

TURKEY: ECOLOGICAL ORGANIZATIONS EARTHQUAKE REPORT ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE FEBRUARY 6TH EARTHQUAKE

This report is prepared by a Working Group consisting of activists and specialists from Climate Justice Coalition, Turkey (www.iklimadaletikoalisyonu.org) and Ekoloji Birliđi (www.ekoljibirligi.org).

During the preparation of the report, weekly hybrid meetings were held with ecological, labor, and professional organizations in all provinces where the February 6th earthquakes occurred to gather information. The agenda for identifying the events of the past year and assessing the current situation after one year was determined in the meetings, covering various fields such as nature, law, health, migration, economy, sociology, etc. In addition to the information shared during the meetings, the report includes observations, press releases, actions, and reporting activities conducted by ecological, labor, and professional organizations at the local level. Similar to our first report, a method of generating analysis for each topic title was adopted after presenting the current situation. In our report, we aimed to present the current and real state of affairs by using numerical data obtained from open sources, in addition to on-site direct observations and interviews.

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PART ONE:

ECOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL DEVASTATION

1: ECOCIDE CRIME SCENE EXPANDED EVEN MORE AFTER ONE YEAR: REMOVAL OF DEBRIS, TRANSPORT OF EXCAVATION, AND DEBRIS AREAS

“In the summer, along with the heat, there was such intense air pollution that we had trouble walking on the street. Especially those with chronic illnesses, those with asthma. For example, I experienced this very often. We started walking around with medicines in our hands. For instance, I have to wipe my work desk every fifteen minutes.” (Antakya Environmental Protection Association, Nilgün Karasu)

FINDINGS:

Building demolitions, excavations: It is observed that the demolitions of damaged buildings in earthquake zones were carried out without adhering to the conditions specified in the existing regulations. During demolitions, the method of 'wet demolition' to prevent dusting was not used as a common practice, ignoring the health of the public and living beings. Necessary precautions were not taken during the transportation of debris, and the debris was transported openly on trucks after being loaded. The dust created as a result of demolition and transportation became an inseparable part of the city silhouette like a fog. According to the experiences shared by activists and locals in Malatya, pollution in underground waters has increased, and visible air pollution with the effects of asbestos and debris dust has occurred in the Beydağları region, experiencing unprecedented closed weather conditions until now.

During demolitions, the safety and health of workers working in the debris area were disregarded. Demolition and separation were subcontracted to companies through various tenders, and these companies, in turn, subcontracted the work to other companies. According to the accounts of the people, during demolitions, company employees damaged water pipes, the environment, and sometimes cut down trees. Demolition works were carried out with a commercial-profit-oriented approach.

Debris dumping areas: In the areas where demolition took place, an average of 12 tons of construction debris per person is generated. Debris in earthquake-affected areas consists not only of construction debris but also includes daily consumer goods such as furniture, electronic waste, medical waste, domestic waste, and wastewater from infrastructure. The waste management process of removing, transporting, and storing debris, if done incorrectly, will lead to short-term waste-related pollution and long-term ecological destruction in the region. In our observations in March and May, we identified 18 locations in Malatya, Hatay, Gaziantep, and Adıyaman provinces. Our observations took place in:

Malatya/Mamürek (5/5/2023), Antep/Karaburçlu Village (Between Nurdağı and İslahiye) (3/5/2023), Hatay/Narlıca-Altınözü (25/4/2023), Adıyaman-1 (4/5/2023), Adıyaman-2 (4/5/2023), Adıyaman-3 (4/5/2023), Malatya/Doğanşehir (5/5/2023), Hatay/Koçören (10/4/2023), Antep/İslahiye (3/3/2023), Hatay/Kanberli Village-Altınözü Road (10/4/2023), Hatay-Samandağ (10/4/2023), Hatay/Hassa (3/5/2023), Hatay/Antakya-Atatürk Avenue Side (10/4/2023), Hatay/Antakya-Primemall Mall Area (10/4/2023), Hatay/Enek, Altınözü Road (10/4/2023), Malatya/Polat Village-Doğanşehir (5/5/2023), Malatya/Ören-Doğanşehir (5/5/2023), Maraş/Elbistan.

In Hatay, debris was dumped on the banks of the Asi River, agricultural fields, and near temporary living areas. The reaction of the people in Hatay to the dumping of debris around the Harbiye Waterfall prevented this action, increasing hope to some extent with societal organization. The data provided by ecologists from Hatay indicates that sometimes the decision on where to dump debris is made by the driver without any prior decision. The Mileyha Wetland was chosen as a debris dumping area, and the protest of the local people and ecologists stopped the debris dumping process. Coastal areas were also used as debris dumping areas, disregarding the life in the tent city established in the Deniz Stadium shortly after the earthquake, which was later removed. Even after the removal of the tent city, debris dumping and separation operations continue in the area. By the first anniversary of the earthquake, a total of 38 dumping sites were created in Hatay. Although the demolition of severely damaged buildings has largely been completed, the possibility of further demolitions remains if the reinforcement of moderately damaged buildings does not take place, and the dangers of debris transportation, dumping, and separation persist as a threat in the earthquake zone.

In Narlıca and Koçören, a valley with olive groves was selected as a dumping area, leaving the legally protected olive trees vulnerable. In Narlıca, where there are two debris dumping areas near stone quarries and the city landfill, a total of 2 million 124 thousand tons of debris was estimated to have been dumped by May 2023. While 1 million 100

thousand tons of this was dumped in the stone quarries, the remaining 1 million 24 thousand tons was dumped on the land defined as 'agricultural land'. Although an investigation was initiated by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry to identify the land where the debris was dumped as agricultural land, the investigation revealed that the 'title deed' document presented as evidence was false.

