

# REPORT ON THE EXPERIENCES OF VOLUNTEER MOTORCYCLE DELIVERY WORKERS IN EARTHQUAKE ZONE



# DELIVERY WORKER RIGHTS ASSOCIATION

## IMPRESSUM

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# INTRODUCTION

On February 6, 2023, two earthquakes of magnitude 7.8 and 7.5 occurred nine hours apart, centered in Pazarcık, Kahramanmaraş. 11 cities of Turkey, which has 81 cities, were shaken. Millions of people mobilized in solidarity with the earthquake victims. People of all ages and from different occupational groups, such as miners, firefighters, doctors, and machine operators, acted without hesitation for the people and other living beings who were living in 717,614 collapsed and damaged buildings (This number was unknown at that time but learned from damage assessment reports later). More than six months have passed since the two February 6 earthquakes. Much has been written about the earthquake. And much more will be written.

Forgetting that indescribable pain may seem logical to many of us as it allows us to return to “normal life.” Yet while some of us came out from under the rubble, some of us reached out to those who came out of the ruins, some of us mobilized all our resources “from a distance,” we were all “exposed” to that great pain and despair. Leaving our helplessness to the influence of the narcosis of time and closing our ears to the hum of the faults moving under our feet means underestimating nature. Underestimating nature creates a heavy burden on our lives.

On February 7, we went to Hatay - one of the most affected cities - to participate in aid and solidarity activities. After 1.5 months of working in the region, we decided to conduct research with one of the professional groups mobilized in the earthquake: motorcycle delivery workers. Since then, we have conducted field research examining the experiences of motorcycle delivery workers who participated in search and rescue, aid, and solidarity activities in earthquake zones. We compiled their policy recommendations regarding possible earthquakes in the future.

We tried to reach all delivery worker groups whose collective travels we could identify and conducted semi-structured interviews with a total of 30 delivery workers from 15 cities, including some workers who had traveled to the region individually.<sup>1</sup> Face-to-face interviews were conducted with 21 delivery workers from Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir, Bursa, Eskişehir, Adana, Mersin, Antalya, while online interviews were conducted with 9 delivery workers from Konya, Manisa, Balıkesir, Çanakkale, Düzce, Sakarya, Malatya.

1) All the delivery workers we interviewed were male. We found no data on female delivery workers in the region from our interviews or field observations. However, we still need precise information on the presence of female delivery workers in the earthquake zones.

# PART I.

## Those Who Say You Can Go Anywhere If You Have a Motorbike

**“Even when things are going badly, even when you are very troubled, remember there is always more way to go. Even when you say you have seen it all, this planet and people of the world confront you with such strange things that you are surprised every time. Take care of yourself; always keep going without slowing down.”**

**(The Man in the Golden Suit/ Barkın Bayoğlu)**

Motorbike is “devil’s work” for some and divine blessing for others. Motorbike riding means madness, with death at the end for some and freedom itself for others. For some, motorcyclists are vagabonds; for others, they are heroes who come to the rescue in times of trouble.

According to TURKSTAT data for May 2023, 53.5% of registered vehicles in Turkey are automobiles, and 16.4% are motorcycles. There are 4,471,700 motorcycles in Turkey. The number of motorcycle riders is probably much higher than this figure, as many people ride motorcycles without owning one themselves. Although there is no precise statistical data, it is estimated that the number of motorcycle delivery workers is in the hundreds of thousands.

There is much evidence to support the claim that riding a motorcycle is more dangerous than driving a car. According to numerous studies, the rate of death or severe injury in motorcycle accidents is 35 times higher than in automobiles.<sup>1</sup> According to TURKSTAT, in 2022, Turkey witnessed 321,485 traffic accidents resulting in death and injury, with 45,650 involving motorcycles. On average, there were 166 motorcycle accidents daily. This statistical information underlines that riding a motorcycle carries a significant risk in our country. We also need to add that motorcycle driving training is inadequate, and the use of equipment is limited.<sup>2</sup> However, hundreds of thousands of people, even millions, do not give up motorcycles despite the risks. On the contrary, the number of motorcycles on the road and the number of people riding motorcycles is increasing every year.

1) Yeşil, 2017. *Motosiklet sanıldığı kadar güvensiz mi?*, ntv.com.tr.

<https://www.ntv.com.tr/otomobil/tutku-mu-risk-mi.0y5UWy402UakyALIYIYTQw>

2) These issues are, of course, the subject of other discussions and reports.

Based on this situation, people who ride motorcycles perceive danger differently than drivers of other vehicles. While some think they can reduce the threat by using equipment and following driving rules, many ignore the risks and dangers. Especially in recent years, with the increase in delivery platform companies and online shopping becoming an indispensable part of life in Turkey, motorcycle delivery work has become a race against time. Many of the accident, injury, and death statistics above belong to these workers. Delivery workers must deliver orders to addresses and customers within minutes. It is part of their lives and working conditions to be at risk of accident, injury, and even death in traffic during the day.<sup>3</sup> Motorcycles go unnoticed and unperceived in traffic, as well. Moreover, many delivery workers are young and less averse to danger and risk-taking. It is not for nothing that motorcycle delivery workers have demanded that their work be included in the scope of “hazardous occupations.”

