

Izmir Earthquake Rapid Assessment Report

November 2020



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1. Overview

On October 30 2020, the western province of İzmir, Turkey was hit by a 6.6-7.0 earthquake that primarily damaged İzmir city.¹ The earthquake was followed by a tsunami which damaged coastal areas and towns of the province and was felt in provinces as far as Muğla and Manisa. It was followed by over 1,400 aftershocks with 43 of them being over a magnitude of 4.0 geologists expect these aftershocks to continue for several weeks.²

More than 100 people have died while over 1,000 have been injured.³ Hundreds of people have been left homeless and face prolonged displacement over the coming winter months as their homes and buildings have been damaged by the initial earthquake or the subsequent aftershocks. Businesses, hospitals, and municipality buildings have also been damaged and will require renovation to ensure that services can be safely provided to people in the future. This situation is exacerbated by the COVID-19 crises, which threatens to rapidly increase among İzmir communities, as people seek shelter in crowded areas and with families and friends.

More than 86 encampments have been established to host displaced people, with the response being led and coordinated by AFAD, İzmir Municipalities, and NGOs. While the

response is comprehensive isolated groups such as affected refugee communities are at risk of exclusion to aid for a variety of reasons such reluctance to leave their damaged homes or language barriers.

Dünya Doktorları (Doctors of the World-Medecins du Monde) is on the ground providing health services such as psychological support services and Covid-19 kits. Based on staff observations, and needs assessments, the following gaps in services are highlighted:

- Aid and services in the larger encampments are being provided to the detriment of the small camps, which are reporting more needs.
- More hygiene kits including COVID – 19 PPEs (masks and child-masks) and disinfections are needed.
- More mobile lavatories and showers.
- Psychosocial support, for residents of all ages as well as refugee communities.
- Mobile psychosocial support to reach those staying in smaller encampments or suburbs.
- Awareness raising on available support mechanisms in response to the earthquake, particularly targeting isolated groups such as refugees.

¹ While the magnitude of the earthquake is reported as 6.6 by Turkish state institutions, international institutions such as The United States Geological Survey and The European-Mediterranean Seismological Centre reported the magnitude of the earthquake as 6.9 and 7.0

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-10-31/earthquake-shakes-turkey-greece-buildings-destroyed/12834300>

² <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-10-31/earthquake-shakes-turkey-greece-buildings-destroyed/12834300>

³ <https://bianet.org/english/crisis/233694-death-toll-rises-to-79-in-izmir-earthquake>

2. Dünya Doktorları Derneği Response

Since 2016, Dünya Doktorları Derneği (DDD), has been working in Izmir, providing a range of services to refugees, undocumented migrants, and seasonal workers through its Mobile Medical Units (MMUs). With the support of Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), DDD provides Psychosocial Support Services (PSS), MHPSS (Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Service), and primary health care. Through Mobile Medical Units, DDD has provided primary health care, sexual and reproductive health (SRH), and health awareness services including Covid-19 awareness to disadvantaged communities such as Bayrakli district as well as rural district of Torbalı.

The response to the Izmir earthquake is being coordinated by AFAD (The Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency) with the support of the Gendarmerie, Turkish army forces, the Turkish Red Crescent (TRC), and civil society organizations including I/NGOs and 41 provincial-level AFAD directorates. There are aid distribution Assembly Areas in all districts of Izmir totalling almost 400.⁴ DDD has joined the coordination platform led by AFAD and has been collaborating with state

and non – state actors to respond to the needs of the affected population.

In addition, DDD has also been coordinating within the Civil Society Organizations Disaster Platform (*Sivil Toplum Afet Kordinasyon Platformu-SITAP*), of which it is a member organization. SITAP was established in response to the Elazığ and Malatya earthquake on 24 January 2020. SITAP members have been coordinating ongoing needs assessment covering 86 encampments. Most of these camps or encampments have been set-up by local municipalities to accommodate displaced people.

