

WORKERS' PARTY OF TURKEY



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OUR COUNTRY DOES NOT DESERVE THIS CRUELTY WITH EVERYTHING IN OUR POWER, WE STAND IN SOLIDARITY WITH OUR PEOPLE

Workers' Party of Turkey

February 6th, 2023

Upon receiving the news of the earthquake that shook our country this morning, we in the Workers' Party of Turkey took immediate action, and rapidly established a Disaster Coordination Center. Since then, we reached out to many compatriots in the earthquake zone and coordinated humanitarian aid coming from citizens in other provinces.

In the early days of the crisis, the TİP Disaster Coordination Center has received more than 1500 calls for help. The number of calls reveal the severity of the situation we are facing.

In many neighborhoods of the Hatay province, especially in Defne and Samandağ, as well as in provinces Kahramanmaraş, Gaziantep and Adıyaman, people have been left to their fate in the harsh winter conditions.

In these areas, many buildings, old and new, subcontracted via state tenders under the AKP government -public institutions such as hospitals, dormitories, hotels, AFAD and municipality buildings- collapsed. The pro-government construction companies, and the ministries and directorates which awarded these tenders to them are responsible for the death of the young, the children, and the patients. We demand the prosecution of those who caused the death and suffering of thousands of citizens.

Against all the protests of Hatay residents, experts, and environmental activists, Hatay Airport was built on the Amik Plain, and is now unusable. With the cities' highways and viaducts damaged, it is now impossible to reach Hatay, and tens of thousands of people cannot receive aid.

Institutions such as the Turkish Armed Forces and AFAD are tasked with search and rescue and providing food during emergencies. However, under the AKP rule, they have been systematically disempowered, their staff and personnel reduced, and thus they have been rendered useless in search and rescue operations. Besides, many specialized, volunteer search and rescue groups were not allowed to get involved because they couldn't get the necessary certification issued by the pro-AKP bureaucracy.

In the aftermath of the massive earthquake of 17 August 1999 in northwestern Turkey almost 25 years ago, the "earthquake taxes" collected nationwide were not spent on preparing for earthquakes and ensuring the safety of the citizens, but on roads and bridges that the AKP has built in order to generate political gains and enrich pro-government contractors.

Our country was hit by two very severe earthquakes during the coldest days of winter. Effective search and rescue in the earthquake region, especially in Hatay, Kahramanmaraş and Adiyaman, is



virtually impossible. Besides, there is a lack of food and water supply. Our citizens are trying to rescue their relatives from the rubble by digging with their hands, while those who survived struggle in the freezing cold.

Our country has been facing a great challenge for hours since the two devastating earthquakes. But the state, the government institutions, specialized experts, means for transportation and sustenance are nowhere to be seen.

The people of our country do not deserve to be abandoned to such despair, nor do they deserve the remorselessness of the government.

We will never forget and never forgive those who abandoned our people to this fate.

We have mobilized with all our power to stand with our fellow citizens who have been left to fend for themselves in these harsh winter conditions.

Our people will heal their wounds through solidarity.

Our fellow citizens will never be alone and helpless.



SHAKEN BY EARTHQUAKES, MURDERED BY CAPITALISM! SOLUTION: SOCIALISM

Workers' Party of Turkey Science Committee

February 11th, 2023

Our country faces one of the worst disasters in its history. The destruction caused by two great earthquakes on 6 February 2023 has a direct impact on ten cities and almost fifteen million people, which will last for a long time. As the Science Committee of the Workers' Party of Turkey (TİP), we share our heartfelt condolences with those who have lost their loved ones. We wish a quick recovery to those rescued, injured, or left without shelter.

The news from the region has demonstrated the severity not only of the earthquake but also of the crisis of governance in Turkey under the AKP regime in the bitterest way imaginable. The most efficient tool that can protect citizens against earthquakes is

an urban planning that follows scientific principles and pro-public policies. Unfortunately, in the last twenty years the leading principles that have shaped the urban zones in Turkey have not been public benefit and science but profitability and the benefit of construction companies. To this end, urban areas have intentionally and hastily been expanded. The earthquakes have also shown us that the state has drifted away from the level of functionality and rationality that could ensure its citizens' most urgent needs and even their right to live, to say the very least. As is evident from the attitudes of those representing public authority, too, the state in Turkey no longer constitutes a structure that can even minimally represent the people's feelings, expectations, and desire to live together in harmony.



As the Science Committee, we are well aware that the common main problems our people face, including the aftermath of the earthquake, can only be mitigated when we unite and replace the mentality that leaves all the state apparatuses to the hands of capitalists and their associates with an understanding that privileges public interest.