We have witnessed delivery workers taking swift action in two recent “incidents” that affected the whole society, created a feeling of helplessness and need for protection, and posed risks and dangers. Delivery workers were of the few occupational groups that quickly took action during the curfew and lockdown period within the scope of the COVID-19 outbreak announced by the Ministry of Health on March 11, 2022. While people hesitated to open their doors even to receive the order delivered to their doors, delivery workers gave orders to countless doors. It is also a fact that in this period where life was deeply affected and livelihood difficulties increased, they had to choose to work instead of taking unpaid leave. Apart from the routine dangers in traffic, many delivery workers were in the field during the circulation of a deadly virus. In addition to healthcare workers, delivery workers were among the “heroes of the pandemic.”

During the pandemic, delivery workers provided services as required by their profession and for a fee. However, in the earthquakes centered in Kahramanmaraş, they offered a service based on humanitarian sensitivity and volunteerism. Despite being confronted with one of the strongest and most widespread earthquakes in the history of Turkey, and despite the “apocalyptic” images reflected on television and social media, delivery workers did not hesitate to act. Some of them got organized at 07:00 am on the morning of the earthquake (less than 3 hours after 04:17), some at noon of the same day, some in the evening, and some over the course of the following days. They set out towards ruined cities that made people shudder even while watching them on the screen, streets dominated by chaos, where the asphalt was split, and debris was piled up. Some of them had search

3) The ‘the more packages you deliver, the more you earn’ system, along with companies’ speed-indexed order delivery approach and corresponding advertisements, are some of the most significant reasons for the rising number of accidents.

and rescue training; others had no training at all. But all of them acted with the thought that “There is something I can do,” “With my motorbike, I can be the hands and feet of the earthquake victims and those participating in the relief work there”. While the aftershocks continued, experts and authorities were constantly warning against new earthquakes, there were people needing help and solidarity, and delivery workers and motorcyclists could not remain indifferent to these conditions.

One of the first lessons learned by “two-wheelers” when they start riding a motorcycle is: If someone on the road needs help, cut the gas, approach her, and do anything you can! Tying a rope to a stranded motorbike and pulling it to the nearest petrol station, giving petrol to someone who runs out, taking a car driver waiting with a bottle to the nearest petrol station, delivering an injured animal found on the road to the vet and many similar situations are familiar for delivery workers.

In addition, delivery workers who consider their motorbike as a part of their body are not lazy to go to their destination. It is enough to decide to set off. After getting on the motorbike and feeling the gas in the palm of your hand, the only thing they think about is arriving. Feeling the wind on the road and being on the way to where you need to be is the motivation of delivery workers. Delivery workers step on the gas by hanging the words of the Man in the Golden Suit on their handlebars like an invisible compass: “Even when things are going badly, even when you are very troubled, remember there is always more way to go.”



## How Did the Motorcycle Delivery Workers Arrive to the Earthquake Zone?



On February 6, 2023, earthquakes centered in Kahramanmaraş in Southern Turkey occurred at 04:17 am. While some of the delivery workers we interviewed were instantly informed about the earthquake, others heard the news when they woke up. On the morning of February 6, delivery workers' WhatsApp groups became active. The workers who received the news shared the information they heard with the groups. The President of the Hatay Motorcycle Delivery Workers Association sent a message to the WhatsApp group consisting of the Heads of Associations saying, "We are under the rubble." Meanwhile, Istanbul Delivery Workers Federation and many association heads from different cities were trying to communicate with delivery workers association presidents in the earthquake zone. Apart from the images reflected on television and social media, the information received from the people in the earthquake zone and the cries for help mobilized the active delivery workers associations. Everyone agreed, "Let's do something as soon as possible; let's run for help".

A delivery worker describes the mobilization that night: "We have a WhatsApp communication group consisting of associations' presidents. Murat Abi woke me up. In fact, he mobilized all of us: 'There has been an earthquake; let's get up and do something.' He woke us all up at 04:30 AM. The earthquake had already happened

at 04:17. He woke us up as soon as he got the news. Then, on the morning of the earthquake, we started to work on what we could do."

Another delivery worker said: "Messaging continued until the morning. We were in contact with our Federation President and the Governor. We wanted to go to the region as soon as possible and participate in the relief efforts."

The presidents and executives of the delivery workers associations in Istanbul, who are among the founders of the Motorcycle Search and Rescue Association established in 2021 and who had received training in cooperation with institutions such as the Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (AFAD), the General Directorate of Forestry, the Disaster Coordination Center (AKOM), the Search & Rescue Association (AKUT), gathered at the airport at 07:00 am on the morning of the earthquake in coordination with the Istanbul Governorship. Dozens of trained delivery workers were transferred to Kahramanmaraş and Malatya to participate in search and rescue operations in line with the central planning.

While some set off from Istanbul to the earthquake zone in an organized way on the morning of the earthquake, others set off individually. One of them is a delivery worker from Hatay who works in Antalya. When he woke up in the morning and saw ten missed calls from his brother, 15 from his sister, and 46 from his mother, he could not stand it even though he spoke to his family on the phone and learned that they were fine. He describes his journey to Hatay:

"I sat in the bus station and looked for bus tickets. I looked for flights. None. Cancellations... There was no way to go to my family and my hometown. Towards the evening, I couldn't stand it, so I took the Mersin road. They have already built an endless Mersin road. I had a rainstorm there, so I traveled on a motorbike without a raincoat. I made a decision, I just went. I mean, I didn't think about it, I didn't question it, I didn't think about the consequences, I just went on my motorbike."