30 of the 86 encampments consist of more than 30 individuals and 9 of them more than 200. A total of 13,266 individuals are recorded as having been sheltered at the visited sites.

This report provides a situational assessment of the impact of the earthquake with a particular focus on vulnerable groups, gaps in services, and DDD's response. Information is based on data from the SITAP needs assessment, DDD staff reports, and other field assessments.

⁴ <https://izmir.afad.gov.tr/izmir-toplanma-alanlari>

3. Introduction

Izmir is Turkey’s third largest city with a population of over 4.5 million. There are 147.134 Syrians registered under Temporary Protection throughout Izmir province,⁵ though there are large numbers of undocumented refugees and migrants. Izmir province’s strategic location on the Aegean coast, a few miles from the Greek islands of Lesbos and Chios attracts migrants seeking to enter Europe, while many more find work in the industry and factories around Izmir city and in the surrounding rural areas as seasonal workers.

Bornova, Bayraklı and Buca are some of the districts most impacted by the earthquake. Bornova in particular is an area primarily built upon old river-bed composed primarily of alluvial soil or loose sediment, which increased the duration and thus the impact of the October 30 earthquake.⁶ The area was additionally affected by urban transformation as it is host to older buildings or those not built in accordance with regulations. These districts are also host to some Syrian families under temporary protection in the city. Refugee communities also reside in Doganlar, Pinarbasi, Isikkent and Mevlana neighbourhoods and Konak as Basmane neighbourhood. More refugees and migrant’s residence in the outskirts of Izmir city in often poorly constructed housing, which may have been damaged.

Area name ⁷	District	Number of tents	Number of people
Âşık Veysel Recreation	Bornova	827	4135
Ege University Campus	Bornova	120	720
Bornova old city town	Bornova	215	1075
Buca Hippodrome	Buca	194	1164
Buca Stadium	Buca	159	795
Seferihisar district Sigicak region	Seferihisar	90	360
Bilal Cakircali Park	Bayraklı	171	1026
Eceler Park	Bayraklı	130	650
Smyrna Square	Bornova	270	1620
Bayrakli Skate Park	Bayraklı	110	550
75. Yıl Park	Bayraklı	50	250
Tepekule Neighborhood	Bayraklı	50	250
Other locations	-	405	2025

The majority (99%) of the refugees living in Izmir are Syrian. Most of them are with irregular registrations (60%) while the rest do not have any registration at all. Other nationalities, in these informal settlements include Afghans and other central Asians nationalities.⁸ The main barriers for the refugee population is legal documentation - 35% reported they are

⁵ Directorate General of Migration and Management, Statistics, October 28, 2020. <https://www.goc.gov.tr/gecici-koruma5638>.

⁶ See the reported interview with the lead of Chamber of Geophysics in Izmir in Turkish language Izmir Earthquake – October to November, 2020

<https://www.milliyet.com.tr/ege/bayraklinin-aluyon-zemini-yikimin-onunu-acti-6343766>

⁷ Data is available on the AFAD website.

⁸ DDD (internal) needs assessment of refugees and migrants, Izmir, August 2020.

unable to acquire legal documentation - and are therefore largely excluded from public health, education services, and are limited in their housing. As such, undocumented Syrians and migrants are forced to stay in unofficial and poor-quality housing or encampments.

The SITAP report identifies three categories of vulnerable people: refugees, elderly, and disabled individuals. However, no exact data has been reported on their needs in the assessment.

About 39 of the 86 encampments have been recorded as hosting vulnerable individuals in these categories. Six out of the 39 encampments consist of more than 200 individuals and 12 of more than 30 individuals. Only three encampments are reported to include refugees, but these three shelters consist of more than 200 individuals (specifically; 700, 2000 and 420).



4. Sector Assessment

4.1. Shelter

More than 17 buildings have totally collapsed while over 180 have been heavily damaged with many more being structurally compromised resulting in hundreds of people being displaced.

