



2025

# 2-YEAR REPORT

# TÜRKİYE-SYRIA EARTHQUAKE RESPONSE

PBERRY



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# SUMMARY

More than two years after the February 2023 earthquakes, Hatay continues to face significant humanitarian challenges, affecting both refugee and host communities. Many families remain in overcrowded container cities with inadequate sanitation, exacerbating health risks and the spread of communicable diseases. The destruction of healthcare facilities and the loss of medical personnel have severely restricted access to essential health services, including mental health support. Protection concerns persist, with post-earthquake trauma and lack of proper housing escalating Gender-Based Violence (GBV) risks. Unregistered refugees face deportation risks and limited access to legal and social services.

Humanitarian operations also encountered regulatory hurdles, with stringent permissions and coordination requirements affecting aid delivery.

In Northwest Syria (NWS), years of conflict, economic collapse, and the 2023 earthquake have left the health infrastructure in critical condition. The humanitarian situation remains dire, with severe shortages of medical supplies, personnel, and funding. By the end of 2024, the Humanitarian Response Plan was **underfunded by 65%**, leaving millions of conflicts and earthquake-affected individuals deprived of essential services, which included internally displaced persons (IDPs) in IDP camps and tented settlements.

Although the political shift that was characterized by the former government's overthrow in December brought some stability to the region, displacement surged due to increased hostilities – which continues to be the case in northern Aleppo region and Northeast Syria (NES). Meanwhile, unexploded ordnance threatens civilian life on a daily basis, impeding them from travelling and accessing essential services. A compound of hostilities, funding cuts and depleted resources significantly challenged the health sector and restricted health access for vulnerable communities, particularly in areas of maternal and reproductive health.

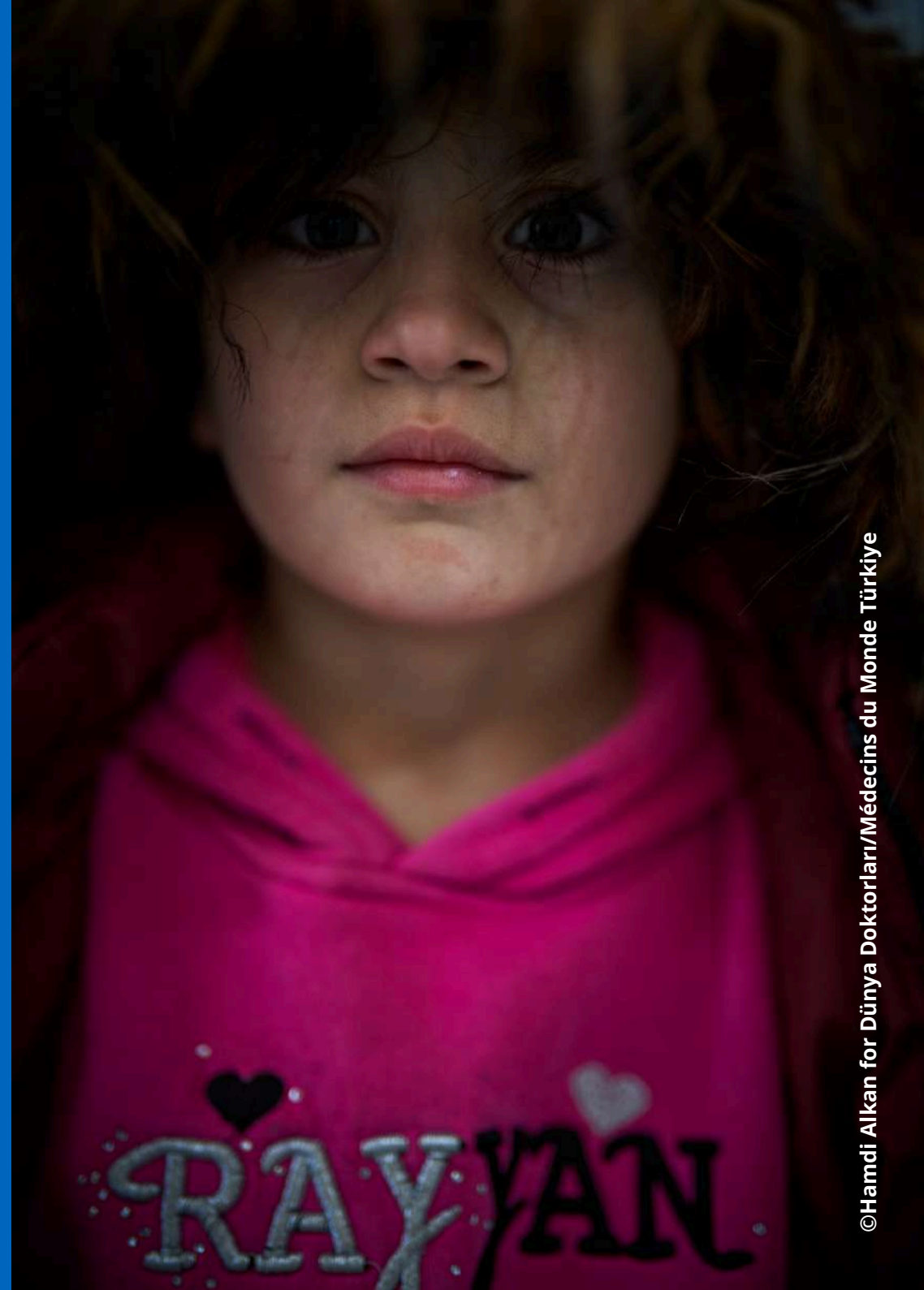
In response, MdM Türkiye provided crucial health and protection services to affected communities in Hatay and NWS.