There are also the problems that need urgent attention in the areas hit by the earthquakes. In this regard, TIP Science Committee demands the urgent that the following are carried out immediately:

1. Announcing “state of emergency” in the ten impacted cities, even though the law no. 7269 allows declaring a region as “impacted by disaster that threatens lives,” does not have an additional value or function in making the delivery of emergency aid to the region any easier. The state of emergency is employed instead as a political tool to punish citizens questioning the measures taken in the aftermath of the earthquakes. What we need is not to suppress people`s demands and complaints via the declaration of the state of emergency but to record these demands and to shape the emergency response accordingly.

2. The political power must immediately stop addressing institutions, organizations, and volunteers engaged in providing humanitarian aid to the region according to their positioning with regard to the ideological stance of the ruling party. An effective and humane aid strategy requires a well-planned, coordinated, and vigilant cooperation with all involved institutions, organizations and volunteers.

3. All impacted citizens should be provided with a monthly salary not below the poverty line until permanent housing and employment opportunities can be provided.

4. Tent cities and insulated container housing with necessary infrastructure should be set up with a special consideration paid to the long-term effects of the earthquakes and the weather conditions in the impacted cities.

5. Population surveys must be conducted among the people living in tent cities to identify vulnerable groups such as pregnant women, children, babies, as well as those in need of vaccination to provide protective health services without further delay.

6. Field hospitals should be constructed widely and rapidly to prevent setbacks in emergency and other health services. The lack of a healthy workforce, medicine, and other medical products should be compensated immediately. All healthcare infrastructure including private hospitals and medicine companies should be mobilized to this end. All survivors should be provided with free health services including medicines, no taxes or contributions should be demanded for these.

7. In order to prevent epidemics, mobile sanitation and other relevant equipment should be installed, people should regularly be provided with clean drinking water, and damaged waterworks and canalization infrastructure should immediately be repaired. To meet the nutrition needs of the survivors, regular access to food should be made available.

8. It is imperative that the pets and farm animals are provided with health care and shelters, the bodies of the dead ones are buried in a fashion that poses no risk to the health of the public as well as other animals, and vaccine programme is run against zoonotic diseases to protect public health.

9. BTK (Institution of Information Technologies) and other related organizations must cease restricting and blocking social media and other communication applications, immediately. The people`s right to communicate cannot be violated. Internet service providers should make internet service free and accessible in all the cities affected by the earthquakes. Large WI-FI spots should be set up in all field hospitals and unharmed public institutions.

10. Each individual responsible for the lost lives, injuries, and damaged buildings must interrogated by attorney generals in an effective, swift, and just manner.

Turkey`s economy is strong enough to finance these swiftly, the country`s resources are sufficient for these expenses. These expenses should be covered by the central government budget. In case of a budget shortage, the payments for private-public cooperative projects should be postponed, companies in sectors notably profitable in the last fiscal period such as construction, real estate, and finance should directly be taxed for financing these expenses. These taxes should be collected in a “6 February Earthquake Reconstruction Fund.”



EARTHQUAKE REVEALING POLITICAL CRISIS IN TURKEY

Workers' Party of Turkey (TİP)
International Relations Committee

February 12th, 2023

It has been almost a week since the deadly earthquake that struck 10 provinces in Turkey. We, as the Workers' Party of Turkey (TİP), have sent a short report about the situation in general as well as the political aspects of it. However, the situation is highly unstable and updating each minute as the death toll has reached almost 30.000.

Current situation

As we approach the end of the first week of the deadly earthquakes, almost 30.000 people have lost their lives while most of the search & rescue missions are about to be ended. The number of people who are evacuated from the earthquake zone reached 147.000. The numbers are increasing every minute and estimations are horrific. The first response of the AKP government was to declare a state of emergency in 10 provinces hit by the earthquake and Erdoğan visited the area only on the third day. However, the media blackout is rather massive, as almost all of the national TV outlets streaming from the area are interrupted by earthquake

victims asking why the absence of government. The anger against the government continues. Dangerously, racist sentiments against refugees living in the area are fuelled by neo-fascist parties on the grounds of fake social media posts. The state is practically invisible in the sense of safety and security while some mobs try to attack people who are "allegedly" looters.

Our efforts in the disaster zones

In the early days of the earthquake, we established a Disaster Coordination Centre at our HQs in İstanbul. We have been mobilized for disaster relief and solidarity with our thousands of members and volunteers, aid trucks, and vehicles. Our efforts continue and expand every minute as disaster relief is urgently needed in the area.