Most of the buildings that either collapsed or suffered extensive damages were illegally built with subpar materials, or in contravention of construction standards for the earthquake-prone region. The Ministry of Environment and Urbanisation announced that 300 teams are being deployed to the areas, to assess the extent of damage to residential buildings.⁹

⁹

<https://www.trthaber.com/haber/gundem/depre>

Izmir Earthquake – October to November, 2020

[mzedelerin-hasar-tespiti-icin-basvuru-yapmasi-gerekmiyor-527459.html](https://www.mzedelerin-hasar-tespiti-icin-basvuru-yapmasi-gerekmiyor-527459.html)

Residents of the buildings that collapsed or were extensively damaged have been moved to temporary shelters. However, there are hundreds of other buildings that were damaged and whose residents have been advised not to return, pending an official damage assessment of the building. This has resulted in a need for more temporary shelter for hundreds of people in the short to long-term. Where possible, residents have sought shelter with relatives and friends, while others have been forced to avail of the public camps. Under the coordination of AFAD and the Izmir Metropolitan Municipality (IMM), temporary encampments have been built in different districts.

Nearly 3,500 tents were set up in Bornova, Bayraklı, and Buca and nearly 9,000 earthquake survivors been accommodated in these tents.¹⁰

In other affected areas outside Izmir central city such as Mevlana, Bayraklı and Manavkuyu neighbourhoods, smaller and informal encampments are being built by IMM and AFAD, while TRC and some municipal workers are also in these areas.¹¹ According to a statement of AFAD, cash support will also be provided to those who lost their belongings due to the collapsed buildings and those, whose houses are heavily damaged.¹²

There is no official information of damage to Syrian-hosted buildings, though this could in part be a reluctance on their part to report any damage and risk being displaced from their homes.



Reports suggest that some refugees have preferred to stay outdoors close to their houses or are unaware of the shelter provided by authorities in affected districts.¹³ One reason for this is that undocumented refugees may be reluctant or fearful of going to the authorities, which has been

¹⁰ For the most updated exact numbers of delivered shelter related aid, please see the press release of AFAD in Turkish language <https://www.afad.gov.tr/izmir-seferihisar-depremi-duyuru-51-02112020---1330>

¹¹ Support to Life, Rapid Assessment Report, 01.11.2020, pg. 2. https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/STL%20Sit_Rep%20and%20Needs_%20%C4%B0zmir%20Earthquake_V1.pdf

¹² It has been reported that 30.000 TL is to be provided to those whose houses are collapsed and 13.000 to those, whose houses are heavily damaged, as owners of their houses and 5.000TL to those, whose rental houses are heavily damaged.

<https://www.afad.gov.tr/izmir-seferihisar-depremi-duyuru-50-02112020---1215>

¹³ ASAM, November 2, 2020.

reported by some NGOs.¹⁴ There is also a communication gap.

In part due to a language gap: refugees may not know how to respond to an earthquake, what support is available and where to get it. Given that many undocumented refugees live in informal housing or without documentation, they are also unable to qualify for the cash support that AFAD is making available.

Additional shelter related needs are expected to rise, with the onset of winter and heavy rains for the Izmir province.¹⁵

4.2. Non-Food Items (NFIs)

A variety of actors on the ground are providing non-food items to displaced families in the temporary shelters. AFAD, IMM, Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policies, local municipalities, and NGOs such as TRC, IHH, IBC¹⁶ and Besir Association, are providing NFIs such as blankets, hygiene materials, disinfectants and some masks.¹⁷ However, as highlighted by other NGOs, those refugees who continue to resident near their damaged homes, are in need of additional NFI such as tents, sleeping bags, blankets, winter clothing and so forth.¹⁸

¹⁴ <https://www.gazeteduvar.com.tr/gocmen-dayanisma-agi-suriyeliler-tepkilerden-cekindikleri-icin-yardim-talebinde-bile-bulunmadi-haber-1503694>

¹⁵ International Blue Crescent, <https://reliefweb.int/report/turkey/international-blue-crescent-s-ibc-response-izm-r-earthquake>

¹⁶ ibid



4.3. Food Aid

Food needs of the affected population residing in Izmir and other surrounding areas are being met by coordinated efforts of AFAD, TRC, Izmir Metropolitan municipality and other partners such as the Bursa Metropolitan Municipality, Mamak municipality, Cesme municipality, and Besir Association.¹⁹

According to SITAP, food aid is needed for 27 encampments out of the 86 assessed: 13 out of 27 consist of more than 30 individuals and 4 of them include more than 100 individuals.

