00: There are at least 150 people in the center. A crisis desk is being set up. Under the leadership of Yakup Işık, the regional supervisor, the warehouse inventory is examined and urgent aid is organized. As an organization, we quickly take action.

07.00: I go to the warehouse and do what I

can to help prepare the materials to be sent. It is raining outside and getting wet in such an emergency situation makes it difficult. In the meantime, the teams are getting organized, needs are being identified and they are ready to set off.

09.00: We set off for the center of Kilis for damage assessment and observation. We set up a tent where people could get hot soup and water.

12.15: We visit the debris sites. The minarets of the mosques around are destroyed. I see people with blankets and cardboard cups in their hands, there is a deep concern on their faces.

13.30: We learn that IHH's search and rescue teams are active in Gaziantep and so we decide to go there. But first we need to go back to the center and pack our belongings quickly. Once more, a strong earthquake shakes us as we pack our belongings at the center.

This time I'm going down without panicking. This second earthquake in Elbistan had a



magnitude of 7.6. When the quake ends, we take our bags and head for Gaziantep. After about two hours we are on the field.

16.30: The situation in Gaziantep is worse than in Kilis. I am confronted with a foggy landscape. The screams, which I can't orient myself to, blend in with the others. Three large apartment blocks in the same street have collapsed, at least 6-7 stories high. Dozens of families are trapped under the rubble.

17.00: It is freezing cold and raining. I see people waiting next to the rubble, hoping to receive good news from their relatives, opening their hands and praying. It is the longest wait of their lives. I can't even imagine how many people are trapped under the rubble. We are having a hard time because we don't have enough winter gear. The rain is getting heavier, we have no boots and our socks are already wet. Up the road there is a gas station that is full of people. We buy all the supplies we can get our hands

on there. We go to the debris field on the back side of the road where we see the IHH Kayseri search and rescue team. We meet with the team leader and get information about the situation. We are told about a building withstanding the initial earthquake where a heartrending incident unfolded when an individual, seeking to retrieve their car from the garage during an aftershock, became ensnared under the collapsed structure, and died. "Can anyone hear my voice?" echoes in my ear. The teams repeat this phrase over and over to get signs of life from those trapped under the rubble. The air is very dusty; it's hard to breathe. One of the search and rescue workers breaks his foot while working in the rubble. These people are here voluntarily, they work without regard for their lives. The earthquake victims gather around the fire lit by the search and rescue teams. We make our way to Kahramanmaraş.

21.00: It is dark, there is total chaos. The sound of sirens echoes everywhere, it's like a war has broken out... I think we have suffered the kind of damage that war cannot inflict. I see people running around not knowing what to do. Our search and rescue team receive sounds from under the rubble, our friends are working with all their might. There are people waiting for their loved ones. Screams and crying blend with one another. I cannot believe what is happening around me, but everything lies before me in all its concreteness... Soon I witness one of the most impressive moments in my life. They find a mother and her five-year-old daughter. The mother hugged her daughter during the earthquake, and that is how they died. And next to them is the girl's doll. Perhaps her favorite toy. Wrapped in a blanket and laid out for the hearse to pick up. A few hours after this incident, the deceased mother's sister arrives. Unaware of the deaths of his sister and nephew, she waits for them to emerge from the cave-in. We can't tell her that her sister and nephew are just lying there.





2nd Day

00.00: A few streets away from our location, we are in a debris field where our teams are working. Our search and rescue teams have set up their equipment and are working on the wreckage. Since the wreckage is on a slope, the area around it is secured against slipping. They are talking to a young girl named Sümeyye, whom they are trying to rescue. However, since we are exhausted, we cannot stay there any longer and go to the car to get some sleep.

09.00: We wake up bent double. The rain has stopped, but it is unbearably cold outside. With the daylight I see the earthquake damage more clearly. Most of the buildings have collapsed and those that have not are badly damaged. People have set up tents with their own resources. They need help to protect themselves from the cold and to feed themselves. Around five in the morning, they pulled Sümeyye out of the rubble. That was the first moment of happiness I experienced in the midst of all the pain.

10.00: There are now more families around waiting for their loved ones. We come across Emrah and talk a little. “Normally I am cold-blooded, but the earthquake was so strong that I couldn’t even leave the house, and then I came here immediately.” His parents are under the rubble. He does not give up hope, he waits for them.