In Hatay, primary healthcare (PHC) and sexual and reproductive health (SRH) screenings, mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), protection services, and awareness sessions were delivered through a safe space in Antakya and mobile units reaching hard-to-access rural areas such as Samandağ, Altınözü, Defne, Reyhanlı and Kırıkhan.

In some locations, MdM Türkiye remained the sole provider of essential healthcare and protection services for earthquake-affected populations. **In 2024, the organization provided a total of 34,957 services to 13,522 unique beneficiaries in Hatay.**

In Northwest Syria, MdM Türkiye played a critical role in addressing the severe gaps in healthcare and protection services caused by ongoing conflict and underfunding.

Mobile medical teams and partner-supported health facilities delivered primary healthcare, sexual and reproductive health services, MHPSS, and protection interventions to internally displaced persons (IDPs) and other vulnerable groups. The organization worked to sustain essential maternal and child healthcare services amid widespread shortages of medical supplies and personnel. **In 2024, MdM Türkiye provided 801,968 services to 130,242 unique beneficiaries in NWS.** Despite security risks and operational constraints, MdM Türkiye's response contributed to improving access to life-saving health and protection services in one of the most challenging humanitarian settings.



# ABOUT US

Médecins du Monde (MdM) Türkiye (Doctors of the World) is a Turkish humanitarian non-governmental organization (NGO) registered as Dünya Doktorları Derneği (DDD). MdM Türkiye is a part of Médecins du Monde International Network - which is made of 17 independent health and human rights organisations working on domestic and international projects. MdM Türkiye has provided primary health care and mental health and psychosocial support to vulnerable Turkish people and displaced refugee Syrians in Türkiye since 2016. MdM Türkiye has responded to three post-earthquake emergencies: Elazığ and Izmir in 2020 and Hatay in 2023.

Through our medical supply center in Türkiye, MdM Türkiye also strengthens access to quality medication for humanitarian actions in the region.

**OUR MISSION** is to provide support to all people who are excluded from the health system, since at least half of the world's population – particularly children, women and refugees – lack access to essential health services and medical care due to global injustice and misuse of resources. We work to provide lifesaving and life-sustaining medical care to those most in need by assisting populations in distress, victims of natural: man-made disasters or armed conflicts.

## OUR VISION

*A world where barriers to health have been overcome,  
a world where health is acknowledged as a fundamental right*

# PART 1

## CONTEXT &

## HUMANITARIAN NEEDS

# TÜRKİYE

More than two years after the February 2023 earthquakes, both refugee and host communities in Hatay continue to face immense challenges. In 2024, despite significant recovery efforts, many families in Hatay continued to reside in container cities, where they will stay for a number of years. Overcrowding, inadequate sanitation facilities, and limited access to hygiene products in these settings have exacerbated health risks, leading to a rise in infections and illnesses linked to poor hygiene and unsanitary drinking water.

The destruction of hospitals, family health centers, and migrant health centers, coupled with the loss of qualified medical staff due to death, injury, or migration, severely limited access to healthcare, including mental health services in Hatay.



Beyond physical health concerns, the psychological toll of the earthquake has been severe. As millions of people lost loved ones, homes, and livelihoods, a sharp rise in psychological distress was observed in the affected community.

During 2024 in Hatay, the humanitarian context continued to evolve as organizations exerted post-earthquake recovery efforts—while trying to navigate complex permission regulations and access challenges. Field operations faced increasing difficulties due to stringent permission procedures by the authorities. To avoid delays, organizations have been advised to comprehensively outline their activities and coordinate closely with local authorities to minimize the need for repeated approvals.

### **Critical contextual challenges in Türkiye summarized below:**

- The Directorate of Family and Social Services has mandated that only their personnel conduct field surveys. As a result, humanitarian organizations must establish strong coordination with local authorities to ensure data collection aligns with regulatory frameworks.
- A significant portion of the affected population continues to reside in container settlements. According to the Turkish Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD) report titled Integrated Disaster Management – Efforts in the Earthquake Zone, as of February 2025, Hatay province had the highest number of people still living in container cities in the earthquake-affected region, with 218,379 residents.

- Additionally, informal settlements housing migrants and refugees—primarily undocumented individuals—remain highly vulnerable to extreme weather conditions, including severe cold and heat, as well as environmental hazards such as floods and fires. Discussions on technical insulation solutions for these settlements are ongoing, underscoring the urgent need for durable housing solutions.
- Coordination with law enforcement on child protection cases was hindered by inconsistent responsiveness to referrals, complicating protection efforts. The election period intensified restrictions on aid to refugee and migrant populations, with delays in protocol approvals for migration-related projects. Unregistered migrants continued to face deportation threats and administrative obstacles in updating their legal addresses.

