

KEY JUDGEMENTS FEBRUARY 2023

Title: Türkiye and Syria Earthquake

Location: Türkiye and Syria

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INTRODUCTION

On the 6th February 2023 an earthquake affected areas of South Eastern Turkey and North West Syria, there is a high initial risk of trafficking and exploitation of children and young people and the potential for a surge in commercial sexual exploitation.

WE ASSESS AS FOLLOWS

- a) The area affected by the earthquake has a pre-existing market for the sexual exploitation of children and young people, particularly amongst the refugee population. Before the earthquake, there have been reports of children and young people being the subject of trafficking and sexual exploitation.
- b) In similar natural disasters such as the earthquakes in Haiti and Nepal, emergency responders, both formal and informal, that flock to the location brought with them a high risk of trafficking and exploitation, particularly sexual exploitation. Whilst post-event investigations have exposed large aid agencies to scrutiny and increased safeguarding, it is impossible to control the large informal aid sector. The risk will be repeated, and transaction patterns on financial platforms will be indicative.
- c) Young people, in particular babies and children, have a high monetary value both in off-book adoption markets and for exploitation. The opportunity to access orphans at scale will be a significant attraction for criminals.
- d) Social media channels and news reports are awash with images, personal details and locations of children who have supposedly been orphaned. Safeguarding barriers will be lowered for a period in hospitals and communities, opening opportunities for traffickers

ASSESSMENT CONTINUED

e) There is a largescale movement of people out of affected regions to safer cities because of the earthquake. People offer and seek transportation and accommodation online. There is a high risk of exploitative offers and people being trafficked as they move locations.

f) An increase in anti-migrant sentiment, based on misleading reports of looting, means that Syrian refugees are unable to access the same amount of state support as Turkish citizens. The large population of unregistered migrants and refugees, such as those from Afghanistan and African countries, are also not entitled to state-sponsored support. This makes these populations particularly vulnerable to exploitation.

INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS

Intelligence requirements are general at this stage.

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