

Environment

# Statement by ecology movements in Turkey- demands for immediate action

Tuesday 21 February 2023, by [Assembly for Unity of Ecology](#), [Climate Justice Coalition \(Turkey\)](#) (Date first published: 10 February 2023).

**Immediately after the February 6 earthquake, one of the biggest in the history of Turkey, a broad meeting of Ecology Organizations in Turkey published this statement:**

Contents

- [WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE URGENTLY](#)
- [ECOLOGICAL DEMANDS](#)

---

**Our urgent demands from the government, which holds all the resources of the state in its hands, and our call for solidarity.**

After the 7.7 magnitude earthquakes centered in Pazarcık, Kahramanmaraş, at midnight on February 6, followed by the 7.6 magnitude earthquakes centered in Elbistan at noon on the same day, more than ten thousand buildings collapsed and tens of thousands of people were trapped under the rubble. In reality, it is the government, which is trying to turn this disaster into an opportunity for its own survival and has declared a state of emergency in the region to this end. Organization of civil initiatives and rank and file solidarity networks are vital to making emergency interventions in the areas of destruction and rebuilding life. It is imperative that the disaster is not magnified by obstructing the aid and solidarity of civil initiatives under the pretext of the State of Emergency!

The state, unable to fulfill its basic duty of organization and coordination, has left the people of Turkey today with the obligation and responsibility to organize themselves.

Our most urgent need today is to weave a solidarity that crosses borders in order to keep alive our people who have lost their living spaces and cannot meet their basic needs in the entire geography affected by the earthquake, especially in search and rescue operations.

First of all, we would like to observe that an earthquake is a natural phenomenon, that it has been going on for millions of years and that earthquakes occur for nature to realize itself and for the earth to complete itself:

The main responsible for the losses of life is this corporatist government, which has left life to freeze under the rubble, and which no longer functions as a social state. Natural phenomena cannot be

characterized as disasters, catastrophes or fate to cover up the massacres caused by the capitalist system based on the greed for profit. Humanity has lived in peace with nature for thousands of years, and has built its social life in harmony with nature, taking into account natural phenomena. Houses were built in harmony with the behavior of nature. Now, the governments that nourish the concrete-oriented urban policies imposed by capitalist modernism with multi-storey buildings, thus paving the way for capital to increase its earnings, bear the main responsibility for these losses.

In the last two hundred years, policies that increase the exploitation of nature and labor have been followed. As a result of these policies, we are facing an ecocide caused by the brutal face of capitalism, which causes destruction and collapse by destroying human and non-human life. The region where the earthquake occurred is a region where many ecological crimes have been committed, such as the construction of hydroelectric dams, thermal power plants, nuclear power plants and airports on fault lines and, as a result, lives have been endangered. The only way to defend life against this destruction is not in spite of nature, but in a reciprocal relationship with nature, in peace with nature, and in solidarity with nature.

We know that there are many things we need to do to build the life we dream of, but today we are faced with an urgent, vital situation that requires us to act without waiting. As you read this, there are still lives under the rubble waiting to be rescued if they are not frozen. While they are fighting for their lives, the construction and mining companies who caused the collapses continue to count their money.

This is our warning to the government, which controls all the resources of the state, about what needs to be done urgently and our public call for solidarity:

### **WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE URGENTLY:**

1. Mining and construction activities, especially in the region and neighboring regions, should be stopped immediately, and construction machinery and equipment belonging to public and private companies should be sent to earthquake zones for search and rescue operations together with technical personnel.
2. Civilian and military infrastructure and personnel, and private sector airline infrastructure and search and rescue and relief teams should be rapidly deployed to earthquake areas that cannot be reached by road.
3. Buildings such as second residences, hotels, places of worship, including those in neighboring regions, especially reliable buildings in the region, should be put into service free of charge or by using public resources to be used in solving the shelter problem.
4. In order to provide vital needs such as clean drinking water, food, clothing and hygiene products, the mechanisms created by civil society for solidarity should be fully and completely coordinated with public services.
5. Rescue teams should be formed to include living beings other than humans. The work of civilian teams taking initiative in this regard should be facilitated and supported.
6. Since the earthquake occurred in a region with a high concentration of migrants, search and rescue and basic needs should be carried out with full inclusiveness, free from discrimination.

## **ECOLOGICAL DEMANDS:**

1. Information should be provided on the causes of the natural gas explosions and the fire at Iskenderun Port, which materials were burned, and the chemical and nuclear materials, if any, involved in the fire.
2. An inventory of hazardous, flammable and explosive materials in the industrial facilities in the region should be made; preventive measures should be taken without delay for possible disasters as a result of aftershocks or new earthquakes.
3. More than ten thousand buildings are thought to have collapsed. Work on asbestos, radon and other harmful gases emitted from these buildings should begin as soon as possible to ensure the safety of the people in the region, especially search and rescue teams.
4. Damage assessments should begin on the dams, which control water and are an extension of the commodification work, and necessary measures should be taken to prevent a secondary disaster.
5. It must be determined whether the chemicals in the mines are mixed with water aquifers; necessary measures must be taken.
6. The problems of non-human creatures living in cities and their peripheries, whose habitats we have usurped, regarding nutrition, access to clean and healthy water and shelter must be solved as soon as possible.
7. Damage to electricity and natural gas transmission lines in the earthquake zone, explosions in natural gas lines, security dams in the region, thermal power plants in Maraş and Adana poses great risks.
8. Large energy investments, security policies and fossil fuels that put life at risk must be abandoned.

Our condolences to everyone who is suffering. We are very saddened by our losses, but our sadness does not prevent us from ignoring the cause of the destruction, the slowness of the search and rescue efforts, and the measures that need to be taken to prevent possible further disasters. The state of emergency cannot hide this situation, nor will we allow it to.

In solidarity.

### **Climate Justice Coalition**

Assembly for Unity of Ecology

---

### **P.S.**

- Internationalist Standpoint. February 10, 2023:  
<https://www.internationaliststandpoint.org/statement-by-ecology-movements-in-turkey-demands-for-immediate-action/>