Our members have established two main coordination centres in the cities Hatay and Maraş-Elbistan where humanitarian assistance was provided. In addition to that, we started to establish a temporary container city in Hatay, one of the most affected cities, to provide shelter to those who are affected and currently, 26 containers were sent to the area.

As of today, we are assisting our people with 660 volunteers, 31 trailer trucks, 36 trucks, 12 pickups, 4 vans, 35



cars, 1 mobile catering truck, 2 shower cabins, 12 portable WCs, 4 water tanks and 8 portable food stands, thanks completely to the contributions of our people.

Our Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson, Spokesperson, MPs, and members of the central executive committee are on the epicentre of the earthquake in coordination with our members, volunteers and local branches.



Our Chairperson and Istanbul MP Erkan Baş reported from the earthquake area and underlined that the nature of capitalism as profit, not human life, was always the priority for the AKP government. He also stated that although the earthquake is a natural disaster, the necessary preparations based on scientific approaches could have been completed before. (QR1 to watch the full speech with English subtitles)

Our Spokesperson and Istanbul MP Sera Kadıgil also visited the earthquake area. She underlined how the government's delayed response led to the death of several thousand people and how the corruption of the state at every level led to a rentier regime which now blames nature for this disaster. (QR2 to watch the full speech in English subtitles)

Political crisis unfolding

The current crisis is a very painful turning point for Turkey in which a poly-crisis is visibly ahead of us. We are faced with such great destruction that it is not

possible to eliminate the effects of the disaster by temporarily delivering social aid to the people affected by the earthquake. Most of the disaster-affected areas are not habitable anymore and it will create a wave of domestic relocation of the mass population. The most basic living needs of these millions of people, from shelter to employment, from food to education, must be met. In addition, a huge public resource should be devoted to the reconstruction of destroyed cities. By the nature, we understand the AKP government or capitalist mode of production is not capable of doing that. Therefore, the working-class movement should become a political agency to keep our country liveable and prosperous.

As we already noted in our previous bulletin, the state bureaucracy in chaos since the first days of this crisis. Most of the state institutions are dysfunctional to deliver the needs of citizens. The unqualified bureaucrats are on running most of the institutions. The only qualification needed for them to be in their position is unquestionable loyalty to Erdoğan's regime.

Lastly, fascist figures are fuelling the anger of our people towards refugees in the area by spreading fake news through social media. Although there is no proof, most of these social media posts are claiming that refugees or immigrants are organizing lootings in the earthquake area. Due to the lack of security measures in the area, unfortunately, there are events of lynching of civilians. This racist rhetoric used by fascist figures benefits the real ones that are responsible for this disaster.

We will continue to deliver updates about the situation to international organizations and the press. Please see our previous report about the earthquake here: Solidarity will save lives!





THERE WAS NOBODY THERE*!

Can Soyer / Member of Party Assembly

February 8th, 2023

No state. No institutions. No accountability. No conscience. No sense of shame. All that there is are the hands of the people, stricken by the disasters, reaching out to each other. The last haven of fraternity. The dignity of solidarity.

One of the most memorable outcries of the 1999 Earthquake was "Is nobody there?"

There wasn't.

Nearly a quarter of a century later, the question is the same:

"Is nobody there?"

No.

Our lives in the hands a government policy that sees it fit to have us not only to live in a land of constant disasters, but also to endure the same disasters over

and over again, has become the story of our solitude in the face of anguish far beyond human strength and capacity.

A story full of grief, sorrow and rage. But also one that we wholeheartedly believe is coming to an end.

A story which we will put to an end to; by joining hands, standing together, never abandoning each other, just as we did a quarter of a century ago.

Surrounded by fault lines with a history of earthquake disasters which we still grieve for; our country is once again in the grip of the calamity of a major earthquake. Although it is as of yet impossible to ascertain the number of collapsed buildings or citizens trapped under rubble, killed, wounded, left homeless, jobless, or orphaned; estimations indicate the magnitude of the disaster will nonetheless be too much to bear.



Meanwhile the attitude of officials responsible for running the country and the state is one of incompetence, ineptitude and apathy. A gang enthralled by their own vanity and stupidity, unable to heed anyone else out of fear of damaging their pretensions, laughing at the face of years of warnings by scientists and experts, with an ignorant inanity, sit idly by while our country is falling to pieces.

When 10 cities -7 of which being metropolises- are destroyed by the earthquake, the failure to reach these cities and the debris; the lack of any relief plans by governorates, sub-governorships, sanitary departments and highway authorities; the lack of disaster recovery plans by ministries and disaster management institutions against a calamity that was expected to happen at any moment; the failure to devise or implement a rational and swift response scheme in consideration of all the technical resources and human capabilities of 21st century; any one of these would seem extremely difficult to account for.