In Malatya, the wetlands and vineyards of 14 villages in Mamurek have been filled with judicial debris. Debris was dumped next to Malatya City Cemetery, agricultural lands, and natural areas. In the first weeks after the earthquake, debris and garbage were dumped in Doğanşehir in a hurry to eliminate the crime scene.

Debris and rubble from concrete buildings and earthen houses continue to be dumped next to villages and apricot trees. Eight kilometers away from the district center, a massive dump, a mixture of garbage, asbestos, and chemicals, has been created.

In Adıyaman, after the earthquake, debris was dumped into the streambeds that feed the Atatürk Dam. After the reaction from NGOs, the debris was taken to different areas, but the ecological destruction risk in these areas was not calculated, and there has been no improvement in the ecological destruction dimension. Waste and debris were transported to the dumping area next to the Karapınar Cemetery, which is located near the Göksu Dam. The people visiting the graves of their losses encountered the debris of their collapsed homes there, adding to the trauma of a community mourning their losses. Ziyaret Creek, which flows into the Atatürk Dam, irrigates agricultural lands and provides drinking water to Urfa, was chosen as the dumping and sorting area. Börgenek Village, which has been experiencing the impact of the cement factory for years, is now struggling with the destructive effects of the debris dumping area.

Nurdağı, located right next to Karaburçlu Village, was turned into a debris dumping area without taking any precautions, including iron separation. In Antep, İslahiye, the land expropriated from the villager for university construction was turned into a debris area, and animals grazing nearby lost their lives.

In Maraş, debris was dumped in areas very close to the city center, and it was reported that debris was accidentally dumped on private properties. In Elbistan, debris dumping areas are spread along the sides of the road to the garbage mountains and the pasture areas.

The basin feeding the Ceyhan River continues to be poisoned. Debris waste is dumped wherever there is an olive grove, an orange grove, a streambed, or a wetland, resulting in plastic, asbestos, heavy metals, and other pollutants entering the food chain indefinitely.

Asbestos, classified by the World Health Organization as "definitely carcinogenic," can cause various diseases, including mesothelioma and lung cancer.

The Ministry of Environment, Urbanization, and Climate Change officials assured citizens that there was no asbestos in the air, calling for reassurance. The responsibility for taking necessary precautions regarding solid materials containing asbestos was delegated to the contracting companies. However, the Hatay Governorship claimed on July 15, 2023, that asbestos levels in the city were below regulatory standards, but it was later understood that the threshold value considered in the statement applied to the working legislation where protective measures were implemented for worker health. According to scientists, even a single asbestos fiber can cause lung cancer, mesothelioma, and non-cancerous, severe, and progressive lung diseases (asbestosis).

The demolition of earthquake-damaged buildings took place without removing asbestos-containing materials, and the heavy machinery used in the process caused these materials to break down into micron-sized particles. Asbestos fibers can be spread over a very large area in an uncontrolled manner with the help of the wind. During observations in the region, it was noted that the use of protective masks was almost nonexistent, and almost everyone was directly exposed to dust. Authorities did not conduct awareness-raising or encouraging campaigns for mask use.

On July 26, 2023, Bedir Özten, the representative of the Chamber of Civil Engineers Malatya Branch, stated in a written statement that during demolition works in Malatya, asbestos, mercury vapor in bulbs, lead, and PCB substances were "poisoning the city."

On September 2 and 3, 2023, an expert team from the Chamber of Environmental Engineers Istanbul Branch collected samples from the region and had asbestos analysis conducted at a laboratory registered with the Turkish Accreditation Agency (TÜRKAK) in accordance with relevant standards.

Results showed that asbestos had contaminated the soil surface, plants, and living spaces in Hatay, reaching neighboring cities through wind and vehicles. According to laboratory results, asbestos was detected in 16 out of 45 samples taken from living spaces, flora, soil surfaces, dust accumulated on vehicle surfaces, and insulation materials.

The Turkish Medical Association and the Right to Clean Air Platform conducted asbestos studies in Adıyaman, Kahramanmaraş, and Hatay. Asbestos was found in two out of 30 samples in Adıyaman, eight out of 21 samples in Kahramanmaraş, and two out of 15 samples in Elbistan. Asbestos was also found near the villages of Durmuşlar in Gaziantep-Nurdağı, many neighborhoods in Hatay-Antakya and Yayladağı, Afşin-Büyükatlar Mahallesi in Kahramanmaraş, and Kırklar village in Osmaniye-Haruniye.

During the actions of ecological organizations and local people to draw attention to the asbestos danger and demand the right to a healthy life, they were subjected to the violence of law enforcement.

The asbestos precautions entrusted to the contracting companies were wasted on scrap metal and iron obtained as a result of debris removal.

ANALYSIS: Due to demolition processes that do not comply with legal regulations, the health of living beings in the region is being jeopardized, and the cumulative impact is encircling the ecosystem. The lack of traceability regarding the presence of asbestos in the debris is evident in many instances, and asbestos is being imposed on the public as a future cancer risk. Despite press releases and actions by ecological organizations to highlight the ecological destruction caused by debris removal, rubble transportation, and dumping operations, existing practices have persisted. Deposit areas have been chosen in riverbeds, agricultural lands, olive groves, and areas near the sea as storage areas. This selection has not been made in accordance with any legal, scientific, or technical basis. The closest "pit" observed has been considered as a storage area. Ground applications have not been implemented in storage areas, and impermeability, slope sensitivity, and stability have not been researched. Dust and noise prevention measures have not been taken.