Although not all delivery workers were able to move towards the earthquake zone on the same morning, the mobilization continued gradually. The spread of news such as "Roads are closed", "Do not come to the earthquake zone without permission", "Entrances are not allowed" caused many delivery worker groups to wait. Workers followed the news on the one hand and continued their preparations on the other. We observed that all delivery workers who were going to the earthquake zone participated in the collection of aid materials from the first hours of the day in the cities where they were located. The delivery workers, coordinated with AFAD, Governorships, Municipalities, and NGOs, voluntarily took the aid materials, and carried them to the relevant centers on their own



motorcycles outside working hours and during their breaks until late at night.

The delivery workers carried out this transport organization both in groups and individually. From applying to the relevant institutions to writing to WhatsApp groups, from sticking the inscription “This motorbike collects aid materials for earthquake victims” on the back of their motorbikes to making announcements on the stories of Kurye News and other Instagram pages, delivery workers declared that they were ready to help and serve.



The February 6 earthquakes once again proved that no obstacle could stop people who want to help and be in solidarity. Thousands of delivery workers were not satisfied with collecting materials even though they heard that “roads were closed” and “chaos prevailed in the cities,” “images of looters” were reflected in the press, and the organizations that would enable them to go to the earthquake zone with their motorcycles were limited and inadequate.

Delivery workers in nearby cities, who contacted each other through delivery workers federations and WhatsApp groups turned to joint organizations. A delivery worker from the Bursa All Laborer Motorcycle Couriers Association describes their departure: “On the first day of the earthquake, we

traveled to Istanbul. With the participation of a few friends from Kartal Delivery Workers Association and Pendik Delivery Workers Association from Istanbul, we formed a team of 30-35 people. We met at the airport in coordination with the governorship. We were first transferred to Adana and then to İskenderun (earthquake zone).”

Another delivery worker described their joint organization: “We went to the earthquake zone on the 10th of February. As the Sakarya Motorcycle Delivery Workers Association and Düzce Motorcycle Delivery Workers Association (North of Turkey), we rented a tow truck. We put the motorcycles there and went that way.”

A delivery worker from Manisa said: “We went gladly because we know that motorcyclists are important in the region. We went to Adıyaman region. Colleagues in Balıkesir arranged the transport. We loaded our bikes on lorries, and the drivers traveled by bus. We unloaded our bikes there and started to work.”

Ankara was one of the cities that traveled to the earthquake zone in large numbers. On February 7, the announcement from the groups mobilized hundreds of delivery workers. “We were 50 people at first,” says the worker, adding that the interest started to increase as the departure organization became known: “When we said we were going, news started coming from everywhere. Suddenly, the number of people who signed their names increased to over 100-110. When the team increased, 190 delivery workers got ready with their motorbikes at 7 pm. With 12 tow trucks and a lorry, volunteer delivery workers started to be sent. Businesspeople were also constructive in this process. We went directly to Hatay.”

Adana was also one of the cities affected by the earthquake. The relatively limited scale of the earthquake and the lack of a severe need for delivery workers caused the workers there to turn their attention to Hatay. “We quickly saw that serious aid was coming to Adana. We traveled to the places hit by the earthquake and saw no need for us. As far as we saw on Twitter and Instagram, Hatay could not be reached. So, we and our friends decided that there was more need for us there. We collected money among ourselves, hired a tow truck, and set off for Hatay on February 7.” says a delivery worker from Adana.

More than a thousand motorcycle delivery workers from all over Turkey set off to the earthquake regions with their motorbikes with feelings and thoughts such as “Maybe we can pull a life out from under the rubble,” “We can bring supplies to an unreachable village,” “We can carry foods for babies,” “We can deliver medicines to patients,” “We can share the pain of an earthquake victim who lost a relative and pray together.”

## PART II

### Being a Volunteer Delivery Worker in the Earthquake Zone

Except for some delivery workers who have families in the earthquake zone, almost all delivery workers either went to the earthquake zone together with associations and trade unions or connected with groups of friends to reach the cities shaken by the earthquake.

Delivery workers mainly traveled to Hatay. Some of them went directly to Serinyol, located on the city's exit road close to the center of Hatay, while others went directly to İskenderun, the port district. In addition, delivery workers groups also went to Kahramanmaraş, the epicenter of the earthquake, Malatya, and Adiyaman.

### How Companies Approached Delivery Workers

Except for those who set off on the same morning and those who work as platform workers in self-employed status and shut down their systems directly, most delivery workers notified their workplaces before setting off. Most of the delivery workers we spoke to for the research or chatted with while in the earthquake zone stated that they generally had no problems with their employers. We observed that none of the delivery workers, who were full of the desire to help the earthquake victims as soon as possible, had concerns such as "What will happen to my job?", "Will I be fired?" or "Will I suffer financial loss". To put it in the words of a delivery worker from Ankara: "Since it was our own private company, we did not inform anyone; we just closed it down and left." Likewise, the delivery worker from Konya expressed similarly: "I work at Trendyol and we can switch off our system whenever we want. Therefore, they did not cause us any problems." The delivery worker from Antalya, who works in a restaurant and has no problems with his workplace, tells the following anecdote: "We informed our workplace, and they were supportive. While waiting at AFAD with friends, we said, 'We're hungry; let's have something to eat'. We ordered eight doner kebabs from the shop where I work. The man also brought eight ayran and didn't charge us a penny. He said, 'It's on me.'"