## Protection and Health-Related Risks

In 2024, significant **health risks** persisted in the areas targeted by MdM Türkiye particularly in rural hard-to-reach areas and container settlements as a result of lack of proper housing and impeded access to essential services. Inadequate sanitation and shared Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) facilities in densely populated container cities and informal settlements led to increased prevalence of communicable diseases such as scabies, lice and fungal infections.

**Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH):** Limited access to hygiene materials further exacerbated infections and SRH concerns, including high rates of unintended pregnancies due to insufficient access to contraceptives and family planning education.

Living conditions also negatively impacted menstrual health and menstrual hygiene practices putting women and girls at the intersection of vulnerabilities.

### **Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Needs:**

Alongside physical health concerns, mental health issues—including post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, and other psychological distress—were still present. With decreased funding in 2024, mental health was often not prioritized. Negative coping mechanisms such as child marriage, GBV, and suicides remain pressing.

The MHPSS consultations delivered by MdM Türkiye revealed that 77% of respondents reported increased psychological distress, while 44% identified addiction as a significant concern.

Despite this growing need, awareness of available psychological support services was found low, with only 15% of the population aware of non-state actors providing mental health support.

Addressing these intertwined physical and mental health needs is crucial for the region's recovery.

**Protection needs** remained critical in 2024.

Assessments conducted by MdM Türkiye identified key protection risks, including legal status issues and physical protection concerns exacerbated by medical conditions and disability-related challenges.

The prevalence of GBV, child marriages, child labor, single parenthood, and barriers to mobility further heightened these risks, particularly in remote and hard-to-reach areas, limiting access to service providers and protection mechanisms.

A major issue among refugees was the deactivation of ID documents due to the destruction of their registered homes, preventing them from updating their addresses and resulting in restricted or no access to essential public services such as education, healthcare, and legal assistance. Additionally, Hatay province's closure to new Temporary Protection Identification (TPID) registrations blocked many undocumented individuals to regain their legal status.



# SYRIA

**The earthquake that struck Northwest Syria (NWS) in February 2023**, coupled with years of conflict, economic collapse, and political instability, has severely weakened Syria's health infrastructure. In 2024, severe shortages and cuts in funding<sup>[1]</sup>, resources, and medical personnel as well as heightened hostilities hindered service delivery, leaving critical gaps in healthcare access. By the end of 2024, the Syrian Arab Republic Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) 2024 was underfunded by 65%.<sup>[2]</sup> As of December 2024, 3.54 million of the 5.16 million people in NWS are internally displaced, with 2 million residing in camps or informal settlements.<sup>[3]</sup>

[1] NGO Forum. [Syrians Left Hanging with Lowest Levels of Funding as Humanitarian Needs Hit Highest Levels in Thirteen Years of Crisis](#); Press Release (30 May 2024).

Assistance Coordination Unit, [Impact of decreased humanitarian assistance in Northern Syria \(October 2024\)](#); Assessment (20 Nov 2024).

[2] [Syrian Arab Republic Humanitarian Response Plan 2024](#).

[3] UN OCHA, Northwest Syria Factsheet (As of 31 December 2024).



The military operation launched on November 27 resulted in opposition forces gaining control of Aleppo city, southern Idlib, Hama, and Homs, and culminated in the overthrow of the former government led by Bashar Al-Assad on December 8. While security conditions in most of NWS improved after the fall of Bashar al-Assad's government, Northern Aleppo and NES remain volatile due to ongoing armed conflict. Unexploded ordnance (UXO) continued to pose significant threats to civilian life, hindering them from reaching essential service providers.

According to the IDP Taskforce, more than 664,000 people have been newly displaced across the country since November 27, primarily in Idlib and Aleppo, due to escalating hostilities.

Cross-border movement has also become more dynamic, with over 35,000 Syrians returning from Türkiye in December 2024, according to the Turkish Ministry of Interior.

Following the political shifts, MdM Türkiye conducted a rapid needs assessment<sup>[4]</sup> with key informants, primarily camp managers in December, to understand IDPs' intentions regarding return to their areas of origin. The assessment revealed complex decision-making processes: **38% of communities have no immediate plans to return, 59% would wait for improved stability, including security and basic services, and only 3% intend to return immediately.**

[4] MdM Türkiye, [Rapid Need Assessment: Intentions of Internally Displaced Persons \(IDPs\) in Northwest Syria to Return to Their Hometowns](#) (December 2024).

Syria's health system, already weakened by nearly fourteen years-long conflict, remains in critical condition despite recent political shifts. Persistent challenges include:

- **There are severe shortages** of medicines, medical supplies, and essential equipment.
- **Sanctions-related restrictions**, complicating the import and replacement of vital medical equipment.
- **Deteriorating hospital infrastructure**, with outdated and non-functional medical devices, exacerbated by difficulties in securing spare parts and maintenance.
- **Healthcare workforce migration**, leaving many positions unfilled and further straining service capacity.

While recent political changes offer renewed hope, addressing these structural challenges remains essential to rebuilding Syria's healthcare system and ensuring access to life-saving services.

### Challenges Faced in Syria

- During 2024, funding cuts directly impacted both medical and non-medical referral services, reducing the number of service providers and referral networks in the region. Contact numbers for service providers became unreliable since the February 2023 earthquakes, limiting effective and timely communication, particularly in emergency referrals. In addition, there were no centralized security services throughout 2024, gender-sensitive policies, or women's refuge centers for survivors of GBV.