11.00: Musa, Emrah’s father, is pulled out of the rubble. Unfortunately, he lost his life. His pain is our pain too. Now he is waiting for news, for a voice from his mother. To her he has pinned his last hope.

14.00: In search of water, I go to the Provincial Police Department of Kahramanmaraş, which lies near the debris area. People use this place as a shelter. Everyone grabbed a blanket and took shelter in the main hall of the building. They have limited access to basic needs such as water and food. The worry on their faces is, “Will there be another earthquake?”

16.00: When I returned to the site, people were waiting and the teams were still struggling. Emrah’s mother is pulled out alive. In tears of joy, he runs and hugs Ahmet, the team leader. “You gave me the world,” he says while his sister Hatice says, “I am a teacher, and I assure you that I will educate my students to be as brave and moral as Ahmet and his team.” Hearing this helps raise our spirits.

22.00: After watching the works for a while, we head off to Reyhanlı.





3rd Day

10.00: After spending some time at IHH Reyhanlı Training Campus, we go to the Coordination Center. It is full of search and rescue teams here, preparing to go to the rubble sites. They are working in shifts. We join a team going to Antakya and set off with them.

13.00: We set off with Said and Yusuf with three vehicles full of relief supplies. One of the vehicles breaks down and we continue our journey with two vehicles. On the way, I listen to the stories of Said and Yusuf. They have many relatives who were trapped under the rubble, most of whom died. Yusuf's grandfather was walking down the stairs when the building collapsed on him. In every city I visit, I feel it cannot get worse than this, and Antakya, unfortunately, confirms precisely such an impression. The city is completely destroyed. Traffic has come to a standstill at the entrance to the city. The streets are full of rubble and broken glass. People do not know where to stay, some have set up tents with their own means while those who have vehicles are trying to leave the city.

15.00: We get out of the vehicles at some place to deliver supplies. There is another aftershock. We have become accustomed to earthquakes by now. We plan to return to Kilis after distributing relief supplies to disaster victims. The return route is inundated with such a multitude of vehicles that we decide to switch off the engine, alight from the car and distribute water to those stuck in traffic.

20.00: After hours of driving, we arrive back in Kilis. The situation here is the same as in Reyhanlı, very crowded. We find a pillow and curl up in a corner of the dining hall. This is the first bed I have slept in since the earthquake.

4rd Day

0.00: As soon as we wake up in the morning, we drive to Gaziantep. We are to unload a truck with relief supplies coming from Van into a large warehouse. From there they will be distributed to different cities and towns. While the relief goods are being unloaded into the warehouse, we chat with the driver of the volunteer truck from Van. Ercan, who witnessed the earthquake in Van, says the following to express his sadness about the earthquake: "There were so many relief goods coming from Van that there were not enough vehicles. I came with IHH, I know that you can get everywhere." After unloading the relief supplies at the warehouse, we load as much food as we can into a pickup truck and head to Kahramanmaraş with three vehicles. The roads are cracked in some places.

14.00: : In the initial place where we began distributing supplies in Pazarcık, a local said, "The aid has already reached this place, please direct your efforts to areas where aid is yet to arrive," and guided us to another location. Our people are really merciful.

17.00: We finish our work and head back to Gaziantep. When we arrive at the office, we run into Ahmet Türkmenoğlu, the search and rescue staff who pulled the four-month-old Duru from the rubble 50 hours after the earthquake. Covered in dust, he begins to recount: "I was on my way from Gaziantep to Azaz to take part in aid activities in Syria. The bus suddenly swerved left and right. When the road collapsed a little ahead, we realized it was an earthquake. I immediately contacted my friends in the search and rescue unit and got off the bus to return to Gaziantep. I ran 4-5 kilometers with the bag on my back. Finally, a truck driver stopped. When I explained the situation to him, he took me to the entrance of Antep. But I had to quickly reach the areas where the buildings had been destroyed. I threw myself in front of a car and explained the situation to the driver. He picked me up, but the traffic was blocked. I got out and started running again. At that moment, I saw my teammate Ali. He parked his car, leaving his family behind, and after contacting AFAD, we made our way to the site of the rubble. We started working on the rubble of a building. We heard voices. But suddenly I heard a sound that was different from all the others. The voice of a baby. I rushed over. I saw a baby trapped with her aunt. We immediately began rescue efforts. It was in a difficult place. Thank God we were able to rescue the baby Duru, although it took hours. There was nothing wrong with her, she was perfectly healthy. Her aunt had shielded her and she was injured. Then I saw Duru's father Murat. His face was covered with dust. 'Don't leave me here!' he shouted. While we were doing the rescue work, there was one aftershock after another. Finally, we rescued Duru's father alive. I held out in the rubble for days. All my friends are tired, but they continue to work selflessly."