¹⁷ Aside from DDD, IBC is the only NGO that highlighted its distribution of Covid-19 protection materials

¹⁸ Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants (ASAM), "The Izmir Earthquake of 30 October 2020 and ASAM's Field Study for Assessing the Urgent Needs of Refugees," November 2, 2020.

¹⁹ DDD field staff observations.

The reluctance or inability of some refugee communities not to leave their houses and travel the distance to access the assembly points, where coordinated assistance (including food aid) is being delivered indicates that there is an unmet food aid need for refugee communities, that are far from the assembly points.

4.4. Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

Within the larger encampments in areas such as Bornova, Bayraklı, and Sefherihisar, water, sanitation, and hygiene needs are being addressed through mobile lavatories.²⁰ However, respondents noted that there is a need for more portable lavatories as only two have been provided near the camps.²¹

There is a greater need for water, sanitation, and hygiene in those smaller and informal encampments set in the affected areas surrounding Izmir city. According to the SITAP assessment, the lack of mobile lavatories was reported for 43 (out of 86) encampments assessed, of which 23 consists of more than 30 individuals and 7 more than 200.

Required WASH materials include maternity kits (particularly in refugee locations) and hygiene items specifically COVID-related PPE and

²⁰ AFAD reported that 4 mobile lavatories are delivered to the affected areas but without specifying they are delivered to Izmir centre or surrounding areas, see below link of AFAD press release in Turkish language,

<https://www.afad.gov.tr/izmir-seferihisar-depremi-duyuru-51-02112020---1330>

²¹ ibid

disinfectants and mobile lavatories. In addition, DDD staff have highlighted there is a need for masks for children.

4.5. Education

Over 139 schools have been damaged by the earthquake, necessitating their inspection and renovation before classes can reopen. As such, the Ministry of National Education announced that formal education in affected areas has been suspended for at least a week.²²

4.6. Health

More than 100 people have been killed in the earthquake, though this number is expected to rise as more buildings are excavated. Another 1,000 people have been injured ranging from minor injuries such as broken limbs, to more severe life-changing injuries. According to DDD Izmir team and reports of other actors,²³ there is no reported major damage to medical centres and hospitals. Formal health facilities have not reported any major gaps in the provision of medical health care services to the affected population in Izmir city and surrounding districts.

4.7. Protection

²² <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/turkiye/milli-egitim-bakani-selcuk-izmirdeki-bazi-okullarda-inceleme-yapti/2026971>

²³ Support to Life, Rapid Assessment Report, 01.11.2020, pg. 3.

https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/STL%20Sit_Rep%20and%20Needs_%20C4%B0zmir%20Earthquake_V1.pdf

There have been report of high levels of anxiety among those directly affected by their loss of their homes or loved ones. In addition, anxiety is common among men, women, and children, particularly during the aftershocks, as well as ongoing fear of further earthquakes or building collapses. Some psychosocial support is currently being provided by Provincial Directorate of the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services (MoFLSS) teams and TRC teams to people in affected areas.