However, there were also businesses that caused problems for workers. A

delivery worker from Bursa: "Since we are platform workers, we have replaced our friends. Some could not find a friend. Some employers said, 'What is the need? Why are you leaving?'. Although it was not included in the interviews, Kurye News reported that a delivery worker who went to the earthquake zone from Antalya was dismissed from his job. After the news about the dismissal message sent to the delivery worker spread, the issue quickly became public on Twitter and the company owner sanctioned the employee who dismissed the worker and announced that the worker could return to work.

A significant portion of the delivery workers traveling to offer aid and assistance were platform workers. The delivery workers we interviewed, the observations we made in the field, especially in Hatay, and the information we received from the heads of associations reinforce this information. Delivery workers from all major publicly known platform companies were in the region. Although everyone stated that the companies did not cause any difficulty to the workers, in some cities, delivery workers drew attention to the fact that Trendyol wanted to create the impression as if they had sent the delivery worker to the region themselves. A delivery worker from Ankara: "They tried to create an impression as if they had sent us. They seemed to take credit for the workers' initiative. I think they gave up when the reactions were a bit too much". We heard similar comments from some delivery workers in the field. Even though the motorcycles used by the delivery workers were their own, almost all had baskets and coats with company logos. Since platform workers have to work with logoed baskets and coats, they also travel with them outside

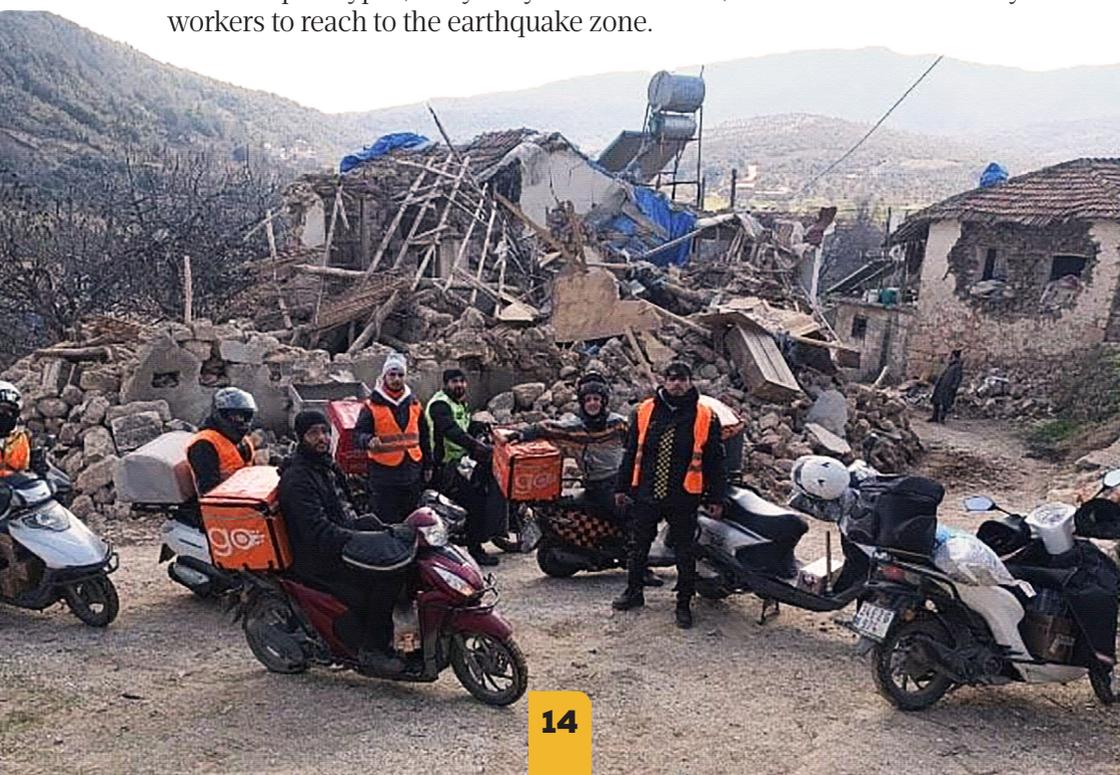


of work. Therefore, although from the outside, it may look like the company mobilized its workers to help the region, this mobilization was entirely a voluntary mobilization of the delivery workers.

The number of delivery workers not working at platform companies and working for single restaurants was small, although they were also in the region. This is because delivery workers, who mainly work with shop motorbikes and have fixed working hours, may leave their jobs for a certain period with the special permission of their bosses or take unpaid leave with an excuse.

### **First Impressions of the Delivery Workers in the Earthquake Zone**

“We arrived in Hatay at noon on the day of the earthquake. The road was blocked. People were trying to leave the city, and people were trying to come for help. When we arrived in Hatay, we realized the earthquake did not happen in Adana! Because when I turned my head to the left, I saw a fire, when I turned my head to the right, I saw someone under the rubble trying to get out. Dead people collapsed on the pavements with blankets on them. Chaos everywhere... It was like an apocalypse, “ says Niyazi from Adana, one of the first delivery workers to reach to the earthquake zone.



