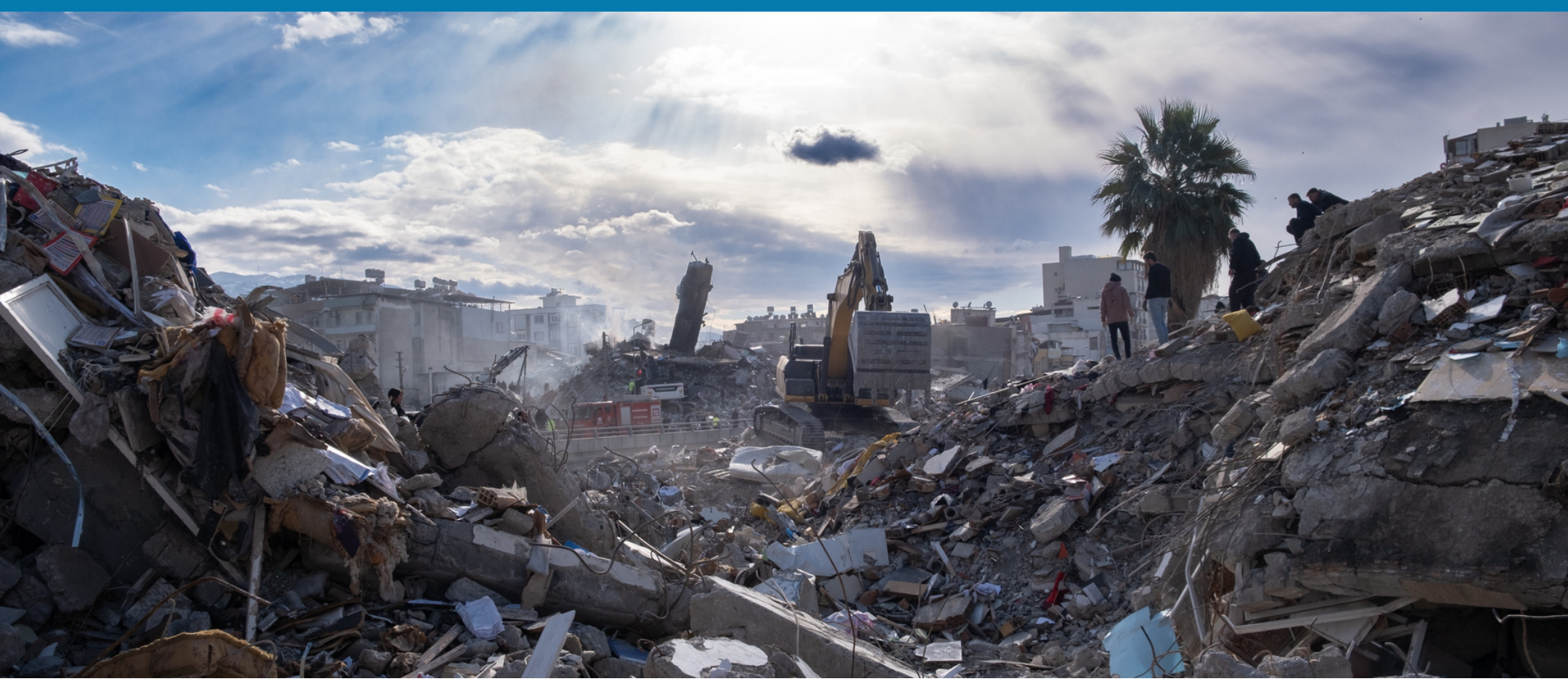
R4HSSS

Research for Health System Strengthening in Syria

أبحاث لتقوية النظام الصحي في سوريا

# NEWSLETTER MARCH 2023

## March 17th 2023



## Local responses to the earthquake

Since the 6 February earthquake that struck southern Türkiye and northern Syria, our partners UOSSM and the Idlib Health Directorate have been actively involved in the health response; setting up ten mobile clinics and directing funds raised by Syrian diaspora to the northwest Syria health response.