According to observations of DDD staff in Izmir and other actor,²⁴ the immediate basic needs of the affected Turkish population are being met by the state and non-state actors operating on the ground. Psychosocial first aid support is being provided by Provincial Directorate of the MoFLSS and the presence of mobile social service vehicles is also reported. In addition, UNFPA, UNICEF, and ASAM plan to provide a safe space for displaced children in the encampments.²⁵

There are some PSS being provided to children, however, a lack of monitoring or supervision regarding these activities may entail child protection risks.²⁶

Furthermore, as DDD field staff have reported, refugee communities may be excluded from such services due to a lack of knowledge of their availability, language barriers, and ineligibility (due to a lack of documentation). Migrants and refugees are already under psychological pressure due to the

intransient nature of their position, trauma from displacement, and ongoing daily stress related to finances and navigating services and bureaucracy in a foreign language. Field teams have also noted that many refugees are likely to experience intense fear and anxiety, as some of them might not have previously experienced and earthquake or know what to do in its aftermath.

Data from the SITAP confirms the need for psychosocial support, which was reported for 30 of the assessed encampments assessed (16 of which consists of more than 30 individuals and 6 more than 200).

4.8.COVID-19

As mentioned within the health section above, there is an increased risk of COVID – 19 infection in the aftermath of the earthquake as people seek shelter with family, or in the encampments where there is limited social distancing.

In anticipation for this, municipalities have begun conducting Covid-19 testing among emergency responders and in some camps to try to stem transmission. This has already resulted in some emergency responders testing positive.²⁷

Out of 86 encampments visited 56 need additional Covid – 19 personal protection equipment, particularly disinfectants and masks for children.

²⁴ ibid.

²⁵ DDD interviews, November 6, 2020.

²⁶ Support to Life, November 6, 2020.

²⁷ DDD interviews, November 6, 2020.

5. DDD's response

In addition to its ongoing work to provide PHC, SRH and PSS to disadvantaged communities in Bayraklı and Torbalı districts, DDD has also been responding and contributing to the earthquake relief:

- DDD is coordinating with the Izmir Health Directorate in Bornova to provide PSS activities and distribute Covid Hygiene kits (containing things like masks and disinfectants).
- DDD is also coordinating with MoFLSS and has set-up a mobile unit to provide PSS First-Aid service at Bornova district. Further locations for PSS mobile teams are being identified in coordination with local authorities and AFAD. Meanwhile, DDD is planning for anticipated PSS emergency, by temporarily relocating PSS staff from other location to Izmir, on rotation bases.
- Within SITAP, DDD has begun training volunteers to help provide psychological first aid and psycho-social support in the field of trauma response and supervising the psychologists of World Human Relief association.
- DDD has distributed disinfectants over 12,000 masks to nearly 500 tents.
- To counter a possible surge in COVID-19, DDD is also planning awareness-raising campaigns to all earthquake-affected populations (both host and refugee communities) whether they are residing in encampments or within their neighbourhoods.
- DDD is also, planning to launch an awareness-raising campaign for refugees communities, to provide information about available earthquake relief services, how to access them, how to apply for damage assessment, and what to do after an earthquake happens.

6. Recommendation

Based on the findings detailed in this report, and best practices, the following recommendations have been made:

- Provision of psychosocial services to the affected population through mobile teams, in coordination with local authorities and the provincial health directorate.
- Expand emergency psychosocial services provision, to refugee communities, especially those who do not necessarily have access to major relief efforts, especially if their homes have been damaged in locations further from the Izmir city centre.
- PSS is being provided to children and there are response activities planned. However, a lack of monitoring or supervision regarding these activities may entail child protection risks.
- Ensure the provision of aid to all camps. There has been some unequal coverage between the different encampments. It is natural that the larger camps receive more services, but smaller encampments

sometimes lack mobile lavatories, hygiene, and Covid-19 kits, among others.

- Ensure the provision of shelter to members of the refugee communities. There is a risk that refugees' homes in areas further away which may have suffered damage, are not being reached. In addition, there have been reports of refugees being fearful to approach the authorities and benefit from aid or identify themselves as refugees.
- Provision of Covid-19 Hygiene and Maternity Kits to the most vulnerable populations, including the refugee communities. There is a particular need for masks and disinfectants to be included in hygiene kits.
- Information dissemination and awareness-raising regarding earthquake relief services and how to assess/apply for official damage assessment.