Fahrettin from Istanbul, one of the teams that landed in Kahramanmaraş towards noon on the day of the earthquake, tells the story with his eyes distracted as if reliving those moments: “It must have been an apocalypse. Fires, screams, and despair were all intertwined. I saw a citizen with dust whose parents were still under the rubble and a business owner watching his burning factory.”

“The first thing that caught my attention as soon as I landed was the news agencies. While some people were in pain, others were still trying to make money. After my nephew’s funeral, who was an only child, it was the first time I saw a pain so palpable. You could see that people were bleeding inside. You could see despair in the way they walk, their steps, and their eyes.” Davut was one of the delivery workers who came from Bandırma to heal the wounds of the earthquake victims.

The above is from the story of İbrahim, from Hatay, who lives in Antalya. İbrahim set off on his motorbike to join his family in the village without even informing his workplace. As soon as he heard about the earthquake, he traveled 600 km on two wheels to reach the neighborhood where he was born and raised. The scene there was scarier than the most realistic horror film:

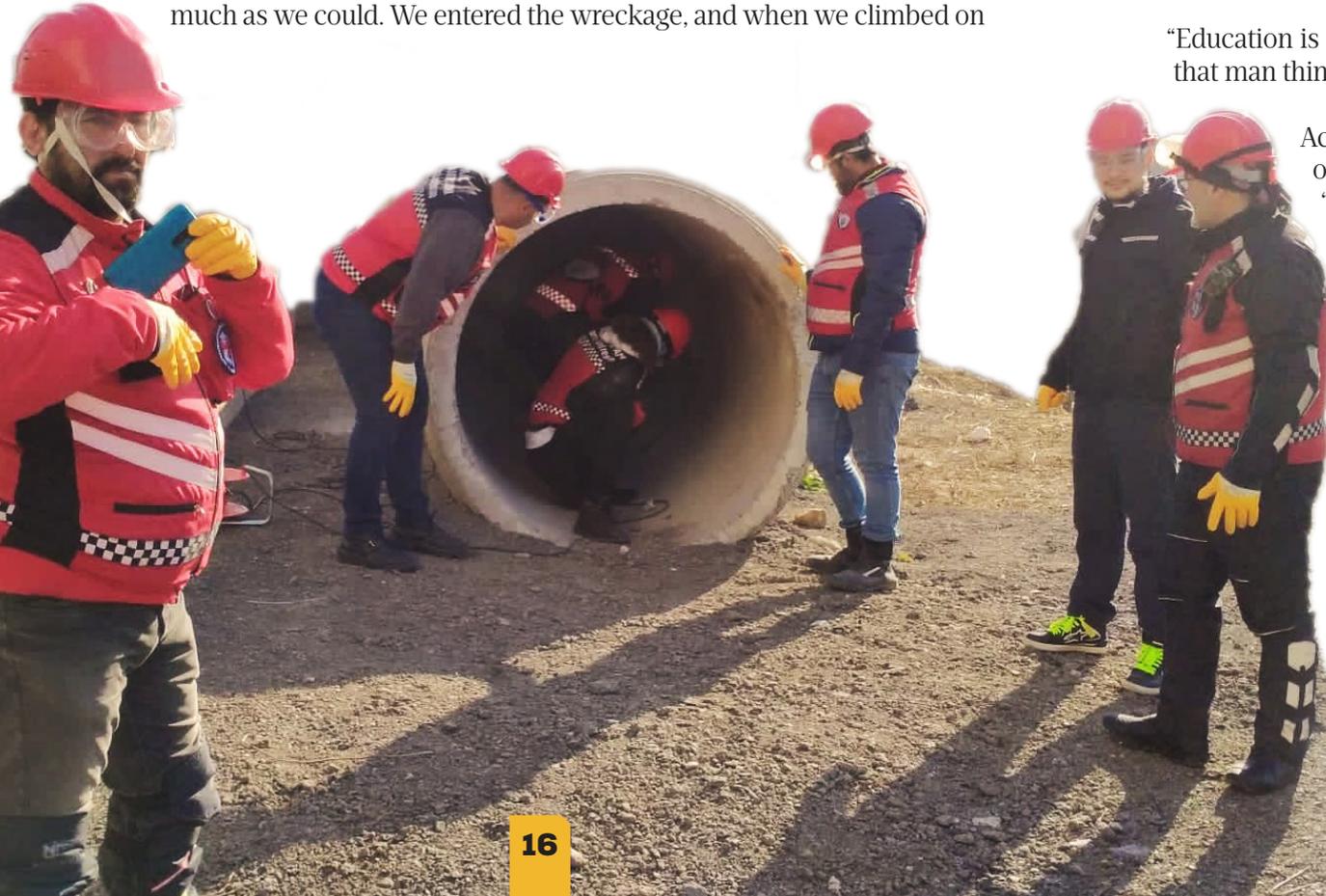
“When I reached Antakya on the second day of the earthquake, everything was destroyed. I entered the streets where I grew up. I saw a man. I recognized him; his eyes were full and red. All the people were crying sadly. I saw people running left and right. The gendarmerie was trying to transport the wounded and people who can’t walk in vehicles. I traveled all around and saw only one or two teams. Their police stations were also destroyed, and they had nowhere to go. I wanted to do something. I went into a building. I pulled out a cupboard, put my head on the wall, and listened. If I heard a breath or a crunch, I would concentrate there. We started to sort out the building by pulling something. Two dead people came out of there. After such a situation, I thought of my family. I mean, after I entered our streets, I forgot everything. I said my aunt’s house was up ahead; I went there.”