In coordination with all partners, R4HSSS have implemented a Task Force for Disaster Health Response, led by the Idlib Health Directorate. The purpose of this task force is to improve coordination and monitoring of the health response in northwest Syria. R4HSSS will observe the dynamics of the response to the earthquake as part of our mid-term research plan. This will help assessing the effectiveness of such local coordination modality for a natural disaster response in a chronic conflict context.

## February 06 Earthquake in southern Türkiye and northwest Syria Statement of Condolence to the Victims

We are deeply saddened by the news of the earthquake that struck southern Türkiye and northwest Syria in the early morning of Monday 6 February 2023. Our sympathies and condolences go out to the people of these regions who have suffered great losses in the Hatay, Gaziantep, Kilis and Diyarbakir governorates in southern Türkiye, and Aleppo, Idlib, Hama, and Latakia governorates in northwest Syria. This earthquake has caused many casualties and severe destruction.

# Syrian Conflict 12th Anniversary

15th March 2023 marked the 12th anniversary of the devastating Syrian civil war. We stand together in solidarity with the millions of victims that have lost their lives, families and homes.

"For 12 years, the Syrian people have endured untold suffering and loss. It is essential that we never forget the human cost of this conflict and strive to ensure that no one is left behind in our collective efforts to rebuild the Syrian health system and restore hope to the millions of lives affected by this tragedy." - Dr Abdulkarim Ekyayez

## News

### King Charles and Sadiq Khan hear emotional pleas for Turkey-Syria earthquake aid in Trafalgar Square, London

On Tuesday 14 February a temporary community space in Trafalgar Square (London) opened to the public for three days, inviting people to join in remembrance of Syrian earthquake victims and show solidarity to families of those still missing following the catastrophic Syria-Türkiye earthquakes. Organised by the Syrian community in the UK and British-based Syrian civil society organisations, the space was opened following a special event attended by His Majesty King Charles III, the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, Leader of Westminster City Council, Adam Hug, and government officials.

**Read here**

Source: BBC and Mouna Khaity

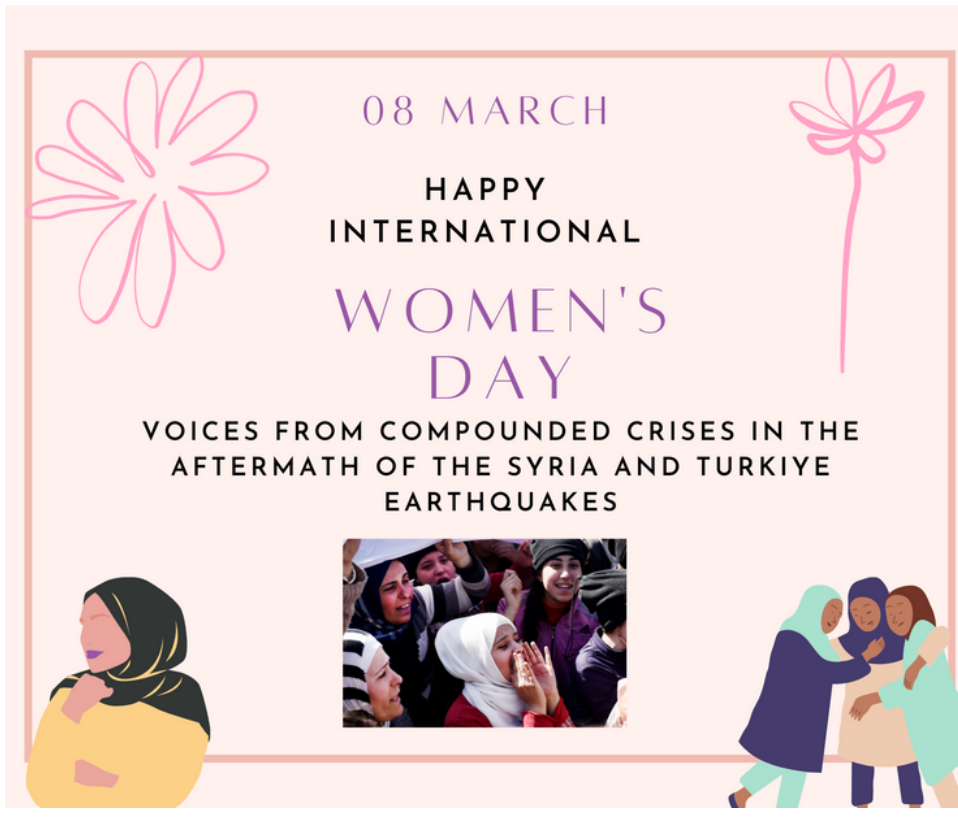
### Turkey-Syria earthquake: Are Syrian victims being overlooked?