- **The lack of qualified medical personnel inflicted critical issues in health service in NWS during 2024.** Also, restrictions on cross-border activities from Türkiye into Syria hindered recruitment efforts for key positions, such as the Program Medical Manager in Afrin.

### **Persisting Health and Protection Risks**

Displaced populations in NWS face severe health challenges due to extreme weather conditions, overcrowded living spaces, food insecurity, and inadequate sanitation. These conditions contribute to communicable diseases such as respiratory infections, diarrheal diseases, lice, and scabies, leading to long-term health complications. Malnutrition is also a growing concern as poor access to food and healthcare exacerbates nutritional deficiencies.

By the end of 2024, hospitals were under immense pressure due to increased demand for services amid dwindling resources. Many facilities have suffered critical losses, including the destruction of equipment and reduced patient care capacities. Reproductive health services are particularly affected, with severe resource shortages threatening care for women and newborns. As of September 2024, fifty-nine Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care facilities were operational, but by October, thirty had already run out of funds.<sup>[5]</sup>

Public health risks continue to rise due to disease outbreaks, poor sanitation, and environmental hazards such as droughts and floods, which further impact agriculture, water resources, and public health. Post-earthquake reconstruction efforts remain stalled due to economic hardships and a lack of development funding, delaying infrastructure repairs and the provision of essential services across multiple sectors.

[5] UN OCHA, North-West Syria Situation Report. Last Updated: 18 Oct 2024.

**Mental Health Risks:**

Mental health services are deprioritized due to funding shortages, leaving displaced populations without access to critical psychological support. The combined effects of prolonged conflict, displacement, and disaster-related trauma further exacerbate mental health challenges in the region.

**Protection Risks:** Protection risks have significantly increased in 2024, particularly for women, children, and vulnerable groups. Displaced women and girls face heightened risks of sexual violence, early and forced marriages, exploitation, and harassment. Restricted access to services, loss of livelihoods, and infrastructure destruction have compounded these risks, pushing families toward harmful coping mechanisms such as child marriage.

Discrimination against vulnerable groups, including individuals with disabilities, continues to limit access to essential services like education and healthcare.

The expiration of emergency funding has forced the closure of many protection programs, leaving countless individuals without necessary support. As humanitarian services dwindle, community frustrations are growing, further complicating relief efforts in the region.

The ongoing conflict, earthquakes, and displacement, combined with funding shortages, are intensifying Syria's humanitarian crisis in 2024, placing additional strain on already limited recovery efforts.



# PART 2

# IMPACT

# TÜRKİYE

Throughout 2024, MdM Türkiye continued providing life-saving health and protection services to earthquake-affected host and migrant communities in Türkiye. In Hatay, PHC and SRH screenings, as well as MHPSS consultations, protection and health-related awareness-raising sessions, and case management/referrals, were provided through MdM Türkiye's safe space in Antakya and mobile unit deployments to hard-to-reach areas in the most affected districts, including Antakya, Samandağ, Altınözü, Defne, Reyhanlı and Kırıkhan. In several locations, MdM Türkiye has been the only NGO providing essential healthcare and protection services to earthquake-affected communities.



## Key Achievements in 2024 - TÜRKİYE

Total Number of Services

Total Number of Unique Beneficiaries



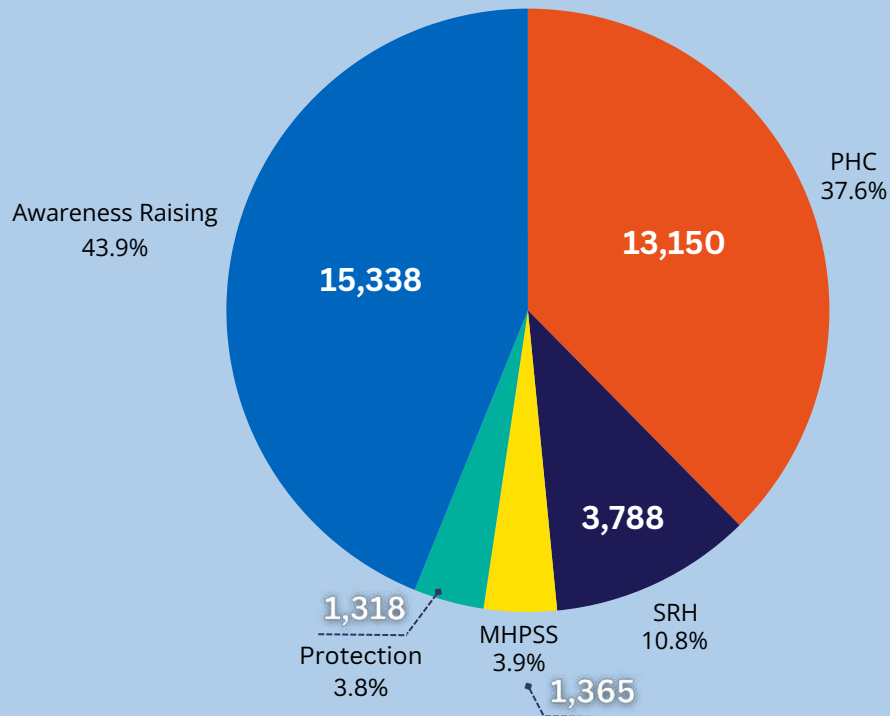
In the earthquake-affected Hatay, MdM Türkiye provided **34,957 services** to **13,522 unique beneficiaries**.



