

Earthquake death toll reaches 44,000 as aid workers condemn U.S. sanctions on Syria

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Damascus, February 16 (RHC)-- The combined death toll in Turkey and Syria from last week's massive earthquakes is nearing 44,000. Many more are expected to die or have not been counted.

Earlier, rescue workers pulled a 17-year-old girl out of the rubble of a collapsed building in the Turkish province of Kahramanmaras, 248 hours after the earthquake struck.

In Syria, relief workers blamed U.S.-led sanctions against the Syrian government for hindering rescue and recovery efforts.

Mohammed Khalil, a medical worker in Aleppo, told reporters: "Sanctions on Syria led to a shortage of drugs for some chronic diseases, and for cancer and chemotherapy treatments. Due to the disaster, we urge the U.S. and Western countries to lift those sanctions on us. Syria has been plagued with a grave humanitarian disaster for 13 years and is still struggling now."

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