Dr Abdulkarim Ekzayez reflects on the Syrian victims being neglected in the aftermath of the earthquake. **Read here**

### Syrian activists and NGOs have called for the following immediate and mid-long term responses:

- More aid to be delivered cross the border into northwest Syria. Donors are encouraged to engage directly with Syrian NGOs and quasi governmental bodies that have a technical focus with no political affiliations, such as the White Helmets and the Health Directorates.
- The aid system should be re-examined focusing on sustainable solutions to deal with the mid and long term consequences of the earthquake.
- Investigating the reasons for the delay in the UN's response to northwest Syria to ensure accountability to victims.
- A timely gender-sensitive response effort to be carried out in northwest Syria.
- Not allowing the Syrian regime to use the disaster for political gain or normalisation.
- The delivery of aid in regime-held areas being carried out by international agencies directly to the Syrians.
- Supporting a political solution in Syria according to UNSC 2254.

## Happy International Women's Day 2023




**Watch Seminar here (English)**
**Watch Seminar here (Arabic)**

On International Women's Day, the Women Leaders in Health and Conflict initiative and R4HSSS launched a new seminar series, highlighting the disproportionate impact that compounded crises have on women. Kristen Meagher (R4HSSS Programme Manager) and Mouna Khaity (Gender and health leadership consultant) co-hosted the seminar, bringing together exception women leading responses to the recent earthquake. Dr Hala Alghawi (Program and Advocacy Consultant at MedGlobal Syria), Abeer Aryan (Head of Athar Al Farasha for Development) and Fatima Al Obed (Volunteer with the Syria Civil Defense (White Helmets)) to discuss the community wide impact of the earthquake and the experiences of women.

## Blogs

### The Forgotten Individuals in Health in Conflict settings: the people with disability in Northwest Syria

Dr. Munzer Alkhalil highlights the importance of access to healthcare for people with disabilities, especially in the context of conflict and the recent earthquake.

**Read here**

### Urgent Health Needs in Northwestern Syria After the Earthquake: A Call for Action

Dr. Munzer Alkhalil calls for urgent action to address immediate and long-term health needs in Idlib. You can also find a list below of local organisations on the ground to support. **Read here**

## Donations

Supporting the local leadership and providing necessary resources will ensure a prompt and effective response to the health crisis. You can find a list of local organisations to support here:

- **White Helmets**
- **Union of Medical Relief and Care Organization (UOSSM)**
- **Syrian American Medical Society (SAMS)**
- **Syria Relief and Development (SRD)**
- **Syria Forum USA**
- **MedGlobal**
- **Molham Volunteering Team**

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# SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMME 2023/24

**As part of R4HSSS' focus on capacity strengthening for the local health workforce, we offer future health leaders in Syria a unique opportunity to study an online master's course at a UK university. These scholarships are awarded to outstanding professionals from Syria to pursue a master's degree in any subject related to the health system at any UK university.**

**£15,000** per award

6 online master courses

## ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

1. Syrian citizen residing either in Syria or in one of the neighboring countries
2. Bachelor's degree (preferably in a related field to the masters you are applying for)
3. Proven work experience in the health sector in Syria continuously for the last five years with a focus on health system strengthening in the conflict affected areas
4. An unconditional admission offer from a UK university by the end of August
5. Students should apply for courses related to the health systems strengthening field

## APPLY NOW!

**Deadline: 30 April 2023**
**Shortlisting: 25 April to 5 May 2023**
**Interviews: 8 - 19 May 2023**

## Publications

### The catastrophic response to the earthquake in Syria: the need for corrective actions and accountability (2023)

This publication calls attention to the disastrous effects of the earthquake of the already severely weak health systems in Syria. **Read here**