It has been observed that even the relevant regulations are not adhered to in building demolitions, and wet demolition is not performed. These incorrect practices not only cause environmental damage but also seriously threaten public health. It has been observed that the central understanding, the state system that produces power, is the main factor that not only fails to heal society's wounds but also deepens them. A physician who conducted research on asbestos in Malatya during Zoom meetings and revealed that respiratory disorders have increased by 80% was reported to have been transferred to Denizli, suggesting that the central government continues to maintain the will to conceal accurate information on public health and environmental protection.

2: ECOCIDE SCENE EXPANDS IN THE PAST YEAR: DEMOLITION PROJECTS IMPEDE RECOVERY IN EARTHQUAKE ZONES

"A quake occurred on February 6th, and on March 12th, a mining exploration license was granted." (Kahramanmaraş)

FINDINGS:

The relocation of the city in Hatay is considered appropriate by conveyors after the move from alluvial ground and significant destruction. They emphasize the need to carry out this relocation, centering on people's rights, without subjecting them to new losses.

Environmental Impact Assessment Processes: Data obtained from the Ministry of Environment, Urbanization, and Climate Change's Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) announcement page for the years 2022-2023 have been classified and transformed into a table. (The table is found in the supplementary part of the report.) According to the official figures of the Ministry, from February 7, 2023, to December 31, 2023, a total of 705 EIA applications were submitted in 11 earthquake-affected provinces (Adana, Adıyaman, Diyarbakır, Elazığ, Gaziantep, Hatay, Kahramanmaraş, Kilis, Malatya, Osmaniye, Şanlıurfa). Out of these applications, 547 resulted in a decision of "EIA is not required." Of the 705 projects that initiated the EIA process, 456 project applications related to mining, ready-mix concrete/cement plants, oil exploration, sand/gravel quarries, mass housing, solar power plants (GES), wind power plants (RES), and hydroelectric power plants (HES) were evaluated.

In Hatay, one of the provinces most affected by the earthquake, the remarkable increase in mining projects by 70% compared to 2022 is noteworthy. There is an 89% increase in GES projects in Şanlıurfa and a 28% increase in Malatya compared to the previous year. The petroleum exploration sector has also shown an increase, with growth rates of 150% in Şanlıurfa and 92% in Diyarbakır. The application rates for EIA for sand/gravel quarries have increased by 450% compared to 2022.

Analysis of 2023 EIA applications:

- Under the "Mining" category; Hatay and Adıyaman Center have 14, Iskenderun has 11.
- Under the "GES" category; Şanlıurfa has 59, Gaziantep has 17.

- Under the "Petroleum Exploration" category; Diyarbakır has 23, Urfa has 5, with the highest increase in EIA files.

Cities with existing EIA files include:

- Antakya with 14 mining and 4 concrete/cement plants,
- Onikişubat with 8 mining, 2 GES, and 3 concrete/cement plants,
- Şehitkamil with 4 mining, 1 RES, 17 GES, and 6 concrete/cement plants.

According to local informants, in the ongoing construction of a dam in Arguvan district of Malatya, approximately 150 deep wells have been drilled for gold exploration. The water flowing from the dam's outlet is reported to be bright red/black, raising concerns about the widespread impact of pollutants through water. Mining activities, combined with dams, drilling wells, lead to the destruction of forests, endemic plants, and animals. In Malatya, mining activities are currently carried out in Yeşilyurt, Doğanşehir, Akçadağ, Darende, Hekimhan, and Arguvan, using various chemicals during the operation.

In Elbistan, the acceptance of hydroelectric power plants (HES) without water, the issuance of new exploration licenses without considering the existing number of mines in the region, and the commencement of the licensing process immediately after February 6th have sparked reactions from those conveying the information. The indiscriminate issuance of mining permits, regardless of meadows, pastures, and wetlands, is also among the situations expressed with authority.

Informants report that in Marash, the region depopulated by HES and mining activities is being taken advantage of, and explosions of stones/rocks for quarries are taking place. Even in the court victories of the local people, the same company/project is encountered again under a new name.

ANALYSIS: Areas depopulated due to migration have created opportunities for miners, GES, and HES, making their work easier with easily granted permits, resulting in increased activities in petroleum exploration. The earthquake, which initially required restorative-protective state policies, has turned into a disaster with profit-oriented damage building demolitions, debris transport activities, and rubble dump site selections, deviating from scientific and ethical considerations. It is alarming to see high-risk projects for the environment emerging in a region already devastated by such destruction. Although there has been a decrease in project numbers in 2023 compared to 2022 (Hatay being the only province with an increase), it is worrisome to witness the continuity of a will that does not prioritize nature and people.

Marash's Elbistan, Yazıhan, Doğanşehir, Darende, Battalgazi, and Yeşilyurt, along with Doğanlıyurt, Kale districts, are surrounded by dozens of quarries, sand, gravel, lime quarries, concrete plants, HES, RES, and dams. For example, the existence of 26 RES facilities in just Arguvan and Arapkir districts is enlightening regarding the unbearable burden imposed on nature. The destructive activities of Elbistan's quarry, visible through rock blasting, have turned into a permanent public health problem exposed to earthquake survivors.

