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Death toll exceeds 21,000 people in SE Turkey, NW Syria



Rescue crews pulled several people from the rubble of collapsed buildings overnight in southeast Turkey four days after devastating earthquakes there, including a 10-year-old boy saved with his mother.

The confirmed death toll exceeds 21,000 in both countries, as of Friday morning.

Hundreds of thousands of people have been left homeless and short of food in harsh winter conditions.

Emergency disaster units, including specialist teams from dozens of countries, toiled through the night in the ruins of thousands of wrecked buildings in southeast

Turkey.

In Syria, more than 3,300 have been killed, though rescuers say many more people remain under the rubble.

Greek state, private entities rush to assist

As far as Greece is concerned, state services and private entities stepped up efforts over the past three days to collect and transport humanitarian aid to the quake-devastated areas, with a total of six flights recorded so far, carrying 90 tons.

Additionally, the first humanitarian mission by the Hellenic Red Cross was set to depart for affected areas in Turkey today.

The first Hellenic Red Cross tranche of aid, some 40 tons, is being transported aboard three trucks, along with a special rescue vehicle and trained staff.

The Hellenic Red Cross also announced the delivery of aid to civil war-ravaged Syria, a particularly difficult and sensitive mission.

Meanwhile, 30 trained volunteers of the Hellenic Rescue Team were scheduled to leave on Thursday evening for the city of Adana in southeast Turkey, with a K9 unit and specialized equipment and medical material in tow.

On the political front, in an abrupt about-face from recent belligerence and saber-rattling, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's top foreign policy adviser, Ibrahim Kalin, on Friday expressed thanks for Greece's active support of Turkey after the catastrophic 7.8 magnitude earthquake.

In particular, Kalin, responding to Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis' recent Twitter message in Turkish, wrote: "...Mr. Prime Minister, thank you for all your support."

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew speaks with Archbishop Ieronymos over dire situation in quake-ravaged areas

In another quake-related development, the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, His All Holiness Bartholomew I, spoke on Thursday with the Archbishop of Athens and All Greece, His Beatitude Ieronymos, who again expressed his condolences for

the victims of the devastating earthquake in Turkey.

Archbishop Ieronymos declared the undivided support of the Church of Greece and a willingness by hierarchs of the Holy Synod, the clergy and faithful to contribute to the relief efforts.



In another corner of Europe, the Archbishop of Thyateira and Great Britain, His Eminence Nikitas, requested that an extraordinary collection plate be circulated on Sunday, at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy, in all of the Archdiocese's parishes. All funds collected will be disbursed through the ecclesiastical channels, as they will be used specifically for the purpose of earthquake relief.



Elsewhere, the Ecumenical Patriarchate's Metropolis of Imbros and Tenedos, at the initiative of resident Metropolitan Kyrillos, has also collected humanitarian aid for those affected by the earthquakes in southern Turkey and Syria.







Saint Joseph the Hesychast

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