Serkan came to Kahramanmaraş from Istanbul and was one of the few delivery workers with search and rescue training. In the first days when professional teams were not in the field, he was with one of the groups that worked with limited equipment and pulled dozens of earthquake victims out of the rubble: “In some foreign films you see, fires and ruins everywhere. Factories were burning along the road. When we came to the center, almost no buildings were

left standing. It had been 20 hours since the earthquake. The roads were split, and there was a state of panic. There was great despair. Everyone flocked to us and begged us to rescue their relatives when we exited the car.”

Cemil from Bursa joined another group in Istanbul and traveled to Iskenderun. Like all the delivery workers who reached the region the day after the earthquake, he talks about the apocalyptic atmosphere. He draws attention to the helplessness caused by the lack of equipment:

“Seeing the earthquake on TV and being there are very different things. When we went there, a brother from AFAD directed us. ‘I will take you a wreckage side,’ he said. When we arrived, there was nothing. There was no digger, no crane, no delivery worker. There was nothing, and we had no equipment with us. There were no helmets or gloves. We said, ‘What are we going to do here?’ We are delivery workers. We do not know what to do. We don’t have any knowledge. We didn’t receive any training. We started to do something as much as we could. We entered the wreckage, and when we climbed on



the wreckage, there was already an instantaneous earth tremor. We were also getting uneasy.”

Burak from Konya was also one of the delivery workers who stayed in Hatay for the longest time:

“The first moment we entered the city, we started to smell dead bodies. We didn’t think it was so serious when we decided to come. Everyone was a bit confused. We arrived in the dark and couldn’t see much. We arrived near the Mustafa Kemal University Hospital in Hatay. A helicopter was landing and taking off every minute. Sirens were constantly sounding, and ambulances were coming and going. I felt as if the apocalypse had happened.”

### **Search and Rescue, First Aid, and Disaster Training Background of Delivery Workers:**

“Education is nothing else but the art of teaching how to overcome obstacles that man thinks are difficult or easily overcome.” (Wolfgang Van Goethe)

According to the first aid regulation of the Ministry of Health, one out of every 20 people employed in occupations recognized as “less dangerous,” one out of every 15 people working in industries identified as “dangerous,” and one out of every 10 people working in sectors recognized as “very dangerous” must obtain a Basic First Aid Training Certificate. Although delivery workers are not officially included in the status of dangerous occupations, the danger of the profession is widely discussed in the public due to the accident and death rates.

Obtaining a driver’s license by passing the motorcycle driving license exam is necessary to use a motorcycle. In the motorcycle driving license exam, 12 of the 50 questions consist of first aid questions. The first aid knowledge of hundreds of thousands of delivery workers is limited to these 12 questions unless they have had previous training in another occupation.

As people who have been in the delivery sector for many years and based on our field observations, it is rare for delivery workers to have first aid training. However, they are constantly in traffic, and the risk of serious injury in accidents is 35

times higher than in other vehicles. There are 60 motorbike accidents recorded on average every day in the country.

In Turkey, anyone over 15 and a Turkish citizen can be a Basic AFAD Volunteer. To be able to participate in the Support AFAD Volunteer Training, it is necessary to be at least 18 years old. Authorized institutions, especially the Red Crescent and AKUT, provide disaster training. However, disaster training is not compulsory. Although disaster training is given in schools and official institutions from time to time, this training is only for some occupational groups.

We do not have precise data on the general situation of delivery workers regarding disaster training. However, if we exclude the training organized by some delivery workers' associations with particular sensitivity, disaster training for delivery workers remains exceptional.

"I didn't have any training, but we learned a lot of things there. I regret why I didn't get any training before," says Muhammed from Konya.

Yusuf, also from Konya, regretted not receiving any training: "Unfortunately, I do not have any search and rescue or disaster training. But I realized from the earthquake zone that any kind of training is vital in a possible disaster. That's why I became more eager to receive training after returning home."

"I did not have any training. After my return, I made attempts to get training. I watched many videos on YouTube," said Omer from Izmir.

Mehmet from Antalya is one of those who realized the importance of training while still in the earthquake zone and took the initiative. "I had no training. But while I was there, I logged into the e-Government application and directly applied for training. They did not call me for training, but I was accepted."

A delivery worker from Ankara also noted his hesitation due to his incomplete training: "My first aid training is not complete, but at least I started. That's why I didn't intervene in anything to avoid any wrong intervention."

"No, I did not receive any training from any organization. But I find this issue fundamental. I personally saw the people there getting injured and crippled. Indeed, I could have been more useful if I had received this training. For example, we live in an earthquake zone in Istanbul. Why are we not given these trainings?" On the other hand, Mehmet from TEHİS, the Tourism, Entertainment, and Service Workers' Union, calls especially on municipalities

to organize training for all delivery workers.