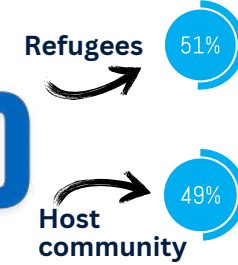
**16,938**  
medical screening



**1,365**  
earthquake survivors received specialized mental health consultations



**10,230**  
unique beneficiaries



**387 individuals** identified as socio-economically vulnerable received in-kind assistance to address health-related needs.

**2,403 kits and materials** were distributed, including **2,097 hygiene kits** and **306 maternity kits**, to vulnerable communities.







# SYRIA

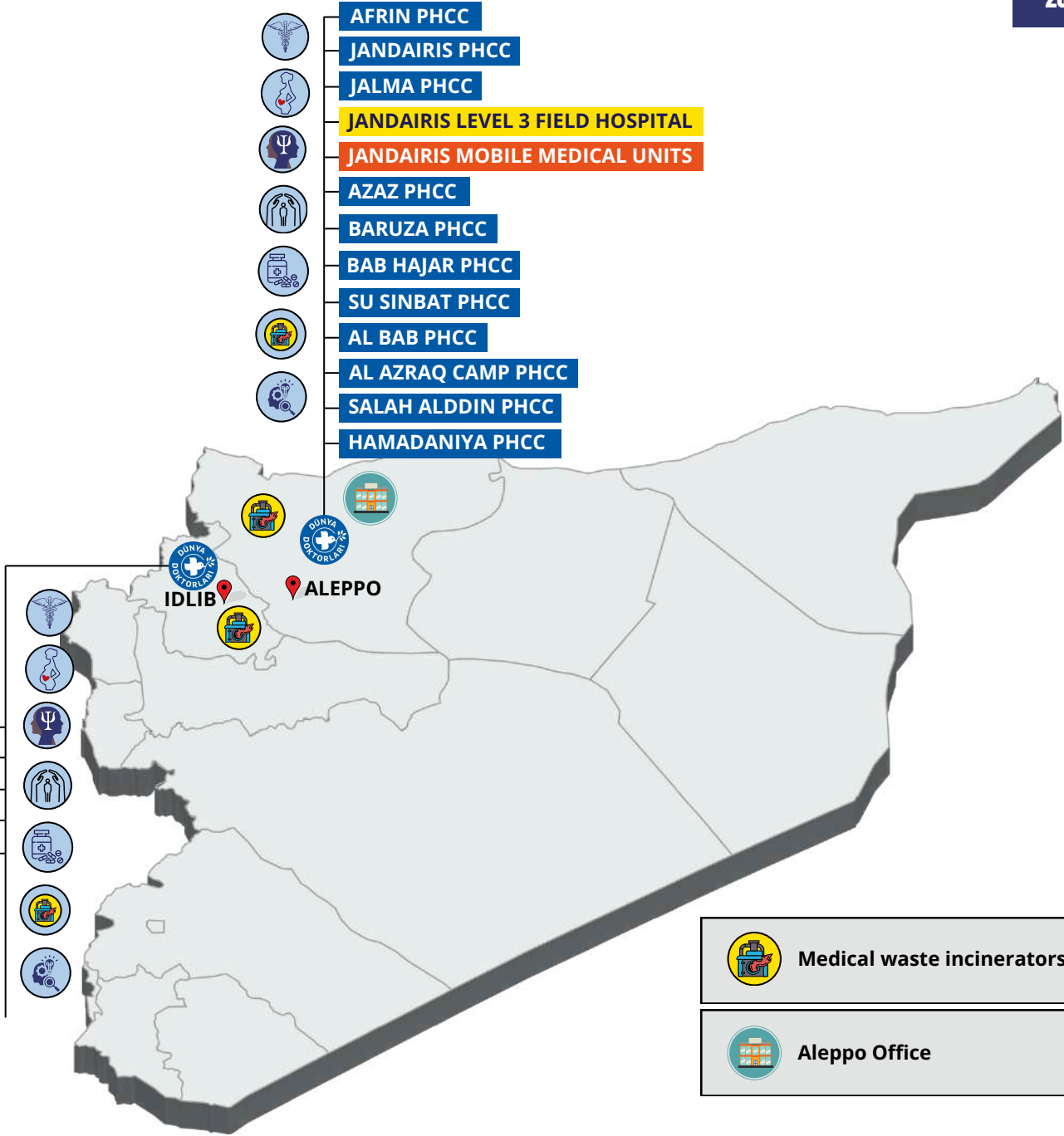
In 2024, MdM Türkiye directly operated **fourteen health facilities** across Afrin, Idlib, and Eastern Aleppo and carried out outreach efforts, **providing a total of 801,968 services to approximately 130,242 beneficiaries.** This total includes **34%** pharmacy services, **33%** PHC services, **19%** awareness-raising sessions, **9%** SRH services, **3%** lab services, **1%** MHPSS services, and **1%** protection services.

