

Oslo, 9 February 2023

Excellencies,

As we continue to witness scenes of devastation in Turkey and Syria, I write to ask for your full support scaling up all types of humanitarian access and response modalities for Syrians in great need. Our colleagues are on the ground on all sides of conflict lines across Northern Syria. They are witnessing death and destruction while supporting their families and responding to needs on the ground.

Immediate relief efforts should for now focus on search and rescue operations, finding safe spaces for people to shelter, and getting emergency provisions to those that have lost everything. To that end, humanitarian access is essential. Now is a key moment to demand that we can use all available routes to reach those most in need – cross-border, crossline, and via local partners.

We are also mindful that once this story fades from the headlines, efforts must be made to maintain long term support to Syrians in permanent crisis. We must, beyond emergency relief, also build resilience and disaster preparedness among all communities regardless of political boundaries. The earthquake makes it evident that donor restrictions preventing rebuilding and reconstruction should be removed. Children in opposition and government-controlled Syria should equally see their homes, schools and services rebuilt.

In a country already devastated by 12 years of crisis and war, the earthquake risks being the tipping point for an exhausted population. Collapsed homes, energy supply, water networks, boreholes, and pumping stations is being reported across Idlib, Aleppo, Latakia and Hama governorates. In our humanitarian and donor community we should rather than continue costly cycles of water-trucking and tent distributions, support communities to access basic services in a sustainable and dignifying manner across all parts of Syria.

NRC remains available to share our unique experience in Syria across *all* areas of the country, opposition and government controlled, undertaking multiple response modalities from emergency relief to rebuilding and rehabilitation, and always with a principled approach.

Your sincerely,


Jan Egeland
Secretary General