Many public buildings in various cities have been damaged, and even schools are being used as public buildings at the cost of disrupting education. The current situation is used as a reason for the interruption of public services. However, the Directorate of Environment, Urbanization, and Climate Change Districts/Provinces have not cited physical problems when concluding 547 EIA files with the decision "EIA is not required."

3: LEGAL REGULATIONS INCREASE PROPERTY RIGHTS VIOLATIONS, RECONSTRUCTION

FINDINGS:

Prosecution of the responsible: According to official figures, there is no public official listed as a defendant in earthquake-related files where at least 50,000 people lost their lives. Even in emblematic cases like Isias Hotel, Ezgi Apartment, Sait Bey Apartment, and Ebrar Site, public officials have been considered "incidentally at fault" in expert reports. For the first time, expert reports prepared by Konya Technical University for the Palmiye and Hamidiye sites in Kahramanmaraş categorize public officials as "primary offenders." However, ecology activists' criminal complaints against all public officials responsible for the earthquake, from the President to the mayors of all provinces in all years, have been rejected due to a lack of grounds for prosecution.

Urbanization: In Malatya, where 72% of the buildings collapsed, despite TMMOB's recommendation not to build structures exceeding 5 floors for new constructions, Yeşilyurt Municipality insisted on 7 floors, leading to a court case. In areas where TMMOB objected to building floor numbers, warnings were not taken into account by local and central administrations, resulting in most of these regions being affected by the earthquake. According to informants, there is currently no planning for urbanization, no consultation with chambers, and uncertainty. For example, the region of İkiçizce,

designated for habitation, is rumored to have an underground fault line, causing concern. The determination of the ground plus 8 floors for new structures in Onikişubat within Kahramanmaraş, and ground plus 4 floors in Dulkadiroğlu district, is among the uncertainties expressed by participants. A member of the Soil Conservation Board shared that no agenda has been brought to the board regarding new settlement areas, including buildings built so far.

The central government announced that it would deliver 2,000 TOKI houses in Elbistan, but not a single house has been delivered yet. It is predicted that housing deliveries will accelerate during the local election process.

Legal changes: With the "omnibus law" enacted in July, olive groves, forests, and meadows were opened to zoning under the pretext of new settlements. According to TOKI officials, a total of 124.73 million square meters of land is rapidly being opened to zoning in 15 provinces. Within these areas, approximately 65 registered olive grove lands, totaling about 321 acres, have been opened to zoning in Hatay, Antakya, and Defne districts. Immediately after its implementation, relying on the "Law on the Transformation of Areas at Risk of Disaster" and the "Law Amending Some Laws" and "Law Amending Decree-Law No. 375," an area of 207 hectares (eight neighborhoods) in Antakya and Defne districts of Hatay and an area of 1.60 hectares in the Atatürk neighborhood of Samandağ were declared as "reserve areas." With this decision, 50,000 people were put at risk of being left without property.

Legal changes' objections: According to the report of the Hatay Earthquake Victim Association, nearly 20,000 lawsuits have been filed in Hatay in 2023, with most of the post-earthquake lawsuits being cancellations related to errors in damage determination. Regarding the application of reserve building areas, more than two hundred cases have also been filed in the Administrative Court. In cases where institutions or citizens file lawsuits against human rights violations, procrastination, impunity, and failure to fulfill legal duties are observed.

ANALYSIS:

The implementation of "reserve areas" indicates the application of a state policy of dispossession. This decision, which will cause tens of thousands of people to be homeless and hand over the country's title deed to the central government, should be immediately annulled. While the most basic need of those affected by the earthquake is safe housing, there were only 28 mass housing project applications in 2022, and only 1 project application in 2023. This situation can be interpreted as an open display of the

crisis turned into an opportunity. In a statement by Murat Kurum on the official website of the Ministry of Environment, Urbanization, and Climate Change, it is mentioned that "the first shovels of 21,000 disaster houses have been hit since February 21." In light of this information, housing projects initiated in the region are continuing without regard to environmental regulations. The reconstruction process neglects the ancient life in cities experiencing destruction without considering the materials naturally present in each city, aiming for low cost and high profit through uniform concrete development. The local population, including chambers, is not included in the process, and the mistake of preferring agricultural lands for construction areas is being maintained. The fact that crimes do not lead to prosecution and punishment in the face of violations of both living spaces/living rights and criminal law causes loss in both areas. The state of emergency has turned into the normalization of extraordinary practices. The threat that the solution to the heavy difficulties experienced will be shaped according to voting behavior cannot be reconciled with the social state principle and is not considered ethically correct.

4: ANIMALS IN THE WRECKAGE OF SPECIESIST MINDS

FINDINGS:

The exploitative and dominant perspective towards animals has continued unchanged after the earthquake. Animals found in the wreckage could not find new homes and were put up for sale in markets. Due to the inability to find feed or to avoid financial losses, animals were either sold to traders or sent for slaughter. Attempts were made to keep the animal carcass and exploitation market alive by distributing large cattle by the Ministry. In the Nurdağı district of Gaziantep, some rescued animals from the earthquake were housed in the area set up for container housing, and horses were used for riding to provide psychological support to children. People believed that pet birds, especially parakeets, would sense earthquakes in advance, resulting in a surge in parakeet purchases from pet shops. The biodiversity of the Mileyha Wetland Area in Samandağ, Hatay, hosting various bird species from the Arabian Peninsula to India along important migration routes, is under threat. In Mileyha, 231 plant species and 282 bird species, as well as many frog, bird, butterfly, reptile, insect, and mushroom species, are facing the risk of extinction.

