



# The day the earth shook

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On 6 February 2023, two massive earthquakes struck South-eastern Turkey. The earthquake was followed by more than 4000 aftershocks, causing destruction, claiming thousands of lives and damaging or destroying essential infrastructure, including health care facilities. The national government declared a level 4 alert and launched an appeal for international aid. Ten provinces are currently under a state of emergency and will continue to be for the next three months.

We are used to earthquakes, but not to such massive ones affecting a geographical area as vast as this. A large winter storm hampered rescue efforts, dumping snow on top of the ruins. There were energy, heating, and water disruptions in many cities. The earthquake caused broad fissures in roads and airports, thus making transportation impossible in some areas. Some hospitals and dialysis center buildings totally collapsed.

Emergency services in Turkey rushed to search for survivors trapped under collapsed buildings. There were at least 38,000 deaths and 105,500 injured. Patients were moved to more stable health centers around the region. A small percentage of patients had to be transferred by sea because of the damaged roads. There was a huge need for dialysis due to AKI and crush syndromes, and for continuing care of chronic dialysis patients. To date, we have collected information regarding over 1000 crush-syndrome patients. Among them there were many children. Unfortunately, due to a lack

of time and experience many children had limb amputations instead of fasciotomies.

We all stand united as one. All nephrologists and health care workers, as well as the dialysis industry and medical companies did their best to answer the calls for help. We were racing against time. There was an extreme lack of dialysis catheters and dialysis filters, especially for children with crush syndrome. The government's transport system was not quick enough to deliver the emergency equipment, so private delivery facilities were used.

Many volunteer nephrologists, dialysis nurses, and dialysis technicians went in to support the effort. The local staff, many of whom had lost their relatives and homes, were also under great pressure. They worked while aftershocks continued, while their families had no shelter and were sleeping in cars. Currently, our nephrologists and dialysis staff are all working in rotation as volunteers in all the Turkish regions that have been affected by the earthquake.

Now, the situation is stable. There is enough medical equipment. Despite some water disruptions, the infrastructure has improved. There is an urgent need for shelter for the health professionals who are helping dialysis and crush patients.

We want to thank the Italian Society of Nephrology for their sincere offer to help. We feel much stronger coping with this disaster knowing there are people who care and want to support us. Our Italian colleagues are now contributing by providing shelter, which is the main problem for health care workers here at the moment.

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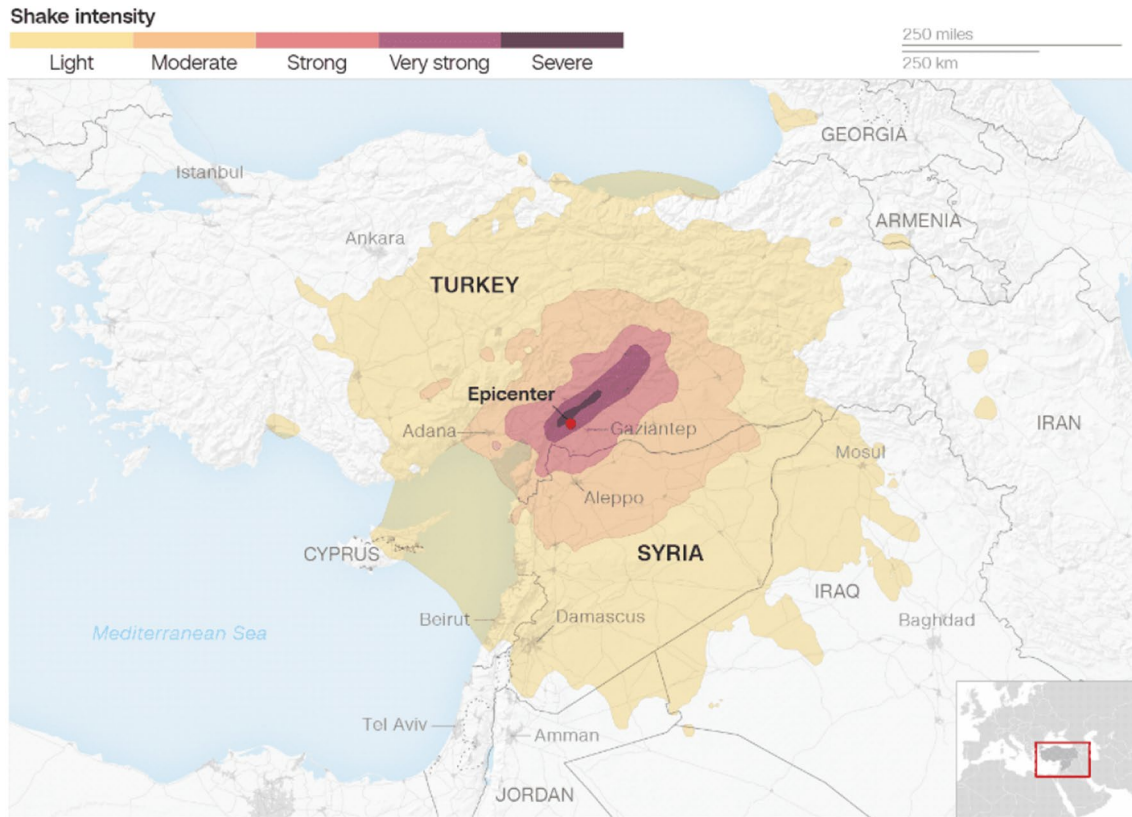
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Our hearts beat together. We want to express our gratitude to the Italian Society of Nephrology.

The intensity of the the earthquake and the width of the affected area in Turkey (6.2.2023).



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