- Funded by BHA
- Funded by Tzu Chi Foundation
- Funded by GFFO

- SARMADA PHCC
- AL DOAA PHCC
- AL SALAM PHCC
- QAH PHCC
- KELLY PHCC

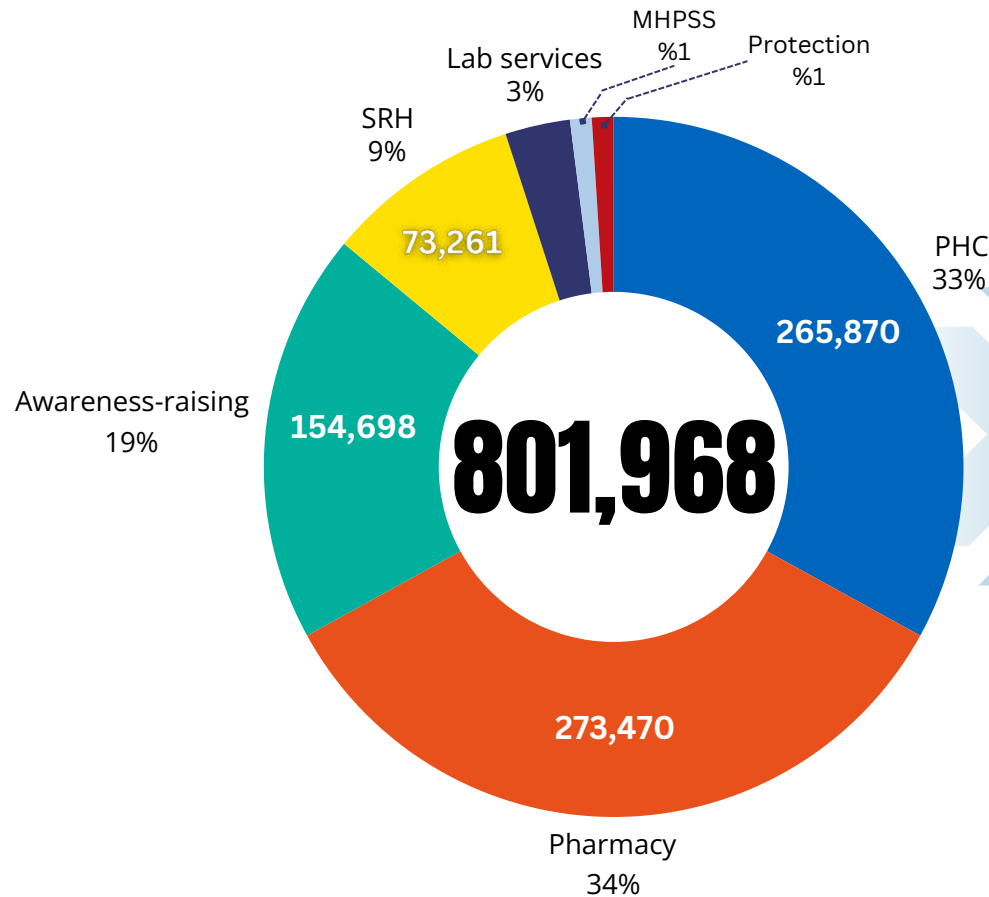
-  Primary Health Care
-  Sexual & Reproductive Health
-  Mental Health & Psychosocial Support
-  Protection
-  Medicine
-  Medical Waste Management
-  Capacity Building