21.00: We head to the site of rubble in the center. These are the last critical hours of the search and rescue operation. "Can anyone hear my voice?" echoes as the final glimmer of hope. Families waiting in the rubble for their loved ones are about to lose hope. They carry blankets and try to warm themselves by the fire. For days they have been waiting there, ready to give everything for a single voice of their loved ones.





22.00: We chat with Yaşar, the coordinator of the search and rescue team. “This earthquake has made us forget everything we know. I have been a search and rescue expert for many years, I have never experienced such a disaster,” he says. I can’t even imagine such an earthquake in Istanbul, the city where I live.

00.00: We go back to the office and try to get some sleep. At night, I find myself waking up from time to time with the lingering worry of an earthquake. I try to sleep with the bitterness of having to return to Istanbul the next day.

There is a lesson I learned from all these experiences. Moving forward, it is crucial for us to be fully prepared for an earthquake in every possible way and to embrace our loved ones tightly. We must do this without putting it off or ignoring it. I have seen dozens of people who are no longer able to hug their mothers, fathers and children once again, and I have witnessed their pain. We must embrace goodness and uphold positive values, while also implementing essential measures to create a harmonious society. Only then can we have hope for the future.



2023 RAMADAN JOURNEY

On February 6, a series of earthquakes centered in Kahramanmaraş caused significant impact, affecting millions of people.

In the 11 cities, there is an ongoing demand for hot meals, shelter, and other essential necessities. In the crisis-stricken regions of the world, our arrival is eagerly anticipated by the people.

During Ramadan, we have extended our assistance to the less fortunate, starting with those within our own country and subsequently directing our efforts towards the vulnerable populations in crisis-afflicted regions. Thanks to your generous contributions of Zakat, Fitrah, Food Packets, and Iftar donations, millions of people were able to observe a comfortable Ramadan. Your support made it possible for earthquake victims, the elderly, orphans, orphan families, and the needy to enjoy nourishing meals during both Iftar and Sahur.

During its 2023 Ramadan trip:
IHH reached

4 million 744 thousand

people in 37 countries including Türkiye.

- 2 million 704 thousand people in Türkiye
- 2 million 40 thousand people abroad

With your support and donations;



23.504

We delivered your zakat, fitrah and fidyah donations to 23,504 families in need.



1.378.000

1 million 378 thousand people benefited from 275 thousand 640 food packages.



1.500.000

We served Iftar and suhoor meals to 1 million 500 thousand people in six provinces affected by the earthquake, and to 15 thousand 381 people in crisis regions abroad.



1.940

We organized Iftar and suhoor programs for 1,940 children in 28 orphanages during Ramadan.



58.748

We gifted 58 thousand 748 orphans with Eid clothes.



7.915

We delivered "Ramadan Children's Package" to 7,915 children.



Ramadan in the world of the hearing impaired

We are in Burundi. We visited a school in the Buyenzi district of the capital Bujumbura, where the hearing impaired receive basic religious education and catechism lessons. Following the lesson, during which all participants attentively engaged in seeking answers to the questions that occupied their thoughts, and subsequent prayer training, we proceeded to the garden to distribute Ramadan rations.

Before we started distributing the rations, many people told us in sign language how happy they were that we had come to Burundi from Türkiye for them. With a subdued yet fervent demeanor, they offered their prayers and expressions of gratitude, acknowledging our steadfastness in not forsaking them despite the recent earthquake that struck our nation. Their joy was evident as they beheld our presence before them.

After distributing the food rations, I met Hafsa, who I remember with her smiling face, and asked her how Ramadan was. She said, "When there is no food at home, we eat what my neighbors bring for iftar. At suhoor, we only drink water. I have three children. Today, I will cook the beans and rice you gave us for Iftar. I am also making a very good tea with corn flour, sugar and lemon. We will pray for you at Iftar. May Allah be pleased with you."

