

*Over 2,600 killed as 7.8-
magnitude earthquake hits
Turkey and Syria*



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Ankara, February 6 (RHC)-- A powerful 7.8-magnitude earthquake has hit Turkey and Syria, killing over 2,600 people and trapping many others. The quake struck at 04:17 am local time (0117 GMT) at a depth of about 17.9 kilometers (11 miles) and was followed by a 6.7-magnitude aftershock 15 minutes later, according to the US Geological Survey.

Turkey's AFAD emergencies service center put the first quake's magnitude at 7.4. According to the head of Turkey's disaster and emergencies management agency (AFAD) Yunus Sezer, the country's death toll following the earthquake has risen to 1,121, with some 2,824 buildings destroyed.

Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan had earlier put the death toll at 912 with over 5,000 others injured. He described it as the country's largest disaster since 1939, adding that 2,818 buildings collapsed as a result.

The Ankara government has requested international aid amid the widespread devastation caused by the quake. The president of the Turkish Red Crescent also urged the nation to make blood donations.

Kerem Kinik also said on Twitter the organization sending additional shipment of blood to the affected region. The country's vice president Fuat Oktay announced the suspension of schools in the 10 affected cities and provinces. He also announced that flights to and from the airport in Hatay province have been suspended, while airports in Marash and Antep are also closed to civilian flights.

The quake leveled buildings across major cities in southern Turkey, including Kahramanmaras and Gaziantep, and caught most people while they were still asleep.

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