
FEBRUARY 7, 2023

Severe earthquakes in southern Türkiye: Guidance for companies sourcing from the region

Two major earthquakes with magnitudes of 7.8 and 7.5 on February 6 at Kahramanmaras, southern Türkiye have caused catastrophic devastation in a very large region that covers 10 different cities (Adana, Adiyaman, Diyarbakir, Gaziantep, Hatay, Kahramanmaras, Kilis, Malatya, Osmaniye, and Sanliurfa). Essential services, including transportation, communication, electricity, gas, and water infrastructure, are severely damaged in all cities impacted by the earthquake.

The affected region is host to a number of textile and garment factories that are suppliers of international brands, including some FLA member companies. Some of the cities in this region are also home to large groups of seasonal agricultural migrant workers who harvest several different commodities.

FLA is closely monitoring developments on the ground and has been in touch with different stakeholders since the early hours of the earthquake. FLA recommends that members and other companies sourcing from Türkiye pay extra attention to the following points:

1. If your company sources from any of the suppliers in the 10 cities mentioned in this alert, try to get in touch with your suppliers to understand the impact of the earthquakes on workers and factory buildings/structures, even though doing so may be difficult. Suppliers in Adiyaman, Hatay, Kahramanmaras, or Malatya may be particularly impacted, according to preliminary reports and FLA observations, since these cities have significant casualties, collapsed buildings, and infrastructure damage. If your supplier has an office in another city, consider utilizing that option rather than your normal direct contact.
2. Most of the factories (except for some textile factories working on shifts) were not operating at the time of the first earthquake. Since the earthquake, laborers in the impacted areas have been unable to go to their workplaces, and the management of these factories has had difficulty communicating with workers due to damaged and/or overwhelmed communications infrastructure.
3. Even if your suppliers are not located in one of the impacted cities, your suppliers might be working with some of the raw material and upper tier suppliers from this region. Therefore, FLA recommends checking with your direct supplier to ascertain the situation of your indirect suppliers.
4. Contact your suppliers to understand their specific situation. Companies should seek to understand the nature of damage to workplace buildings, machinery and equipment, utilities, and infrastructure, the availability of raw materials/semi-finished and finished products, and other assets.

5. Assess the status of your supplier's access to services and utilities, including electricity, heating, water, communication, transportation, etc.
6. Discuss with your suppliers their business continuity plans and provide technical assistance, if needed. Check the timelines and delivery dates of existing orders and extend deadlines in light of the information provided by suppliers.
7. Evaluate the financial viability of your suppliers in the region and consider providing financial support if requested.
8. Clarify, where possible, key requirements to be met before suppliers resume production:
 - a. A post-earthquake inspection of the factory building is conducted by a competent and certified structural engineering service provider who can assess and determine that there are no structural safety issues in place – namely, that buildings are safe and that reinforcements are not needed.
 - b. All necessary approvals are received from relevant local authorities.
 - c. All utility and safety systems (such as electrical, heating, ventilation, air conditioning, fire safety, lifting, water/plumbing, and gas and compressed air) are in good working condition.
 - d. The emergency shutoff systems for utilities are in good working condition.
 - e. There are no structural integrity issues with the warehouse racking systems.
 - f. Large and heavy objects are kept on lower shelves.
 - g. The status of post-earthquake emergency response plan for locating and communicating with all workers.
 - h. Safe spots and danger zones on each building floor are marked and identified.
 - i. Access to key services, such as transportation and communication, is available.
 - j. There are safeguards against expected aftershocks in place.
9. Compensation of the workers while work is suspended due to force majeure causes like earthquakes is covered under Article 40 of the Labor Law by the half-wage clause.¹ Employers may also want to follow the compensatory work clause explained in Article 64 of the Labor Law.²

¹ The employee who cannot work or is not engaged in work due to the reasons set forth in subsections III of Articles 24 and 25 shall be paid, up to one week, half their wages for each day.

² In cases where time worked has been considerably lower than the normal working time or where operations are stopped entirely for reasons of suspending work due to force majeure or on the days before or after the national and public holidays or where the employee is granted time off upon their request, the employer may call upon compensatory work within two months in

FLA would like to underline the importance of utilizing the unemployment insurance fund for workers in the region in a timely manner and providing compensation to the workers from the unemployment insurance fund (similar to that provided during the COVID-19 pandemic).³

Since the earthquake-affected region is where most of the seasonal migrant agriculture laborers live and work, FLA recommends that companies who source agricultural raw materials in Türkiye contact the labor intermediaries (*dayibasi*) to check on workers' well-being and coordinate areas of collaboration and support for the workers.

DONATIONS AND HUMANITARIAN AID

We also strongly recommend that our affiliates and project partners support humanitarian aid through credible international or national aid organizations engaging in search and rescue operations and supporting Türkiye's urgent needs.

Some of these organizations are listed below – please note that this list is not exhaustive:

Public institutions

- [Disaster and Emergency Management Authority \(AFAD\)](#)
- [Turkish Red Crescent-Kızılay](#)

Other organizations

- [Ahbap](#)
- [AKUT Search and Rescue Association](#)
- [Genç Hayat Vakfı](#)
- [İhtiyaç Haritası](#)
- [Istanbul Exporters' Association](#)
- [Support to Life](#)

order to compensate for the time lost due to unworked periods. Such work shall not be considered overtime work or work at extra hours.

³ Article 23, added to Unemployment Insurance Law 4447 during the COVID-19 pandemic, prevented a lengthy bureaucratic process and allowed workers to access compensation for the duration where onsite work was suspended due to the pandemic.