ANALYSIS:

The psychological exploitation dimension of animals being used for therapy has increased in the earthquake-stricken area. Legal torture operations and species eradication operations are being carried out on dogs and other animals, which are being criminalized and detached from urban and social areas with various labels.

5: POST-EARTHQUAKE RECONSTRUCTION (RE-PLUNDERING) BUT UNABLE TO BE LIVING SPACE

RIGHT TO HOUSING IS SEIZED: TEMPORARY LIVING SPACES BUILT ON UNSAFE AND UNHEALTHY CONDITIONS, ECO-CRIME ON RECONSTRUCTION

FINDINGS:

The housing problem still remains the most significant issue in the earthquake-stricken area. In the first months after the earthquake, a significant urban population migrated to villages and continued their lives in crowded families in structures that remained intact. In other words, people migrated to places not affected by the destruction. However, with the reopening of schools in September, the return to cities began. The return was only possible when sturdy, rented houses or containers could be found, and a part of the population continued to live in the villages. There are three ways to meet the need for safe housing in earthquake-affected areas: buildings produced through TOKI, transformation of detached houses in place, and building reinforcements. One of the severe wounds of the earthquake is the conflicting reports given for the damage status of buildings, and the most significant danger awaiting cities is the concentration on reinforcing damaged buildings. Especially the damage statuses of severely and moderately damaged buildings are changed with relationships such as bribery, kinship, partisanship with decision-makers, and institutions. Medium-damaged buildings are reopened for occupancy using non-engineering methods and simple repairs to generate rental income. People in earthquake-affected cities are forced to live in damaged buildings. Therefore, due to the ongoing aftershocks even one year after the earthquake, the safety of people's lives continues to be threatened.

In Marash, according to transfers, there is a state support of around 750,000 liras for the strengthening of detached houses as part of the reconstruction, and some people engaged in animal husbandry prefer to deal with this individually. The reinforcement support per apartment for multi-storey buildings is reduced to an amount like 125,000 liras.

Nearly all temporary living areas, especially those densely populated by Kurdish, Alevi, Christian, and poor populations, struggle with mud and sludge after every rain, and worn-out roads are not improved. Currently, damage determination studies for drinking water and sewerage systems have not been completed.

Temporary living areas: Temporary living areas were implemented centrally and unilaterally without conducting ground studies, considering geographical and topographical conditions. They were built on gravel without ground insulation and without establishing water drainage systems. The placement of containers did not consider possibilities of floods or other natural events, and poorly planned and irregularly constructed container cities experienced water flooding. Container and tent cities, as well as the field hospital (Hatay), were heavily affected by floods. Five people lost their lives by being swept away in the floods, and one person died from electric current in a container. Containers placed without infrastructure caused structural instability, and they were moved several times during floods, causing inconvenience to the people. In Iskenderun, many container cities were built without engineering expertise, leading to health problems. Some container cities experienced ground slippage, causing blockages in the lavatories inside the containers and resulting in health issues for many residents. Minimum distance rules between tents were not followed, and settlement patterns that did not provide emergency exits left citizens vulnerable and defenseless against dangers. In Dikmece, Hatay, residents only learned about the occupancy decision made on March 30th when officials came for measurements in July, which is a concrete example of the central administration's lack of transparency.

Containers without ground, heat, and water insulation do not provide healthy living conditions. Access to clean water and hygienic conditions in earthquake-affected areas is still insufficient. The risk of epidemic diseases, warned by the Turkish Medical Association (TTB), is a serious threat in container cities. In Diyarbakır, a container city housing 400 families (approximately 1200 people) is an area surrounded by security forces where residents are isolated from society, the city, and services. Civil society organizations are not allowed into container cities for security reasons, and only institutions authorized by the government can enter these areas. The Turkish Medical Association has mentioned that the living conditions in container cities, with cramped spaces and an interwoven life that is not suitable thermally in terms of both heating and ventilation, lead to increased risks of upper respiratory tract infections in winter and various disease risks in summer, contributing to the spread of epidemics.

Hatay, heavily affected as a city after the earthquake, reported 174 container cities, and Adiyaman reported 58. It was mentioned that in Hatay alone, 70,000 people in the city center and 44,000 people in the districts and informal areas, totaling 116,000 people, were living in containers. The situation is thought to be a consequence of the belief that around 40,000-50,000 people in the city center lost their lives in the earthquake, and most of the remaining population migrated. Currently, it is possible to say that 70% of the city is still living in containers. Observations revealed that conditions in container cities are not described as very poor, but they are inadequate. Children are in serious need of psychosocial support, but efforts in this regard are insufficient.

In Adiyaman, it is reported that the construction of container cities without consulting the opinion of the local population, without resorting to a collective mind on how to build, is resulting in painful consequences of a central decision-making mechanism. According to those present in Adiyaman, container cities were constructed without considering privacy areas, without creating living spaces for children and women, and, conversely, children's play areas were built in dark, neglected, and abuse-prone locations, making living spaces risky for child safety. The placement problem of container cities is very relevant to a child abuse case that a Social Services Specialist has dealt with, as mentioned in the account. Container cities created without considering people knowing each other have confined women to the inner area of containers and prevented them from going outside due to a sense of alienation. Reports from Malatya and Hatay indicate an increase in abuse, violence, and drug use in container cities, with serious risks and negligence in child and women's safety.