**SERVICES**

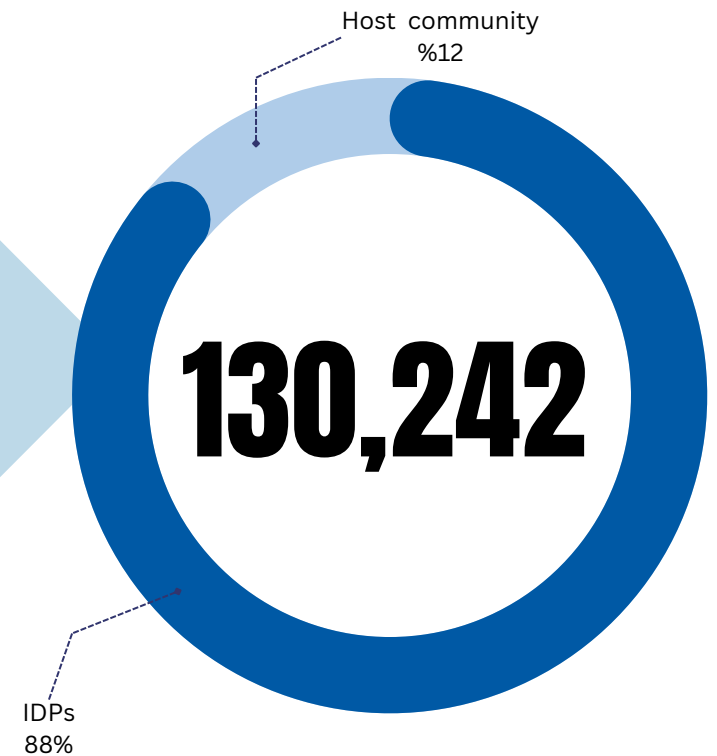


## Key Achievements in 2024 - SYRIA

### Total Number of Services



### Total Number of Unique Beneficiaries

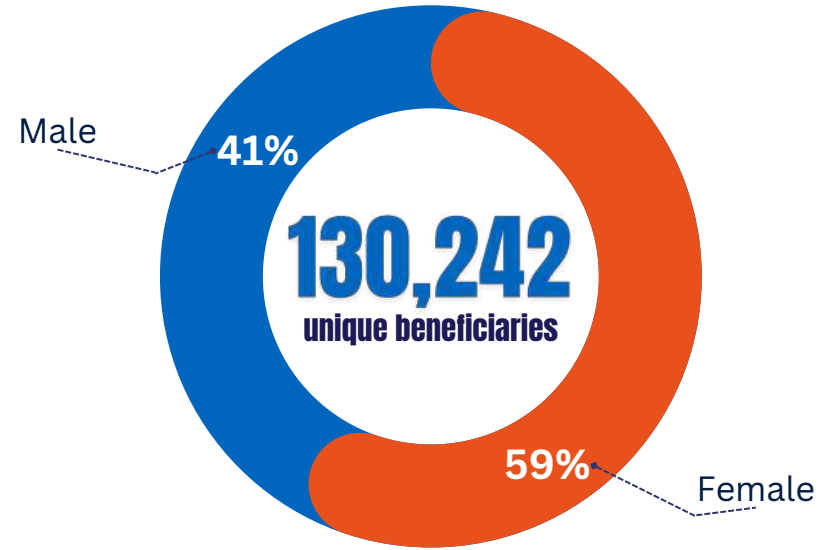
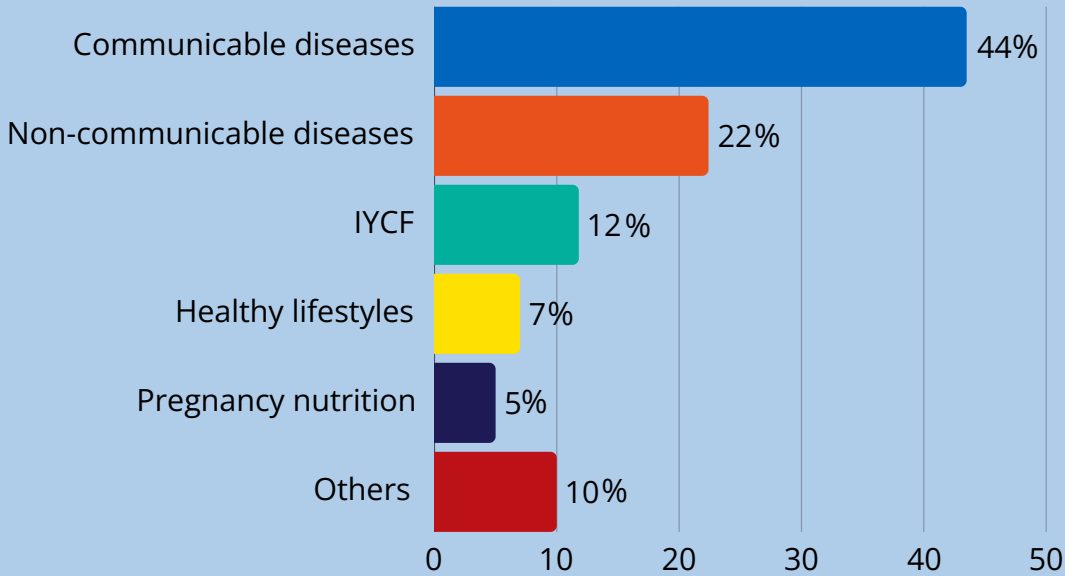


In the earthquake-affected Northwest Syria, MDM Türkiye provided **801,968 services** to **130,242 unique beneficiaries**.



# 147,525

participants attended awareness-raising sessions led by community health workers, covering 82,191 topics on:



## 84,670 kg of medical waste



was safely incinerated from **37 medical facilities**, including PHCs, hospitals, surgical units, warehouses, and pharmacies.





# PART 3

# STORIES FROM THE FAULT LINE



**HATAY, TÜRKİYE**

# **THE STORY OF YASMIN:**

## **A NEW LIFE BEGINS AMID WAR & EARTHQUAKE**



On February 6, 2023, Yasmin Rena, a 27-year-old Syrian woman, experienced an earthquake that changed her life forever. Living in Syria, where war had raged for 14 years, she initially believed her house had been bombed. The reality soon set in: This was a massive earthquake that left homes in ruins, forcing countless families, including hers, to seek refuge in tented camps.

*“When the earthquake happened, my first thought was that our house had been bombed,” Yasmin recalls.*

*“We had lived under airstrikes for so long that destruction felt normal. But then I realized the entire ground was shaking. It was something much bigger.”*

**“I WAS SO AFRAID SOMETHING  
WOULD HAPPEN TO MY BABY.  
THERE WERE NO PROPER  
HOSPITALS IN SYRIA, AND I  
COULDN'T TAKE ANY RISKS.  
TÜRKIYE WAS OUR ONLY  
OPTION.”**



Dünya Doktorları/Médecins du Monde Türkiye's SRH counselor Özlem and translator Rim are with the baby Sara, the daughter of Yasmin Rena during a routine follow-up visit of mobile medical teams of the organization.

