



Diaa*, 51, and his family lost their home after the earthquakes, following multiple displacements. [Photo: Khalil Ashawi/Save the Children]

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Syria on the Brink: After 12-Years of Conflict, earthquakes impact signals a country pushed beyond limits

Amman, 14th March – As Syria enters its 13th year of conflict on March 15, the recent earthquakes that have hit the country have compounded the already dire humanitarian crisis after years of suffering, pushing the country to the brink, Save the Children said.

The conflict has led to multiple displacements, widespread poverty, and millions of Syrian children suffering repeated shocks only exacerbated by the

earthquakes that have displaced over 50,000 children from their homes.

Diaa*, 51, his wife and two sons lost their home in Aleppo after the earthquakes hit the country on the 6 February. They had already been displaced multiple times over the course of Syria's conflict. He said:

"I lost count of how many times I was displaced. We went through a lot. We have been under siege twice and we almost died. Eventually, we were displaced to the north. We fled and were displaced multiple times to many places, to square zero every time."

Entire neighbourhoods in Northern Syria have been rendered uninhabitable, and collective shelters have become more overcrowded than ever. The area worst affected by the earthquakes, that impacted at least 8.8 million people in Syria, is home to some of the country's most vulnerable people, who had already been forced to flee their homes multiple times due to the conflict and a crippling economic crisis.

Thousands of families in Syria are living in unfinished buildings, informal settlements, and makeshift tents. Diaa* added:

"We found a house to live in. In reality, it was not inhabitable. No doors, no windows, absolutely nothing. Even the walls were not insulated. We suffered a lot. When it rained, water would get inside the house."

"We live in a huge trauma, and we never imagined having this life. Even these tents, they are made of thin plastic. When wind got stronger for a couple of nights, we had to keep fixing the tent to the ground from all sides using rocks. The earthquake came on top of all this."

Keeping warm has become even more challenging due to fuel and electricity shortages. Displaced families in Syria are increasingly resorting to desperate measures, with multiple [reports](#) of children being injured by explosive remnants of war while collecting firewood.

Fadel* is 10 years old and has lived in tents most of his life. He helps his family of nine by collecting firewood after school six days a week, to keep warm and be able to cook. He said:

“We came to the tents eight years ago. I have a three-year-old brother with a disability. I remember at least three times when we had no food and I slept out of hunger. I collect firewood daily, except Fridays. The road is difficult because it is slippery, and there are holes on it.”

In 2023, Syria remains one of the world’s largest displacement crises. According to the latest Humanitarian Needs Overview for Syria, more than 15 million people across the country were already dependent on humanitarian aid to meet their basic needs. It’s estimated there were [1.9 million displaced people](#) in opposition-held areas of North West Syria alone before the earthquakes, most of whom were women and children. Following the earthquakes, at least [86,000 people were reportedly newly displaced](#), more than half of whom are children.

Kathryn Achilles, Advocacy, Media and Communications Director for Save the Children’s Syria Response, said:

“For millions of Syrians, this week marks the beginning of the 13th year of living under the shadow of conflict and displacement, a fate they never chose for themselves. Now the earthquakes have made children afraid of the very ground they walk on, and the fragile walls they used to call home. How much more can Syrian children be expected to endure?”

“They have shown remarkable resilience over the past 12 years, but enough is enough. We cannot be content with merely helping children to survive, living in tents, reliant on humanitarian assistance.

“After the earthquakes, we must act to help children recover. To ensure they have safe schools to attend, and their parents have decent jobs to provide for them. Above all, Syrian children must be able to build the bright futures that they see for themselves.”

Save the Children has been providing assistance to the children in need in Syria since 2012. Save the Children programming combines emergency and life-saving interventions with early recovery activities that support the restoration of basic services and aims to reach every last child in need.

As part of the earthquake response, Save the Children is delivering aid through partners, responding in Idlib, Aleppo and Raqqqa governorates, and

providing emergency food rations, blankets, tents and warm clothing. Save the Children is also making sure children and their families can keep clean, healthy and protected from illness and diseases by providing safe drinking water, and essential hygiene and sanitation items.

ENDS

Notes to Editor

- The earthquakes have caused new internal displacement movements and at least 86,000 people were reportedly newly displaced since 6 February. More than half of them are children. [Earthquakes: North-west Syria Situation Report No. 1 \(As of 7 March 2023\) - Syrian Arab Republic | ReliefWeb](#)
- [Syrian Arab Republic: 2023 Humanitarian Needs Overview \(December 2022\) - Syrian Arab Republic | ReliefWeb](#)

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