The presenters state that container cities not affiliated with AFAD have much more means to meet needs, and public living spaces for women and children are relatively better in these areas.

New housing acquisitions: The uncertainty continues for homeowners whose houses were destroyed to reach secure houses. Even a year after the earthquake, the number of delivered houses remains symbolic. The central government provides rent assistance (3,000 TL) to citizens whose houses were destroyed if they become tenants. This situation has pushed people who are in financial difficulties to use the rent aid for daily needs by living in tents (as seen in the example of Malatya).

ANALYSIS:

Feelings of uncertainty, insecurity, and hopelessness predominate in all earthquake-affected areas. These feelings are rooted in experiences such as aid not

reaching during and immediately after the earthquake, the absence of a strong state figure transforming chaos into order, and scandals like the Red Crescent selling tents. The perception of these official institutions has turned into a settled belief, given the lack of progress in living conditions despite a year passing since the earthquake. The need for containers is still not fully met. Access to safe housing and a return to normal life are far from daily reality. Container cities, established without prioritizing life, have imposed new costs on individuals affected by the earthquake without knowing/using scientific facts. The heavy and top-down management of the reconstruction process creates a state of uncertainty, and the resulting feeling of helplessness gives rise to container cities. The inability to have today what cities lacked in terms of infrastructure before the earthquake turns into a dream that cannot go beyond.

While creating temporary living areas, central and unilateral actions were taken without ground studies, without considering geographical and topographical conditions. They were built without proper planning, causing the public to face disasters again during heavy rains and natural events. Each step taken by the dominant side with a single mind harms the public, nature, and living beings more and more every day.

As in the example of Hatay and Malatya, the selection/assumption (people are deprived of the right to be informed) of new settlement areas from locations believed to be chosen/selected, passing through the fault line, and the alluvial structure of the soil puts the "urgent housing need" and "safe housing need" dilemma, causing anxiety as the most intense emotion accompanying their daily lives.

6: DIMENSIONS OF SUPPORT AND AID FROM INSTITUTIONS AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE / STATUS OF LIVELIHOODS, INABILITY TO COPE

FINDINGS:

Individuals who lost their means of livelihood or became unemployed due to the earthquake have faced difficulties in securing their subsistence allowances. Life has become extremely challenging for those who could not migrate after the earthquake. Unemployment has increased, and the existing inflation and crisis have further deepened the economic hardships experienced by individuals affected by the earthquake. In some regions, this unemployment situation is attempted to be reduced by creating a demand for labor in stone, sand quarries, and concrete plants that have become new areas of profit through reconstruction. It is mentioned that intermediaries aim to benefit from the conditions of homeless, unemployed, and needy individuals, exploiting them for work related to the plundering of living spaces.

The earthquake, coinciding with the harvest season in Hatay, has brought agriculture to the brink of extinction. The large-scale migration has led to a halt in agricultural and livestock activities in the city, and the remaining people cannot return to their professions after this devastation. Exports have come to a standstill, and farmers in rural areas have gone through very challenging times.

In Adiyaman, the situation of many factories becoming inoperable has left individuals facing unemployment. Earthquakes during the harvest season have deeply affected farmers, especially those engaged in key livelihoods such as agriculture (tobacco cultivation, etc.). Farmers, experiencing difficult times, have not received sufficient support from the government and have been unable to carry out their agricultural activities. The aid approach based on ready-made food and package distribution has distanced individuals from production.

Size of Aid: Immediately after the earthquake, intensive aid campaigns led by national and global civil structures reached the earthquake-affected areas. Especially food, and water needs were predominantly addressed by these aids. However, it can be described that meeting the need for containers, initially tents, became one of the most problematic areas.

In general, hoarding or favoritism has led to problems in reaching the real beneficiaries of the aids. Initially, the paralyzed state or willful inaction of state institutions created a situation where needs were met by civilian initiatives. This situation led to the public reaction of "the state is buried under the rubble" since the tenth day of the earthquake; the state has tried to remove civilian initiatives from the region by using force in some places to establish authority and control. In certain neighborhoods, specific areas, and container cities, soup kitchens and aid points were established, and individuals affected by the earthquake met their needs from these points.

As mentioned in our report last year, Diyarbakır, as a city where social organization is strong, managed to overcome the acute period after the earthquake with the rapid reflexes of all institutions with a say in the city coming together. However, individuals facing housing problems and those affected by the earthquake whose livelihoods have become more difficult have not received sufficient support from government institutions. The Diyarbakır City Coordination Platform, under the leadership of Diyarbakır, started distributing aid from the third day onwards. A similar solidarity was carried out by NGOs in Hatay, and needs were tried to be solved by organizing civilian initiatives. Approximately three months after the coordination centers, those coming to

the coordination centers were brought to their homes, including villages, and the distribution of aid was ensured.

Volunteer-based activities, in addition to covering daily needs in daily life, also included psychosocial work. In the Hatay region, the Hatay Earthquake Solidarity and Ecology Union initiated the "Born from the Soil" campaign jointly, ensuring the distribution of 75,574 seedlings.

Products from earthquake-affected regions, through the cooperation of cooperatives and municipalities, reach consumers in other cities. However, within the size of the earthquake-affected population, this situation is at a scale where a very small population benefits.

