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Devastating quakes strike southeast Turkey, northwest Syria



A second earthquake measuring 7.6 on the Richter scale on Monday struck southern Turkey within 12 hours of a first massive tremor, which had already claimed hundreds of lives in southeast Turkey and northwest Syria, according to civil defense authorities.

The second quake took place at 13:32 local time, at a depth of only seven kilometers and with an epicenter in the Elbistan region, of southeast Turkey. Some 1,300 people died in the early morning hours of Monday, as the first powerful 7.8 magnitude earthquake devastated the same region.

Syria's state news agency reported 371 deaths and nearly 1,100 people injured across northwest Syria.

In a first reaction, the Patriarch of Antioch and All the East, His Beatitude John X, called for the faithful to pray for the victims and injured. His Beatitude also said churches in the ancient city of Antioch and Mersin, in southeast Turkey, have been damaged.

He also called on the laity and clerics of the Patriarchate of Antioch to offer any possible assistance to those in need.

Back in Greece, the country's prime minister, Kyriakos Mitsotakis, expressed his government's condolences to the affected people and nations, while adding that Greek resources and personnel are ready for immediate dispatch to the devastated areas.

Taking to Twitter, he wrote "...Deeply saddened by the devastating earthquake disaster in Türkiye and Syria...Our heartfelt condolences go out to the families of the victims and our thoughts are with all the people affected. Greece is mobilizing its resources and will assist immediately."

In its statement, the Greek foreign ministry noted that "...Our thoughts are with the victims' families, the injured and the rescue crews fighting to save lives. Greece has mobilised its resources and is ready to provide assistance."