



Earthquake in Syria & Turkey: La Via Campesina extends solidarity to affected communities

Bagnolet, 16-02-2023

La Via Campesina expresses its deepest condolences to the communities in Turkey and Syria affected by the devastating earthquakes. We mourn with those who have lost family, friends, and neighbors, and stand in solidarity with all those who have been injured or affected by the earthquakes. We also extend our gratitude to the civil movement that immediately responded to rescue and save lives in the affected areas.

While we have received information about the situation in urban areas, we urgently call for access to information about the situation of peasants and rural areas affected by the earthquake. Beyond the loss of human and animal life, the destruction of production and means of production, such as animal feed and other inputs, is crucial for food production and survival. We request that all restrictions to communication channels enabling access to information from and toward the affected populations be removed to assess the specific needs of the affected rural communities.

We urgently call for the withdrawal of any sanctions that harm the people, and for humanitarian aid to be sent to those in need of basic supplies such as water, food, and shelter, without discrimination based on race, ethnicity, religion, or gender.

The earthquakes have exacerbated the vulnerability of communities in Syria affected by war and forced displacement for over a decade. In Turkey, the existing effects of the economic and political crisis on the population were multiplied by the earthquakes. **The vast majority of the human losses and damage is due to unplanned and unmonitored urbanization, which has occupied areas that were once agricultural lands.**

The earthquake has also left many children orphaned and at the mercy of child-trafficking networks. Therefore, urgent policies to prevent this terrible situation are needed.

We believe that the deaths and devastation resulting from the earthquakes are not solely due to natural disasters, but rather the consequence of inadequate political decisions that prioritize speculation and economic profit over life and nature. **Despite warnings of an earthquake of this magnitude for many years, constructions were not designed considering the right to safe housing.** The losses resulting from the earthquakes are not isolated incidents, but political crimes! We strongly defend the strategic importance of increasing agricultural lands in the region to ensure food sovereignty instead of real estate speculation that endangers human lives.

Therefore, we demand:

- **Immediate action to abolish any restrictions and sanctions that harm the people to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid to the victims in Syria.**
- **That the Syrian and Turkish governments open more crossings to allow aid delivery, rather than relying solely on the Bab al-Hawa border crossing between Turkey and Syria.**
- **Holding those responsible and corrupted accountable for the destruction of agricultural lands for real estate projects and stopping this practice.**
- **The Turkish and Syrian governments work together with peasants and people in the planning and implementation stages during the reconstruction and rehabilitation processes, by fulfilling their right to adequate and safe housing, and their right to food and food sovereignty so that there is no dependence on imported food and land grabbing through reconstruction and rehabilitation programs.**

La Via Campesina once again reiterates its solidarity with all the peoples and peasants in Turkey and Syria during the reconstruction process. We will continue to work with our member organizations in Turkey and in the Arab Region and North Africa to globalize hope and struggle.