To revive trade, the Ministry of Industry and Technology provides loans ranging from 200,000 TL to 750,000 TL to businesses that have been damaged (through KOSGEB). However, the loan amounts are far from covering the losses experienced. The complexity of bureaucratic procedures also leads to discouragement and abandonment of earthquake-affected businesses. Especially for small tradesmen defined as "poor," not only do they not have the conditions to access these loans, but they are also not even aware of them. The distribution of loans has turned into an opportunity for a certain number of businesses to benefit from a favoritism method. The inability to reach real beneficiaries continues in this case as well. According to official figures, out of 75,415 applications, only 39,680 were able to use loans through KOSGEB.

In some cities (Hatay, Diyarbakır), it does not seem possible to talk about any help coming from state mechanisms. Social practices are effective in solving the problems experienced in some cities. For example, in Diyarbakır, the Diyarbakır City Solidarity and Protection Platform proposed a solution to provide jobs to individuals affected by the earthquake for business people, and efforts were made to create employment.

In Adiyaman, aid in container cities continues as Kızılay distributes cards (food, clothing needs are met through cards). Ready-made food and package aid is no longer mentioned.

In Hatay, it appears that aid to container cities has been extremely reduced in the last few months, with only minimal assistance, such as food and water, arriving once a month. It is seen that the fair distribution of water to the public is not based on a fair understanding, and the distribution of aids still does not reach the real beneficiaries. Civil society organizations make efforts for the fair distribution of aids, but there are still problems in the organization.

ANALYSIS:

The destructiveness of the earthquake has confined the people of the region to the first and second steps of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs due to the lack of reparative/participatory social state policies. The struggle to meet physiological and safety needs is seriously threatening individual/community health. The life sustained by aids for a long time, the difficulty in obtaining subsistence allowances, accepting what is offered, and therefore the inability to demand rights have created a situation where individuals are satisfied with what is given, which is actually the desired result for a will built on capital. Exploiting cheap labor is precisely what is aimed at in an economy positioned on construction and mining activities. Both the lack of objection to projects that will demolish living spaces and the maximization of profitability in favor of capital are seen as opportunities created by the earthquake.

However, there is a reality in the region with large, fertile agricultural lands and people who want to return to farming. Policies/practices supporting agriculture, creating markets, and methods that generate demand will both allow the local population to participate in production processes and contribute to psychological healing. We need a communication built together, a productive dialogue, and "solidarity" for this instead of a hierarchical relationship from top to bottom. If people were able to build their own living spaces, villages, we might have been able to weave that ecological life now.

7: THE SCALE OF MIGRATION AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE (DOES THE RETURNING POPULATION HAVE A PLACE TO COME BACK TO?)

FINDINGS:

Migration: In official discussions, it is estimated that around 200,000 people officially migrated from Malatya, with an additional 300,000 people leaving without registering their residence, making it a total of 500,000 people migrating out. Besides urban-to-urban migration, there is also a significant trend of migration to rural areas and villages. People who can find rental housing or containers have managed to return, but the lack of health and education facilities hinders the return of many.

As an expected consequence of the major earthquake, a massive migration wave occurred from Adana to Istanbul and across a wide region. Within the first month after the earthquakes, it is estimated that at least 3.5 million people moved out of the earthquake zone. Although reliable data is currently lacking, experts anticipate significant changes in the demographic structure of cities in the coming period.

Large-scale migrations after disasters can lead to unexpected increases in population density, strain infrastructure, increase the risk of inadequate healthcare systems, cause rapid changes in local economic and social structures, and potentially cause lasting damage to families and their social support networks. (Source: TÜRKONFED 2023 Kahramanmaraş Disaster Situation Report).

It is estimated by informants that about 200,000 people have migrated from Kahramanmaraş.

Diyarbakır experienced migration from urban to rural areas and, simultaneously, migration to major cities. Diyarbakır has become one of the most migration-receiving areas from other earthquake zones during this period.

In Adıyaman, it is reported that the scale of migration is high, but people find it difficult to adapt to other places and want to return. Housing problems, poor health services, and the lack of functional education are significant reasons forcing people to return and increasing migration.

In Gaziantep, there hasn't been a migration significant enough to alter its sociological structure, but high migration from İslahiye and Nurdağı to Gaziantep has been noted. Migration from Adıyaman and Kahramanmaraş to Gaziantep is also observed.

In Hatay, considering the complete destruction of the city, the scale of migration is deemed serious. The only option for those who want to return to the city is İskenderun, but high rents there prevent people from returning. Uncertainty in education, potential housing problems with the opening of the university, and other factors decrease the likelihood of return for migrants.

According to reports, 205,405 people migrated from Hatay to Ankara. The latest data suggests this number is approaching 300,000. Antalya follows with 154,086 people migrating to Ankara, 65,086 to Mersin, 40,442 to Kayseri, and 40,300 to Muğla. Despite being declared the 11th province affected by the earthquake, Elazığ has been reported to host 50,000 earthquake victims. Unplanned settlements resulting from migration in host cities can disrupt the structure of cities, leading to issues in public and social services, urban infrastructure problems, and rapid changes in the dynamics of general deprivation. Is the situation different for the migration-exporting areas? Not really. (Hatay 1st Year Report)

Even before the earthquake, Hatay experienced mass migrations due to its unique situation. It was among the provinces that both received and sent migrations, with approximately 500,000 Syrian migrants and people from different regions.