Although most delivery workers made similar evaluations, some had received training in cooperation with various public institutions. Fahrettin from Istanbul, who traveled one of the fastest to the earthquake zone, is one of them. "We received our search and rescue, disaster, and first aid training from the relevant institutions under the leadership of the Istanbul Delivery workers Federation. That's why we were able to organize so fast, and we were beneficial in saving many people there," he said.

"As an association, we have received training from many institutions, especially AFAD, AKUT, AKOM. We received both theoretical and field training. Our training is continuing. We continue our preparations to raise all our colleagues' earthquake awareness and prepare for the possible Marmara earthquake." Sedat, the President of the Istanbul Motorcycle Delivery Workers Association, is also a delivery worker eager for training.

The common feature of delivery drivers who say they have received training before is that they are the president of an association or are actively involved in it. Niyazi, the President of Adana Motorcycle Delivery Workers Association, expressed his training background: "We had already received certified training from the Search and Rescue Humanitarian Aid Association (KATAK) team to assist in search and rescue. These trainings were carried out both remotely and face to face, and practical training was also given."



## WHAT DID THE DELIVERY DRIVERS DO IN THE EARTHQUAKE REGION?

*“I don’t believe in charity. I believe in solidarity. Charity is so vertical. It goes from the top to the bottom. Solidarity is horizontal. It respects the other person. I have a lot to learn from other people.”*  
(Eduardo Galeano)

### **Delivery Workers Participating in Search and Rescue Activities**

“We started working in the evening on the first day. We could not bring much equipment with us. We started to work in the wreckage with simple materials, pickaxes, shovels, and hammers brought by citizens. We immediately pulled out three injured people. Later that night, I took the team to rest because there would be intensive work the next day. Our team was completely engaged in search and rescue for the first ten days. We pulled out many of our citizens alive, and unfortunately, many people were exhumed. People almost begged us to take their bodies out. One building was lying on its side, and we had to hold the building with a crane to get inside. But there was no crane. On



the second day, we pulled out about 15 people,” said Fahrettin from the Istanbul Motorcyclists Association for Unity and Solidarity, one of the delivery workers who went to the debris sites with search and rescue training. During the interview, he talked about his experiences and the need to prepare for earthquakes before the earthquake happens. Fahrettin said that the time allocated for training is not lost and frequently mentioned that all delivery workers should take every training they can get about disasters.

Serkan from the Istanbul Motorcycle Delivery Workers Association was one of the workers who participated in the search and rescue. He explained how they arrived on the field faster than the professional teams:

“There were no professional teams for the first 4-5 days. We started by extracting injured earthquake victims from lightly damaged, non-high-risk buildings. Our group consisted of six people. Within 10-15 days, we pulled a total of 62 people from the rubble, including the dead. After the professional teams started to arrive, we were relegated to the background and continued our support and assistance work with their guidance. During that process, we pulled out many earthquake victims from the rubble. At the same time, we acted as the hands and feet of the professional teams and served in the same way they directed us. Sometimes, we listened to voices from the rubble; sometimes, we carried blankets to cover the earthquake victims who were pulled out alive or lifeless; sometimes, we



distributed the food and water brought for the people working there and did not waste even a second.”

“We were forming security circles in a coordinated manner. It didn’t make any difference whether there were wounded or dead bodies. In other words, we prevented the people there from entering the field.” Mehmet from the Antalya Motorcycle Delivery Workers Association was one of the delivery workers who started working with search and rescue and ran wherever needed. “A building was standing on its side. They were holding it with two cranes. It was 3-4 o’clock before we reached them. When the building collapsed, those inside stayed on the opposite side of the door, and those digging were digging on the opposite side. The diggers heard a sound; there was a noise. After long efforts, we rescued a mother and three children. The father had already come out before. But the parents of the older ones had passed away. But one of them died because he was operated on recently. The other one couldn’t escape. One was caught by earthquake at the door. He was dead, too, and they were keeping the body in a solid building. When the colleagues there were excavating, they realized it was empty. This time, they moved to the other side. They started excavation on the other side. We rescued Ata Taner, whose name was also publicized, he was the first to come out. After that, we rescued his aunt, then his sister, and finally his mother. His aunt had a broken backbone. They didn’t want their family to hear. So, we made a security circle to prevent it from being heard.”

## **Delivery Workers Running Everywhere**

“First, we made our internal organization. After that, we split into teams, but in a way that we would not lose contact with each other. Because there was no phone reception there, navigation did not work. We could not find each other when we got lost because of chaos, looters, etc. We had to act as a group, not to be separated from each other. We had teams of 15 people. On the first day, we scattered around to see what we could do, and we did whatever we could. Then we started to distribute food, nappies, formula, hygiene materials on our motorbikes to the addresses given to us,” says Aydın from Ankara, summarizing the experiences of many delivery workers in the earthquake zone.

We want to tell these experiences because we believe that every experience creates unforgettable emotions in the people who live it and touches people profoundly. “We were distributing from 09:00 in the morning until it got dark in the evening,” says Aydın, reflecting with the following anecdote that the

delivery workers were not only distributing but also rushing to everything like jokers and that they were in solidarity not only with the earthquake victims but also with the people who were in the region for aid: “After dark and because there was no electricity in Hatay, we were observing our friends working in the rubble in the 600 Evler region near where we were staying. They were also working on their feet from morning till night. First, we brought them food and tea. Then we realized that they were very sleepy. So, we said, let us take over the task. We observed them for a day or two to see what they were doing. We received training and tried to lighten their burden with picks and shovels, listening to the sound and shining torches. We supported them at night to give them a rest, and during the day, we did our distribution work in a certain coordination.”