In Burundi, casual workers earn about \$1 per day if they can find work. In the villages, the wage is cut in half. In Burundi, where 1 kg of rice costs \$1, life is very difficult, especially for the hearing impaired. If they do not know sign language, it is impossible for them to communicate with their environment and find a job. Even those who work can barely cover their monthly food costs. The act of sharing and assistance bestows abundance upon our lives and fosters a profound connection between our hearts.

Serdar Gürçay
Burundi, 2023

“We have been waiting for you.”

We are in the refugee camps in Cox's Bazar to conduct Ramadan relief efforts. The camps in Bangladesh house nearly 1 million Rohingya Muslims who fled massacres in Myanmar. There are temporary huts, mud-covered roads, and a sense of unease about the future in these camps.

We are here to distribute food rations to families in need and Eid clothes for orphans. Everyone we greet smiles. Some of them are surprised to see us here. I make eye contact with Musa, who is carrying his food ration on his shoulder and looking at me with a smile, and I walk up to him and ask him how he is. “We have been waiting for you. I’m glad you came. Thank you very much for not forgetting us and not giving up on us all these years. It is very important for us that you come here,” says he.

May Allah be pleased with all the benefactors who have revitalized Musa’s hope and bestowed upon him the joy of being remembered.

Taha Sağır

Bangladesh, 2023







58

THOUSAND



Eid mornings are a time that children look forward to. They buy their special Eid clothes days in advance and can't wait to put on their new clothes. Nonetheless, orphans and underprivileged children, who lack the means to purchase Eid clothes, are deprived of this excitement. The days leading up to Eid are sorrowful moments for them.



SMILING FACE



This Eid, thanks to your support, we were able to provide Eid clothes to 58,748 orphans who were affected by the earthquake in our country and abroad. Those who could not take their eyes off their new clothes, those who wore them immediately after succumbing to their excitement, those who were overjoyed... Tens of thousands of orphans woke up with their new clothes, thanks to you. This Eid was unforgettable for them.







WE WERE THERE

The happiest child of Eid

There were dozens of children around us filled with excitement. We tried to make this day memorable for them by making decorations for a souvenir photo.

In the midst of all this, Nevin, who was looking at her glasses, caught my attention, and I went to her. We couldn't have a conversation, but she couldn't take her eyes off her new glasses. You should have seen the happiness on her face when I handed them to her. I was also very touched to give Nevin a gift she would remember for years to come. She immediately put the glasses on, showed them to her friends, and began to enjoy an early Eid vacation.

A few minutes later she came back with her new clothes on. That's how the photo of the happiest child of the Eid was taken.

Furkan Bülbul
Sudan, 2023

WHAT IS GOING ON IN SUDAN?



On April 15, armed clashes broke out between the Sudanese army and the Rapid Support Force (RSF) in the Sudanese capital of Khartoum and other cities. The recent months' disagreement over military security reform, advocating for the complete integration of the RSF into the army, has escalated into a heated conflict. According to the World Health Organization, more than 700 people have been killed and more than 5,000 wounded in the clashes. According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, more than 300,000 people fled the country.

As a result of a protracted crisis, 15 million people in Sudan are facing food insecurity. Since the conflict began on April 15, Sudanese families have become more dependent on foreign aid. Many people have been displaced. Women and children in particular are in urgent need of assistance. Shortages of food, water, medicine and fuel have reached serious levels in Khartoum and its surrounding areas.





What has IHH done?

Many hospitals in Khartoum have been bombed. Hospitals are facing shortages of electricity, water, and essential supplies. There are almost no health workers to take care of the patients and the disabled. International organizations estimate that more than 1 million people have been displaced in Khartoum alone.





We urgently distributed hot meals to more than 4,000 people affected by the internal conflict. We also delivered food packages to more than 400 families.



We sacrificed 40 cattle and distributed them among those in need.



We delivered medicines and medical supplies to hospitals.



Another Dimension of the Israeli Occupation: Food Security and the Water

Dilara Durmuş - Tuğçe Durmuş

The water issue, arising from various factors but primarily attributed to climate change, is currently impacting the Middle East region. Palestine, which is under Israeli occupation, is one of the countries affected by the water problem in the Middle East. Living under occupation places direct restrictions on access to water resources, safe food, agriculture, and livestock for the affected population. The blockaded Gaza Strip, situated on the coast with a dense population, bears a particular brunt of this situation due to its limited access to sufficient resources.

