A collapsed apartment building in Adana, southern Turkey, after two major earthquakes hit the region within 12 hours on 6 February, destroying buildings and overwhelming medical facilities.

The first earthquake (7.7 magnitude) hit southern Turkey at 4.17 am and was followed by at least 78 aftershocks and then a second earthquake of 7.5 magnitude at 13:24. As at 7 February more than 5000 people had been killed in Turkey and Syria and thousands more injured. The World Health Organization has warned that the total number of deaths could exceed 20 000.

The Union of Medical Care and Relief Organizations (UOSSM), a coalition of medical and humanitarian organisations working in Syria, has said that many people are still trapped under the rubble of collapsed buildings and that hospitals have become overwhelmed with the number of crush and trauma injuries.

At least one hospital in northern Syria has reportedly been evacuated because of structural issues caused by the earthquakes.

**Freezing temperatures**

In Turkey, the humanitarian organisation the Red Crescent has begun shipping blood stocks to the affected areas and has called on the public to donate blood. It is also distributing blankets and hot food to thousands of people who have been left homeless and exposed to the freezing temperatures.

Tanya Evans, Syria country director for the International Rescue Committee, said, “This earthquake is yet another devastating blow to so many vulnerable populations already struggling after years of conflict. It is a crisis within multiple crises—temperatures are plummeting to below zero, leaving thousands exposed. Women and children will find themselves particularly at risk of exploitation and abuse should they find themselves once again displaced.

“Many in northwest Syria have been displaced up to 20 times, and with health facilities strained beyond capacity even before this tragedy many did not have access to the healthcare they critically need.”
The BMJ Turkey-Syria earthquake appeal

The BMJ invites readers to donate to its appeal organised in conjunction with British Red Cross. All money raised will support the relief work of the Turkish and Syrian Red Crescent societies. Donate online at bit.ly/3I4VuLV or scan the QR code below.

2. IFRC Europe. Twitter. 6 Feb 2023. https://twitter.com/IFRC_Europe/status/1622582931540611073?s=20&t=oeBKz2CMn7qDEuwFlkmA.