So it would seem, as it must seem to any rational person when everything was so obvious and foreknown, when it was so easy and simple to take all the necessary precautions.

But it isn't; because for those who see the state as a tool to accumulate wealth, and the government as a way to silence those who protest against injustice, it wouldn't be difficult at all to account for any of this. Because incompetence, ineptitude, inability to govern are adjectives that can be used for people with intelligence, logic, and conscience such as ourselves. But for them, they are the sought-after criteria.

Two years ago when our forests were burning and Turkey couldn't find a single firefighter plane to fly we said the same:

"True; ineptitude, ignorance, illiteracy, incompetence, unscientific mindset, immorality and irrationality are the foremost features of this government, its cadre, and its advocates who are planted everywhere from

the media to the academia. It is evident that this type of cadre, as they had once eagerly emphasized, are no better than swineherds, let alone statesmen.

"Then what we describe as a general opinion is true and legitimate in a particular aspect: They cannot govern.

"But there is also this: They don't even try to govern!

"They don't govern in the way we understand it. The institutions expected to meet the requirements of the country, the borders, the forests, the citizens; those that regulate access to basic public rights from education to health; they knowingly, willingly, ardently and gladly do not govern.

"So, at the risk of repetition; they knowingly, willingly, ardently and gladly burn, destroy, exploit, oppress, beat down and murder the whole country.

"It's not that they can't govern because of their ineptitude, ignorance, illiteracy or incompetence; it is precisely because they don't want to govern, that their interests require this state of non-governance, that they need an inept, ignorant, illiterate and incompetent cadre."

Why is it so?

Short answer: The neoliberal creed which is the prevalent polity of our age, and which those who run our country practice with apparent fervour, is the liquidation of the state from its public services and obligations. Those who invoke the pleas "downsize the state", "why would the state ever produce shoes?", "privatisation of healthcare is essential" as if they were prayers are the creators of the fiasco, who couldn't find personnel to respond to the emergencies of tens of thousands of citizens; who couldn't even provide a blanket to those shivering beside the debris; who had to rent the construction equipment necessary to move the debris of destroyed buildings.

This downsizing of state that they repeat deliriously has only ever meant the annihilation of the state's

public services and obligations. But from law enforcement to the judiciary, religious authority to the mafia, the same state has bloated and has become solely an instrument of violence.

Then there are no longer citizens for this state; no obligations to provide services for them; no resources to divert to emergency plans; not even a bowl of soup for a disaster zone. There is only tendering; there is rentier economy; there is bludgeon and prison.

This state does not exist to govern but not to govern, not to fulfil its obligations but to beat down those who demand their rights, not to do its job with the taxes it collects but to pray for the dying souls of those awaiting rescue.

After a quarter of a century, the same question is being asked: "Is nobody there?"

No. No state. No institutions. No accountability. No conscience. No sense of shame.

All that there is are the hands of the people, stricken by the disasters, reaching out to each other. The last haven of fraternity. The dignity of solidarity.

And the only thing to save us from this darkness, and indeed found a new country from these ruins, is this dignity.

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WE THANK OUR PEOPLE FOR THEIR SOLIDARITY

We are conducting search & rescue operations, and providing needs-based humanitarian assistance in the disaster areas of Hatay, Kahramanmaraş, Adıyaman, and Malatya, thanks completely to the contributions of our people,

with

705 volunteers,

45 trailer trucks, 40 trucks,

**16 pickups, 4 vans, 1 mobile
healthcare caravan, 40 vehicles,**

2 caravans, 1 mobile catering truck,

**1 mobile triage centre, 5 water
tanks, 2 portable showers,**

**12 portable WC, and 8 portable
warm food stands.**

Disaster volunteers, Health Care Workers,
Construction Workers, Miners,
Psychologists, etc.

As of today, we have sent the

40th life and office
container
and 588 tents on its way.



WE THANK OUR PEOPLE FOR THEIR SOLIDARITY

February 18th, 2023

Since the very first day of the earthquake, we are conducting search & rescue operations, and providing needs-based humanitarian assistance in the disaster areas of Hatay, Kahramanmaraş, Adıyaman, and Malatya, thanks completely to the contributions of our people.


The search & rescue operations are about to end due to time restrictions. On the other hand, our other operations fully continue to build container & tent cities, and to provide humanitarian assistance to our people.





WORKERS' PARTY OF TURKEY

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