

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES. _____

Expressing deepest condolences to and solidarity with the people of Türkiye and Syria following the devastating earthquake on February 6, 2023.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. MERKLEY (for himself, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. CRAMER, and Mr. DURBIN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on _____

RESOLUTION

Expressing deepest condolences to and solidarity with the people of Türkiye and Syria following the devastating earthquake on February 6, 2023.

Whereas, on February 6, 2023, a magnitude 7.8 earthquake struck southern and central Türkiye, a North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) ally, and western Syria;

Whereas this is the most powerful earthquake recorded in Türkiye since 1939;

Whereas, according to the United States Geological Survey (USGS), the earthquake epicenter was located approximately 16 miles east of Nurdagi, in Türkiye's Gaziantep province;

Whereas the USGS has registered more than 100 aftershocks between magnitudes 4.5 and 7.5;

Whereas the reported death toll has reached 42,000, thousands more people have been reported injured, hundreds of thousands have been displaced from their homes, and thousands of buildings have collapsed;

Whereas the World Health Organization estimates that 23,000,000 people, including 1,400,000 children, in Türkiye and Syria have likely been affected by the earthquake and more than 4,000,000 people already rely on humanitarian assistance in the region of northwest Syria that was affected by the earthquake;

Whereas countless people in the region and across the world have lost family, friends, and loved ones to the earthquakes and will be mourning their loss;

Whereas the United States Government responded immediately to the disaster and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has deployed a nearly 200-member Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) to Türkiye, including nearly 160 urban search-and-rescue teams, to provide life-saving assistance on both sides of the Türkiye-Syria border;

Whereas USAID has committed \$85,000,000 to date for USAID's humanitarian partners to deliver urgently-needed aid for millions of people in Türkiye and Syria;

Whereas individuals, businesses, and philanthropic and humanitarian organizations across the United States and throughout the international community have responded in support of Türkiye and Syria;

Whereas humanitarian access has been constrained by road closures, infrastructural damage, and weather conditions in Türkiye; and

Whereas access to the one official crossing for cross-border aid from the United Nations from Türkiye to northern Syria was heavily damaged, further delaying humanitarian access: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) expresses its deepest condolences to and sol-
3 idarity with the people of Türkiye and Syria fol-
4 lowing the devastating earthquake on February 6,
5 2023;

6 (2) commends the efforts and honors the sac-
7 rifice of the men and women engaged in the humani-
8 tarian response on the ground in the affected re-
9 gions of Türkiye and Syria;

10 (3) commends as well the international humani-
11 tarian and nongovernmental organizations engaged
12 in this effort;

13 (4) urges the United States Government, in co-
14 ordination with appropriate local authorities in
15 Türkiye and internationally recognized organizations
16 and institutions in Syria, as well as other donors, to
17 continue to provide emergency relief and reconstruc-
18 tion efforts in both countries as provided in the hu-
19 manitarian exemptions of the United States Treas-
20 ury's Syria Sanctions program;

1 (5) urges the United States Government to do
2 everything possible to ensure that earthquake assist-
3 ance does not—

4 (A) violate the Caesar Syria Civilian Pro-
5 tection Act of 2019 (title LXXIV of Public Law
6 116–92; 22 U.S.C. 8791 note);

7 (B) facilitate reconstruction efforts that di-
8 rectly benefit the Assad regime;

9 (C) signal or support normalization with
10 the Assad regime; or

11 (D) fuel continued regime atrocities
12 against the people of Syria;

13 (6) encourages efforts by the North Atlantic
14 Treaty Organization and allies to assist Türkiye by
15 providing—

16 (A) search-and-rescue teams;

17 (B) firefighters and structural engineers;

18 (C) medical personnel and supplies; and

19 (D) technical experts;

20 (7) urges the international community to con-
21 tinue to find alternative border crossings to ensure
22 aid gets into affected areas in Syria;

23 (8) calls on the United Nations Security Coun-
24 cil, to pass a resolution to allow for additional bor-

1 der crossings from Türkiye into northern Syria for
2 aid convoys; and
3 (9) to allow full access for humanitarian aid or-
4 ganizations, urges the immediate cessation of vio-
5 lence in northern Syria.