Although drought is considered one of the main factors behind the water crisis, Palestine appears to be in a relatively favorable condition compared to other regions thanks to its annual rainfall. However, the severe limitations on accessing and utilizing water resources affect Palestinians living under occupation. Regrettably, due to Israeli measures, such as the confiscation of water resources and hindrance to the development of water systems, Palestinians are deprived of access to the essential amount of water required for their well-being and health. That is to say, the water crisis in the region is not caused by drought, but by the Zionist administration. Similar policies implemented by Israel also threaten food security in the region.

Food Security and the Water Problem

The World Food Summit has delineated food security as the condition in which all individuals possess both the physical and economic means to obtain sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that fulfills their dietary requirements and preferences, thereby enabling them to lead an active and healthy life at all times. This definition

highlights the multidimensional nature of food security.

Ensuring people's continued access to clean water, sanitation, and health services, as well as food of sufficient quality and quantity under all conditions, through political, economic, and social actions, is the foundation of food security.

Undoubtedly, access to and utilization of water, being one of the most fundamental necessities, significantly influences numerous factors pertaining to nutrition. These factors include agricultural production, dietary patterns, and food diversity. Inadequate water also leads to poor sanitation and thus serious health problems. Water problems arise when any of the essential conditions, namely availability, accessibility, use, and stability, are not met or are lacking, as both water security and food security rely on ensuring these conditions.

It is not possible to consider food and water separately. This is because large amounts of water are needed to produce food. For example, 4,000 liters of water are used to produce 1 kilogram of milk powder.

Food Insecurity and the Water Problem in Palestine

For Palestinians, agriculture is more than an economic symbol; it is also a symbol of productivity, a shared identity, and a way to connect to the land and resist occupation. The occupation of their lands, destruction of water cisterns and natural water resources, and confiscation of plant varieties contributing to biodiversity have resulted in escalating challenges for the Palestinian people regarding food security and access to water.

Furthermore, Israel imposes restrictions on Palestinian agriculture while providing



support to the agricultural and industrial endeavors of Jewish settlers in the region.

In the first six months of 2021, Israel established 150 outposts in Palestinian territories. These outposts seize Palestinian agricultural and grazing lands.

In May 2021, 400,000 people were denied regular access to a reliable water supply due to infrastructure damage in attacks on Gaza and the West Bank. In Palestine, population growth and the forced concentration of population in a given area are leading to more intensive use of limited available land, natural resources, and water, and to faster depletion of resources. These circumstances, compounded by unemployment, are exacerbating food insecurity and poverty in the region. The impoverished economic situation leads to an escalation in the consumption of food items that possess limited nutritional value.

Gaza

The inhabitants of Gaza persistently endure a land and sea blockade, resulting in the deprivation of their fundamental rights, including access to healthcare, education, water, and food. The 2014 attacks by the occupation regime, which caused great destruction in the region, killed 2,147 people and severely damaged infrastructure. This has exacerbated the already severe food insecurity in Gaza. In the year 2014 alone, a total of 220 water sources, utilized for agricultural purposes, were demolished, and the water and sewage systems sustained damage ranging from 20% to 30%. In Gaza, where water resources are exceptionally scarce, the depletion of groundwater reserves is accelerated due to the high population density resulting from the imposed embargo. More than 97% of the water pumped from the coastal aquifer,

Gaza's main water source, does not meet water quality standards set by the World Health Organization.

About 100 million cubic meters of water are salinated due to seawater intrusion.

In Gaza, where fishing is very important, the restrictions on fishing imposed by the blockade not only have economic consequences, but also lead to food insecurity by denying people access to food sources. Approximately 90 percent of fishermen are unemployed. The unemployment rate in Gaza is 49 percent and the poverty rate is 56 percent. There are also restrictions on agriculture. Farmers and agricultural machinery are prohibited from accessing some areas. This particular area, constituting 35% of the arable land in Gaza, holds significant importance for the local population, given their already limited access to cultivable land. Moreover, as a consequence of the wall constructed around the Gaza Strip, approximately 80,000 olive trees were uprooted, and the area of agriculturally unusable land extended to 62,600 acres. In Gaza, where food insecurity is increasing day by day, 68.5 percent of the population have no food security.