Situation of migrants: Gaziantep is identified as a city with a dense migrant population, and this number has increased with migrations from other cities. Information obtained from Adiyaman indicates that, initially, priority was given to Sunnis in the establishment and distribution of container cities, and aid reached Alevi neighborhoods later. Unfortunately, this discriminatory dimension has taken even more devastating proportions for the "migrants." Migrants were forced into container cities located 40 km away from the city and were explicitly segregated, becoming targets. The container city areas assigned to them are the places where they were first settled and experienced bad memories about seven to eight years ago. Sending them back to these areas would expose people to a series of recurring traumas. Information suggests that the containers provided for Syrian migrants are of lower quality, referred to as "foldable containers," with worse materials. Container cities designed for migrants lack humane conditions, exhibit unfair discrimination, and are by no means suitable living spaces.

ANALYSIS:

Millions of people have migrated from earthquake zones to other cities and abroad, yet, one year later, no comprehensive migration study has been conducted. Mass migrations to different cities will alter the demographic structure of both the receiving and sending cities, affecting the social and cultural fabric of unique cities like Hatay, Kahramanmaraş, Adiyaman, and Malatya profoundly. The lack of even the smallest steps taken to restore cities to their old structure and living conditions hinders the encouragement of people who migrated to return. The failure to provide essential rights such as health and education in Hatay, Adiyaman, Malatya, and Kahramanmaraş decreases the likelihood of individuals returning.

The current concern of the people of Hatay is the threat to the city's multicultural, egalitarian, and peaceful urban culture.

In regions hosting migrants, it is evident that they are confined to areas far from humane living conditions, subject to severe rights violations in society, and treated as "the other." Migrants sent to isolated areas, marked as targets, continue their struggle as cheap labor vulnerable to exploitation. On the other hand, the state of neglect and lack of identity make it difficult for migrants to seek justice and obtain legal and social

support in cases of violence and abuse. Unfortunately, the rights lost by all individuals affected by the earthquake are even more for migrants.

PART TWO

CONCLUSION: THE DOMINANT MIND CONTINUES TO DISRUPT LIFE, WHAT SHOULD BE DONE? HOW TO DO?

Based on the wrong understanding of democracy rooted in a centralized governance system, decisions related to cities are made, but society has the power to democratize governance forms with collective practices and conscience. In history, the term "polis," from which the city first emerged, encompassed a democratic, moral-ethical society with the meanings of a "living space." It is evident that cities constructed in state systems focused on domination and profit do not function as a "living space," are not built in harmony with nature, and are not constructed with democratic-ethical principles. One must not forget that the results of the earthquakes on February 6 are related to this misguided perspective. Despite one year passing, the practice of the dominant mind has not changed; on the contrary, it is seen that it reprojects cities and nature, devastated and turned into new areas of profit. By targeting culturally and socially rich cities with diverse beliefs, policies of forced migration and dehumanization attempt to render these cities identityless.

So, what should we do in the face of this reality?

It is now vital to create societies that do not abandon democratic, solidarity, and rights-seeking demands. We will experience together the reflection of collective thinking, decision-making, and the impact of every being's will on life, from home to neighborhood, from neighborhood to district, and to the city.

While some cities in earthquake zones are discussed to be moved to other areas, decisions about living spaces, without the knowledge of the public and without considering natural social realities, are being made at a central table. Despite these practices, we, as ecological organizations, human rights advocates, labor and professional organizations, and the people in those cities, must come together, discuss, produce alternatives, defend the truth unwaveringly, and put it into practice. If we are in favor of local seeds, we must cooperativize; if we say ecological-democratic society and nature, we must create its practice; we should be able to put an ecological-democratic understanding of local governance as a duty and responsibility in front of municipalities.

At the end of the first year after the earthquake:

The increasing destruction in both the social and natural realms makes it imperative to protect our living spaces, cultural and social values, and each other. We are obliged to protect our air, water, soil, cities, villages, neighborhoods, and all living beings. For the people of Hatay, who have been organizing solidarity for a year, the reality expressed by a young person, "just as our principle is to work together with everyone who is not at fault in the earthquake to weave networks of solidarity, theirs is money and profit," obliges us to support all committed crimes and create new socialites. This is what nature expects from us, and it is also our debt to all living beings.

APPENDIX:

Distribution of projects with the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process initiated in the earthquake region on the Ministry of Environment, Urbanization, and Climate Change's website between February 7 and December 31, 2023:

EARTHQUAKE-AFFECTED PROVINCES: MINING/CEMENT/ENERGY PROJECTS WITH INITIATED EIA (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT) PROCESS (2023)										
COUNTY	Mining	Oil	HEPP	JES	WP	SPP	Buildi ng and Mass Housi ng	Sand/ Gravel pit	Cement/ Ready Mix Concrete	Total
ADANA	24	0	0	0	2	18	1	0	0	45
ADIYAMAN	20	3	0	0	2	13	0	0	3	41
DİYARBAKIR	24	2	1	1	3	4	0	4	6	44
ELAZIĞ	15	23	0	0	2	21	0	5	3	69
GAZİANTEP	13	0	0	0	1	9	0	0	0	23
HATAY	13	1	0	0	2	29	0	0	7	52
KAHRAMANM ARAŞ	61	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	12	76
KİLİS	19	0	0	0	2	19	0	0	6	47
MALATYA	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	4
OSMANİYE	10	0	0	0	2	5	0	0	1	18
ŞANLIURFA	10	5	0	0	2	59	0	0	2	78
TOTAL	210	34	1	1	22	177	1	9	42	497