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Over 41,000 dead in Turkey, Syria earthquake: Death toll among worst in recent history



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USA TODAY

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Drones capture scale of damage in Turkey, Syria after a deadly 7.8 magnitude earthquake

Drone footage captured in Turkey and Syria shows the devastating damage caused by a 7.8 magnitude earthquake that killed thousands. *Damien Henderson, USA TODAY*

Key Points

- Powerful earthquakes that shook Turkey and Syria last week had resulted in more than 41,000 deaths as of Tuesday.
- It is among most devastating and deadliest disasters seen in recent history.
- Hundreds of thousands of people have died in major earthquakes worldwide over that last two decades alone.

The powerful earthquakes that [shook Turkey and Syria](#) last week are among the most devastating and deadliest quakes [in recent history](#).

The [death toll surpassed 41,000](#) across the two countries as of Tuesday, making the quakes the deadliest seen worldwide in more than a decade.

On Feb. 6, a [magnitude 7.8 quake](#) struck in the southern Turkish province of Kahramanmaraş, [U.S. Geological Survey said](#). Hours later, a 7.5 magnitude quake hit more than 60 miles away. Scores of violent [aftershocks](#) followed, leaving destruction and devastation in their path.

More than a week after the earthquakes, search teams said they were still hearing voices from under the rubble on Tuesday. [Emergency workers](#) from around the world have been the ground in ongoing rescue efforts. Some successful rescue [have offered glimmers of hope](#) – but relief still struggled to reach some devastated areas, particularly in Syria.

The 12-year civil war has complicated relief efforts and significantly delayed aid moving into the country. Some people there said they have received nothing.

Updates: [Death toll tops 41,000 as desperation grows after earthquake in Turkey, Syria](#)

How to help earthquake victims in Turkey and Syria: [These groups are taking donations](#)

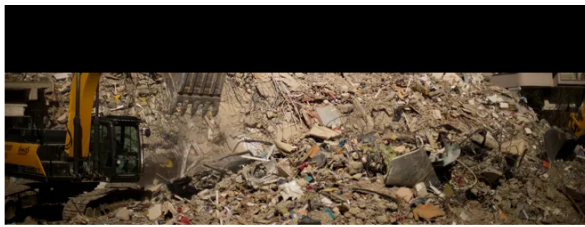
Thousands of buildings were toppled from the earthquakes, [leaving millions homeless](#) in Turkey and Syria amid freezing temperatures. In addition to the climbing death toll, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said Tuesday that more than 105,00 were injured.

Erdogan has referred to the quake as "the disaster of the century."

Here are some of the world's deadliest earthquakes and natural disasters in recent years.

'Heart-wrenching': [Drone footage shows destruction from Turkey and Syria earthquakes](#)

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Emergency rescue members search for people in a destroyed building in Adana, Turkey, Tuesday, Feb. 7, 2023. Rescuers raced Tuesday to find survivors in the rubble of thousands of buildings brought down by a powerful earthquake and multiple aftershocks that struck eastern Turkey and neighboring Syria. *Francisco Seco, AP*

Deadliest earthquakes in recent history

Hundreds of thousands of people have died in major earthquakes over the past two decades alone.

Here are some of the deadliest earthquakes the world has seen in the past 25 years, according to [The Associated Press](#) and the [U.S. Geological Survey](#):

- **June 2022 in Afghanistan:** More than 1,100 people died in a magnitude 6.1 earthquake.
- **August 2021 in Haiti:** More than 2,200 people were killed in a magnitude 7.2 earthquake.
- **September 2018 in Indonesia:** A magnitude 7.5 earthquake triggered a tsunami, killing more than 4,300 people.
- **April 2015 in Nepal:** A magnitude 7.8 earthquake killed more than 8,800 people.
- **March 2011 in Japan:** A magnitude 9.0 earthquake triggered a tsunami, killing more than 18,400 people.
- **January 2010 in Haiti:** A magnitude 7.0 quake killed hundreds of thousands of people. Estimates for the death toll range significantly. The [United Nations says](#) about 220,000 people were killed, while the Haitian government estimates put the number at a [staggering 316,000 dead](#).
- **May 2008 in China:** A magnitude 7.9 quake killed more than 87,500 people.
- **May 2006 in Indonesia:** More than 5,700 people died from a magnitude 6.3 quake.
- **October 2005 in Pakistan:** A magnitude 7.6 earthquake killed more than 80,000 people.
- **March 2005 in Indonesia:** About 1,300 people died from a magnitude 8.6 quake.
- **December 2004 in Indonesia:** A magnitude 9.1 quake triggered an Indian Ocean tsunami, which killed about 230,000 people in a dozen countries.
- **December 2003 in Iran:** More than 20,000 people died from a magnitude 6.6 earthquake.
- **May 2003 in Algeria:** A magnitude 6.8 earthquake killed more than 2,200 people.
- **January 2001 in India:** A magnitude 7.6 quake killed as many as 20,000 people.
- **August 1999 in Turkey:** 18,000 people died from a magnitude 7.6 earthquake.
- **May 1998 in Afghanistan:** A magnitude 6.6 earthquake killed more than 4,000 people.

100 years of earthquakes: [Turkey, Syria disaster could be among this century's worst](#)

Turkey earthquake damage: [Photos capture devastating aftermath of powerful 7.8 magnitude quake](#)

Worst earthquake ever recorded

Of course, it's difficult to pinpoint the "worst" earthquake in history, because the strength of temblors – as well as damage, death tolls and devastation to communities – ranges significantly.

The most powerful earthquake that has [been instrumentally reported](#) was a magnitude 9.5 quake in Chile in 1960. Also known as the Valdivia earthquake, the quake "generated a tsunami that was destructive not only along the coast of Chile, but also across the Pacific in Hawaii, Japan, and the Philippines," according to [NOAA's National Centers for Environmental Information](#).

Estimates for the death toll associated with both the Valdivia earthquake and tsunami range from 490 to 5,700, [NOAA says](#), and 3,000 people were reported injured. The Chilean government estimated that 2 million people were left homeless and more than 58,000 homes were destroyed.

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A 7.8 magnitude earthquake shook central Turkey early Monday and was followed by strong aftershocks. Associated Press Staff, AP

Have Turkey and Syria seen deadly earthquakes before?

Monday's magnitude 7.8 earthquake occurred in the East Anatolian fault zone, a seismically active area that has produced damaging earthquakes in the past.

"Almost all of Turkey is really seismically active," Eric Sandvol, a seismologist at the University of Missouri, told The Associated Press. "This is not something new to the country."

Just over three years ago, in January 2020, Turkey was struck by a magnitude 6.7 earthquake that caused significant damage. And in 1999, a devastating magnitude 7.4 quake near Izmit on the [North Anatolian fault system](#) killed an estimated 18,000 people.

Deadly earthquakes have hit Turkey before: [Why there?](#) [Could a similar quake strike the US?](#)

Contributing: John Bacon and Jorge L. Ortiz, USA TODAY; The Associated Press



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7.8 magnitude earthquake hits Turkey and Syria

A powerful earthquake hit Turkey and Syria early Monday, causing significant damage. At least 31,000 were killed, and the toll was expected to rise.



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