

## Death toll from deadly quakes in SE Anatolia now exceeds 37,000



The continuing tragedy from the twin earthquakes that struck southeast Turkey and northwest Syria continued on Tuesday, with the combined death toll now exceeding 37,000.

Rescuers pulled two brothers alive from the ruins of an apartment block in Turkey's Kahramanmaraş province, media reports relayed the same day. Earlier, a boy and a man were saved in same hard-hit city.

Rescuers and volunteers again worked through the night to locate and retrieve people clinging to life. However, some teams have started scaling back operations as low temperatures reduced the already slim chances of survival.

Amid growing public anger, authorities in Turkey are investigating 163 people in connection with the collapsed buildings. Of those under investigation, eight have been arrested and 48 are in police custody, according to Turkey's state-run news agency.

In the war-battered and now quake-devastated Syrian city of Aleppo, a UN aid

official on Monday said the rescue phase was “coming to a close”, with the focus now turning to shelter, food and schooling.

Meanwhile, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad reportedly gave his government’s green light for more UN aid to enter from Turkey, diplomats announced late on Monday, thus helping those in rebel-held northwest Syria.

Still in the region, the Patriarch of Antioch and All the East, His Beatitude John X, expressed his gratitude towards the Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church and its Primate, His Beatitude Sawa, the Archbishop of Warsaw and Metropolitan of All Poland, for the solidarity and condolences extended in the wake of the Feb. 6 earthquakes.