©Hamdi Alkan for Dünya Doktorları/Médecins du Monde Türkiye



In Türkiye, Yasmin encountered the mobile health team of Dünya Doktorları (DDD)/Médecins du Monde (MdM) Türkiye. Among them was Özlem, a sexual and reproductive health counselor who provided her with medical support and guidance.

Realizing that Yasmin had no identification and was unable to access hospital care, DDD/MdM Türkiye stepped in to assist. They facilitated her hospital admission, providing guidance, counselling and covering the costs of hospital intervention.

With their support, Yasmin safely delivered her daughter, Sara. DDD/MdM Türkiye covered the hospital expenses, which she and her husband could not have afforded. That support extended beyond childbirth, providing follow-up care, essential supplies such as milk and diapers, and emotional reassurance during a challenging time.

**“WHEN I HELD SARA FOR THE FIRST TIME, I FELT OVERWHELMING JOY. SHE IS MY GREATEST BLESSING, AND I AM SO GRATEFUL TO THE PEOPLE WHO HELPED BRING HER INTO THE WORLD SAFELY.”**



Özlem and Rim during a consultation with Yasmin Rena and her newborn baby Sara in Reyhanlı district of Hatay.

©Hamdi Alkan for Dünya Doktorları/Médecins du Monde Türkiye

Through the support of Dünya Doktorları and the Agence Française de Développement (AFD), Yasmin Rena not only found medical care but also hope for the future. Now, as she holds her daughter in her arms, she remains deeply grateful for the assistance that changed her life.

DDD/MdM Türkiye, in cooperation with AFD, continues to support countless individuals like Yasmin, offering vital healthcare to those in need, proving that compassion and solidarity can transform lives.

**Watch Yasmin's story:**

[Story of Yasmin: A New Life Begins amid War and Earthquake](#)



Sara, Yasmin Rena's baby, is with her grandfather in a house in Reyhanlı district of Hatay. December 2024.

©Hamdi Alkan for Dünya Doktorları/Médecins du Monde Türkiye



Sara, born as a hope for her entire family amidst the massive destruction of earthquakes, is with her grandmother in a house in Reyhanlı district of Hatay. December 2024.

©Hamdi Alkan for Dünya Doktorları/Médecins du Monde Türkiye

A photograph of a man and a young boy sitting together on a couch. The man, on the left, is wearing a dark blue sweater and is smiling warmly while looking at a piece of paper he is holding. The boy, on the right, is wearing a blue and grey jacket and a colorful, hand-drawn paper hat. He is also smiling and looking towards the man. The background shows a wooden wall with framed photographs of children in graduation gowns.

# FROM DESPAIR TO HOPE: TUNCAY'S JOURNEY TO RECOVERY

On the bitterly cold morning of February 6, 2023, Hatay was shaken to its core. The earth roared, buildings crumbled, and in a matter of minutes, thousands of lives were shattered. Among them was Tuncay Dönmez, a father of three, who barely managed to escape the collapsing walls of his home with his children. The place that had once been their safe haven was now a ruin.

With nowhere to go and limited options, they took shelter in their car. The cold seeped into their bones, hunger gnawed at their stomachs, and exhaustion became a constant companion. Days passed, and the car no longer offered even the most basic protection. With no other choice, they moved into a makeshift greenhouse tent, a frail barrier against the harsh reality of their new life.

Yet, the earthquake was only the beginning of Tuncay's ordeal. The weight of survival pressed heavily on his shoulders, but his own body began to fail him. A searing pain in his hip became unbearable, leaving him unable to walk properly, let alone work. He sought help at different hospitals, desperate for a solution. But medical treatment, especially the surgery he needed, was far beyond his financial reach.

**Every day was a battle - one he was losing. How could he provide for his children if he could not even stand?**

Then, in his darkest moment, a new path opened before him. Dünya Doktorları (DDD)/Médecins du Monde (Mdm) Türkiye stepped in.

With the support of the French Development Agency (AFD), they not only ensured he received the surgery he so desperately needed but also covered every expense. They did not stop there. They stayed by his side, following up on his recovery, arranging transportation for his check-ups, and making sure he had everything required to heal properly.

For Tuncay, this was more than medical assistance: **it was hope reborn.**

“IF I HADN’T HAD THIS SURGERY, I WOULDN’T HAVE BEEN ABLE TO WORK OR PROVIDE FOR MY CHILDREN,” HE SAYS, HIS VOICE FILLED WITH EMOTION. “THEY TAUGHT ME HOW TO HOLD ON TO LIFE.”



43-year old Tuncay, an earthquake survivor from Hatay, during a medical examination by DDD/MdM Türkiye health staff inside a tent he lives with his three children and wife.

©Hamdi Alkan for Dünya Doktorları/Médecins du Monde Türkiye



Today, Tuncay is back on his feet. He can walk, work, and most importantly, care for his children. His journey from despair to recovery shows the power of solidarity and the life-changing impact of humanitarian aid.

Because sometimes, healing is not just about medicine - it's about giving people the strength to start again.

# PARTNERSHIP & GRANTS

In partnership with



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



Projet soutenu par



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