

**MERCY MALAYSIA's RAPID ASSESSMENT AND HEALTH SUPPORT TEAMS
RETURN FROM SUCCESSFUL EMERGENCY MISSIONS TO EARTHQUAKE
STRICKEN TÜRKIYE AND SYRIA**

Response includes providing structured programme assessment and much needed humanitarian support for displaced communities

KUALA LUMPUR, 27 February 2023 – The first three groups of MERCY Malaysia's Rapid Assessment and Health Support Team returned safely yesterday from successful missions to Türkiye and Syria which were hit by a series of major earthquake on 6 February 2023. At its debriefing held at the MERCY Malaysia headquarters today, Team Leader and EXCO member Tuan Haji Norazam Ab Samah shared pertinent information and situational report in both countries.

MERCY Malaysia deployed its emergency response and assessment team of staff and volunteers a day after the earthquake happened and subsequently sent four (4) missions to Türkiye to provide much needed aid to the affected communities as well as collect and analyse key information to be incorporated into a holistic response planning. MERCY Malaysia had also partaken in two (2) reconnaissance and relief aid distribution missions respectively to Syria facilitated by the Government of Malaysia.

While there, the team experienced first-hand the critical needs in the disaster areas and undertook active stakeholder engagements -- meeting with local governments, community leaders, emergency responders and medical personnel.

"The Turkish Government is doing an amazing job consolidating efforts for the recovery of cities affected by the earthquake. Nevertheless, MERCY Malaysia feels that there are so much to do in Syria. There is a pressing need for humanitarian aid and the suffering of the internally displaced is critical", remarked Norazam.

UNHCR reported that there are almost 6.8 million Internally Displaced (IDPs) while another 84,000 IDPs returnees in Syria itself which will further strain the already limited resources available and compounding vulnerabilities even further.

Dr Mohammed Iqbal Omar, Head of MERCY Malaysia's Health Department added, "We had Malaysian doctors based in Türkiye coming forward to volunteer with MERCY Malaysia which was very timely as they not only have medical license but also helped out as translators. The team met Outpatient and Non-Communicable Disease (NCD) patients, ensuring access to medication for hypertension, diabetes, bronchial asthma and other chronic NCD as most of these people had to leave their homes hastily without their medication supplies. In addition, the MERCY Malaysia Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Services also initiated Psychosocial First Aid at several centres in Osmaniye including setting up child-friendly spaces ensuring inclusivity for children's well-being."

As of 24 February 2023, MERCY Malaysia has provided 40 oxygen cylinders, 10 portable ventilators, 500 Water, Sanitary and Hygiene (WASH) items, and 1800 Non-Food Items comprising blankets, heater units, sleeping bags and socks to Türkiye-Syria. In addition, 4 generator sets and food packs were distributed to 500 families in Syria. The composition of essential items distributed by MERCY Malaysia are based on humanitarian standards defined in the Sphere Handbook.

All these would not have been possible without the support received from various parties, such as the public donors, corporate funders, authorities like MOFA and NADMA, Turkish Embassy and Syrian Consulate as well as local partners such as the Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD), iHH Humanitarian Relief Foundation, and Alliance of International Doctors (AID) that have come together in solidarity, concerned by the plight of the earthquake victims.

The February 2023 earthquakes continue to generate significant humanitarian needs among affected populations in Türkiye and Syria. According to AFAD, as of 24 February, 44,218 people have lost their lives in Türkiye and 5,914 in Syria, while 448,018 people have been evacuated to other provinces.

MERCY Malaysia targets approximately RM 22 million are needed to implement the Türkiye-Syria 2023 Earthquake Emergency Response and Recovery Plan aimed at building communities' coping capacity. Among MERCY Malaysia's emphasis will be on:

1. Access to Healthcare Support
2. Emergency Shelter Support
3. Psychosocial, Protection and Prevention Support

4. Emergency Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
5. Food and Non-Food Items

Due to the severity of the disaster which requires a longer-term aid, MERCY Malaysia plans to set up a base camp in Hatay Province, Türkiye, which borders Syria, to allow humanitarian operations to be conducted on both sides of the countries.

Being a humanitarian organisation backed by over 23 years of experience and that has embraced the Humanitarian-Development Nexus at the core of its values providing continuous humanitarian aid -- before, during and after a crisis, MERCY Malaysia has the capacity to mobilise team members to help international communities through times of need.

MERCY Malaysia is appealing to the corporate sector, institutions, and public for donation to the MERCY Türkiye-Syria 2023 Relief Fund. Contributions can be made through our website www.mercy.org.my or direct transfer to:

MERCY Humanitarian Fund
MBB 5621 7950 4126
Swift Code: MBBEMYKL

MERCY Malaysia
CIMB 8000-7929-08
Swift Code: CIBBMYKL

For Islamic Social Financing (ISF) option, bank transfers can be made to:

MERCY Malaysia
Maybank Islamic 5642 5858
7606Swift Code: MBBEMYKL

All monetary donations are tax-exempted.

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Links to photos and videos:

MERCY Malaysia Rapid Assessment and Health Support Team in Türkiye and Syria

[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1FjmeHcNAAQXDy_qQc0yALz_VNYIhjeU-
?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1FjmeHcNAAQXDy_qQc0yALz_VNYIhjeU-?usp=sharing)

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About MERCY Malaysia

MERCY Malaysia is an international humanitarian organisation focused on providing medical relief, health-related development and risk reduction activities for vulnerable communities in both crisis and non-crisis situations.

Established in 1999 and having delivered humanitarian assistance in more than 30 countries, MERCY Malaysia embraces the Humanitarian-Development Nexus approach by building synergies between emergency, humanitarian and development health aid with the aim of facilitating effectiveness of multidisciplinary responses, building communities' resilience to shocks and future disasters, and achieving sustainable outcomes wherever we serve.