### Inequitable access to aid after the devastating earthquake in Syria (2023)

This publication explores the consequences of the delay in access to emergency aid, after the devastating earthquake on Feb 06 in Syria and Türkiye. Donors must engage with local organizations and quasi-governmental entities in NW Syria such as the
Syria Civil Defence (White Helmets) and Health Directorates to meet the urgent needs and develop long-term localisation plans. **Read here**

### Disruption to water supply and waterborne communicable diseases in northeast Syria: a spatiotemporal analysis (2023)

The objective of this publication is to perform a spatiotemporal analysis to investigate potential associations between interruptions to water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) and WBDs in northeast Syria using data collected by the Early Warning Alert and Response Network (EWARN) from Deir-ez-Zor, Raqqa, Hassakeh and parts of Aleppo governorates. **Read here**

### A missing piece in the Health for Peace agenda: gender diverse leadership and governance (2022)

This publication explores how gender diverse leadership and governance of health systems may contribute to the Health for Peace Agenda. Despite recent momentum, the evidence base to support, implement and evaluate 'Health for Peace' programmes remains limited and policy-makers in conflict settings do not consider peace when developing and implementing interventions and health policies.

**Read here**

### An analysis of humanitarian and health aid alignment over a decade (2011–2019) of the Syrian conflict (2022)

The health system was severely affected and has become aid dependent after the 11 years of the devastating conflict in Syria resulted in more than 874,000 deaths. This publication examines aid alignment over a decade of the Syrian crisis from 2011 to 2019.

**Read here**

### Power dynamics and health initiative design as determinants of peacebuilding: a case study of the Syrian conflict (2022)

Peace-through-health has emerged as a promising concept but with variable evidence of success. Cooptation of health initiatives in conflict is believed to be a major challenge undermining peacebuilding potential. This publication examines the role that existing power structures and health initiative characteristics play at various levels of a conflict in peacebuilding outcomes. **Read here**

## Call for Papers

If you are interested in writing a research paper on the following topics: Attacks on healthcare. Enhancing disease surveillance and response. Diverse research addressing global public health challenges and inequities. From COVID-19 to stronger people-centred and equitable health systems. Impact on attacks on healthcare. More information can be found on this **link.**

## Submit a research proposal

The R4HSSS project develops a research plan every year based on consultations with a wide network of researchers and practitioners involved in the health system in northern Syria. We seek research proposals that fit into our research plan. You can review R4HSSS research plan for the year 2022/2023 using the following **link**. If your submission is successful, you will be contacted by a member of the R4HSSS team to explore next steps.

## New module released on the Data Sharing eLearning course: Costing for data management

To conduct research, you need more than just good ideas - you also need funds. How do you then quantify costs associated with data management and governance? The Global Health Training Centre launches a new free eLearning module on the Data Sharing course: Costing for data management. Take the course: **Data Sharing**

## Courses

Learn for free with the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine: **Click here**

The Top 10 Online Humanitarian Courses With Certificates: **Click here**

Humanitarian Leadership Academy: **Click here**

## What we're reading and watching

**R4HSSS Past Events Videos**

*Cholera: Re-emergence and Control in Conflict*

**Earthquakes in Turkey and Syria—collaboration is needed to mitigate longer terms risks to health** - *BMJ*

**Spy chief's daughter highlights UN's tangled relations with Syrian regime** - *Financial Times*

**She Pays the Highest Price: The Toll of Conflict on Sexual and Reproductive Health in Northwest Syria** - *Syria Relief & Development*

**Mental health resources in Turkish and Arabic** - *Royal College of Psychiatrists*

**Earthquake in Syria: Why was UN aid delayed in rebel-held areas?** - *BBC News*

**The Syria-Turkey Earthquake Has Worsened An Invisible Crisis For Women** - *Huffington Post*

**Syria after the earthquakes: what researchers can do to help** - *Nature*

**Health and humanitarian response after the earthquakes in northern Syria: challenges and recommendations** - *Syria Public Health Network*