West Bank

The West Bank, categorized into Regions A, B, and C as per the Oslo Accords, represents an additional dimension of the challenges encountered by the Palestinian population, primarily due to the presence of the Separation Wall encompassing the area. Apart from the manifold issues caused by the Separation Wall, it has also resulted in the narrowing of Palestinian land and a consequent decrease in agricultural yields for farmers in the West Bank. The Wall has led to a range of significant problems, including the loss of water wells, damage to water pipes, restricted access to water sources, and a notable increase in water prices.

The occupation regime, which controls 90% of the shared groundwater resources in the West Bank, unilaterally and illegally deprives the area of water. The occupation regime prevents Palestinian drilling in Region C and makes it difficult to obtain the necessary permits to

develop water infrastructure. Jewish settlers are exempt from these restrictions and obstacles. The price Palestinians pay for agricultural water use is much higher than that paid by settlers. Jewish settlers and Palestinians living in the same area are subject to different rules regarding basic rights and access to services. Palestinians do not have equal access to water resources in the region. The Palestinian population is also forced to use pesticides and chemical fertilizers that leave harmful residues in the soil and groundwater due to difficulties in importing agricultural products.

While the West Bank experiences a lesser degree of food insecurity compared to Gaza, it still contends with its own challenges. Low food diversity, economic and agricultural problems, women becoming heads of households due to the arrest or murder of men, or having to live in refugee camps are the main factors hindering access to adequate and healthy food. Due to these difficult conditions, people often resort to less preferred foods or have to eat less.

Agriculture, an important source of income for Palestinians, is also affected by Israeli attacks. As a result of land confiscation for new settlements and settler violence, millions of trees have been destroyed in Palestinian farming areas. Settler violence escalates especially during the olive harvest. The burning and uprooting of trees, theft of crops, armed and physical attacks are the most common incidents. In October-November 2020 alone, 1,700 trees were destroyed, 1,870 trees were illegally harvested by settlers, and 600 olive trees were burned. Furthermore, in certain areas of the city, trees are being adversely affected by sewage from nearby residential areas. By the end of 2020, a total of 8,925 trees had been uprooted, burned or destroyed. For all these reasons, the Palestinian olive harvest was very poor. Due to the attacks, the yield of olive trees in these areas decreased by 40% compared to those in other areas. From 2010 to the end of 2021, a total of 101,988 olive trees were uprooted, chemically poisoned or burned in the West Bank. As a result of these attacks, Palestinian farmers suffered financial losses of \$47 million.



Conclusion

The primary cause of the water and food security problem in Palestine is not related to climatic and geographical conditions, but rather, it is attributed to the ongoing occupation. The increasing poverty and unemployment in the region is the result of the restrictive and discriminatory policies of the Zionist administration. The occupation administration prevents the Palestinian population from accessing natural resources and maintaining their economic activities. Palestinians face significant challenges in meeting their basic needs for food and clean water due to the Israeli administration's actions, which involve confiscating land for new settlements, demolishing water wells, prohibiting the drilling of new wells and infrastructure development, and exploiting water resources unilaterally and illegally. As a result, Palestinians are compelled to purchase poor quality water at exorbitant prices and resort to using water that is mixed with seawater. In addition to the lack of irrigation for agricultural land leading to a decline in yields, Palestinian farmers, especially in the West Bank, face growing challenges in farming due to violent attacks by Jewish settlers and the confiscation of their crops. Denial of access to water and other rights violations related to agriculture and livestock constitute some of the factors

that significantly impact the well-being of people in the West Bank.

The food and water problem in the Gaza Strip is even more severe than in the West Bank due to the blockade. Available resources in the area are rapidly running out. The quality of the water used is below the standards set worldwide. Furthermore, the living conditions in the region are steadily deteriorating as a result of Israel's violent attacks. The majority of the population not only lacks access to safe food, but there is also a decreasing diversity in food preferences. The reason for this, as in all of Palestine, is the attacks and policies of the occupation forces.

Food insecurity and water scarcity are among the consequences of the occupation. Despite presenting these findings to the international community through research and reports, a permanent solution to the problem remains elusive. It is believed that this lack of a solution will lead to major humanitarian crises in the future. International aid and donations, while providing temporary relief, are inadequate to prevent crises in the long term. In order to solve the problem, global sanctions must be imposed on the Zionist regime that is usurping the most basic rights of the Palestinian people.



QURBAN IS WORSHIP SHARING MEANS BROTHERHOOD

There are brothers and sisters in Turkey and crisis-stricken regions who are looking forward to being remembered during Eid al-Adha.



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