

Europe Solidaire Sans Frontières > English > Europe, Great Britain > Turkey > Natural / Humanitarian Disasters (Turkey) > **Twitter cutoff in Turkey amid earthquake rescue operations : A social media (...)**

Twitter cutoff in Turkey amid earthquake rescue operations : A social media expert explains the danger of losing the microblogging service in times of disaster

jeudi 9 février 2023, par [SUSARLA Anjana](#) (Date de rédaction antérieure : 9 février 2023).

Twitter was blocked in Turkey for about 12 hours at the height of rescue and relief efforts in the aftermath of a massive earthquake, severely hampering a vital tool for disaster response.

Twitter was blocked in Turkey on Feb. 8, 2023, [according to internet monitoring service NetBlocks](#). The outage came amid the massive rescue operation and humanitarian crisis in the aftermath of the earthquakes in southern Turkey and northern Syria two days earlier. Access to Twitter [appeared to be restored](#) about 12 hours after it was first blocked.

Twitter is a microblogging platform that offers users a way to share short chunks of text, audio and video as well as the ability to post threaded conversations. Almost as soon as the main quake hit, thousands of [eyewitnesses posted videos and photos on social media](#), particularly on Twitter. Such first eyewitness accounts are invaluable in helping emergency relief personnel and researchers assess the extent of damage and match aid to what's needed on the ground.

The Twitter blackout, which was likely the [result of governmental action](#), appeared to have [impeded rescue and relief efforts](#). NetBlocks noted that internet service providers had been blocking traffic to Twitter, and that people could circumvent the blocking by using a [virtual private network](#), or VPN.

Officials in numerous countries periodically [block social media and internet access](#) in attempts to limit the flow of information. Turkey is among the countries with a long [history of internet censorship](#).

Exemples of Tweets.

Twitter's role in disaster relief

Twitter has been used widely in previous natural disasters. A U.S. [Department of Homeland Security briefing from 2013](#) reported that social media has played an important role during disasters. Twitter in particular has been an important source of crowdsourced and real-time eyewitness data that enables relief personnel to interact with affected communities.

A [recent study](#) looked at all 375 million tweets on Twitter in a single day (Sept. 21, 2022) and found that the service allowed governments to communicate crisis information to citizens and citizens to

seek help and information. This type of communication and coordination of response efforts has been useful in many situations, from a [water contamination crisis](#) in West Virginia to a [hurricane evacuation](#) in Florida.

Humanitarian aid and disaster relief require real-time monitoring, almost immediately after a disaster occurs. Combining Twitter feeds [with geolocation data and mapping the extracted information](#) makes it possible to visualize an unfolding crisis. Responders [can track the locations of damage, casualties and resources](#) to determine how best to target relief efforts.

This kind of data also helps researchers in fields such as transportation get [insights about the dynamics of evacuations](#). A [time-based analysis of tweets during Hurricane Sandy](#) in October 2012 shows that researchers can use crowdsourced data from Twitter to quantify the intensity of a hurricane in real time. Such analyses of images of damage and flooding shared through social media help emergency managers identify storm damage and plan relief efforts.

Losing access to Twitter, whether from government blocking, [financial barriers to Twitter's application programming interface](#) or Twitter outages like yesterday's [global glitch](#), will severely restricts up-to-date information about disaster response as events unfold. It also hinders the ability to learn from the past and prepare for future emergencies. < !—>

<http://theconversation.com/republishing-guidelines> —>

[Anjana Susarla](#), Professor of Information Systems, [Michigan State University](#)

P.-S.

- The Conversation. Publié : 9 février 2023, 14:34 CET.

This article is republished from [The Conversation](#) under a Creative Commons license. Read the [original article](#).

[Anjana Susarla](#), [Michigan State University](#)

Anjana Susarla is the Omura Saxena Professor in Responsible AI in the Department of Accounting and Information Systems at the Eli Broad College of Business at Michigan State University. Her research interests include social media analytics and the economics of artificial intelligence.

- The Conversation is a nonprofit news organization dedicated to helping academic experts share ideas with the public. We can give away our articles thanks to the help of foundations, universities and readers like you. [Donate Now to support research-based journalims](#)