During the 40 days we stayed there, we had many conversations with the delivery workers from Ankara in the garden of the Highways 53rd Branch Chief Office, which was their gathering center. We witnessed them working like bees. While tens of motorcycles were loading materials, other workers rested in the shade. Some of them were having a snack on the go. Delivery workers



work like buzzing bees when there are busy orders because more packages mean more bonuses and tips. But it was not like that there; more packages meant touching more people and meeting the needs of more people.

A delivery worker going to the earthquake zone has a target: trying to deliver the materials to the region. However, on their way back, their perception of the surroundings becomes more open, and they come across several cases to intervene. A worker from Ankara describes this very picture: “On the way back from a call, you have to go back to the warehouse; you definitely come across something on the way. I saw a girl sitting on the road crying for pliers. Her car’s diesel hose was broken. I stopped there and repaired it, for example. There were 4-5 university students hitchhiking on the road. We couldn’t stand it and took them to their dormitories. They took the things they could take with them, and we left them on the road again. We encountered a lot of things like these every day.”

“On the evening of the day we left, we immediately went to the field. Malatya Delivery Workers Association had set up a tent there. They collected materials from the soldiers and people who wanted to help. There was baby food, clothes, and dry food. There were also medicines. We were delivering everything to the addresses given to us in the villages. AFAD did not let us near the wreckage. They said, ‘You have no training; your psychology will deteriorate.’ We provided services in material and emergency transport,” says Faruk from the Sakarya Motorcycle Delivery Workers Association about the work in Malatya.

The coordination of delivery workers’ associations among themselves during an extraordinary period was also noteworthy. To illustrate, the Bursa All Laborer Moto Delivery Workers Association met with the Kartal Motorcycle Delivery Workers Association in Istanbul and went to the region. The Sakarya Motorcycle Delivery Workers Association met with the Düzce Motorcycle Delivery Workers Association, and they went to the Malatya Delivery workers Association in the earthquake zone and worked together. These were among some examples of institutional solidarity and cooperation we could identify.

Nail from Düzce, one of the delivery workers who traveled to Malatya, described the mobilization of delivery workers in the following way: “We generally carried parcels. A building collapsed in the aftershocks; someone was trapped under the building, and it was a delivery worker’s brother from Malatya. But thank God, he was safe and sound.”



### **Delivery Workers Carrying Medicine**

All delivery workers especially emphasized the ease of mobility of motorcycles. Let us listen to Burak from Konya about the work done in carrying medicines and doctors: “There were places where cars could not enter, some roads were closed, and there was no news from some villages. We took a lot of food, supplies, clothes, and especially medicines to those places. There was an urgent need to deliver medicine. The roads were blocked, and vehicles could not pass. We traveled through these roads on motorbikes and quickly delivered medicine to the patients. There was no specific organization. Everyone had chosen certain regions on their own. We took doctors and nurses on the back of our motorbikes and took them to the patients. In a way, we can say that our motorbikes served as ambulances in emergencies. In aftershocks, some more roads were closed, and there were roads where even ambulances could not enter. In those cases, we transported health personnel.”

Even weeks after the first hours of the earthquake, there was always traffic in the city and district entrance roads. There were those who came to help, those who tried to leave the area in panic, those who took the wounded to the neighboring cities, those who returned after leaving their children and older adults to their relatives in other regions, and a lot of other vehicles on the roads for many different reasons. Delivery workers had to go to the city center and sometimes to remote settlements unaffected by the earthquake. It was enough to tell the delivery workers that there was a need and to give them two addresses: departure and arrival. Ahmet from Ankara describes an urgent request they received: “We were told that there were materials needed for surgery. We were in Antakya center. The materials are in Dörtyol district. There was no one to go to get them. We set off on two motorbikes. The distance was not close either. It was at least 100 km. There were as many people with good intentions as with bad intentions. The materials we were carrying are worth 2-2.5 million Turkish Lira. Now, if a malicious person comes and disappears, the materials will also disappear. We have also seen such things. We went to Dörtyol in an hour with Bilal Abi. We wrapped the medicine boxes directly with ropes and filled the engine to the brim. There were sacks up to our mirrors.



We took the materials directly to Mozaik Hospital without waiting, delivered them at the emergency door, and left.”

Osman from Eskişehir is one of the delivery workers who traveled long distances and mostly carried medical supplies. “They sent us to a village. It has a 70-kilometer border with Aleppo. We went to the location. One kilometer away from the location, there was an aid truck below, and they did not go there to pick up supplies. And, of course, we were surprised by this situation. We worked a lot with the field pharmacy there. We took medicines to Samandağ State Hospital. There is a private hospital in Samandağ, and we also took medicines there. We also delivered the medicines requested by two doctors. We carried mainly medicines and personal necessities,” he said.

Mehmet from Eskişehir told us that, even though the delivery workers were mainly there to transport relief supplies, they did not refrain from positioning themselves according to the moment's needs. Motorbikes sometimes carried a doctor or a miner; motorbike baskets were sometimes filled with food, sometimes with medical supplies, oil for a generator that wasn't working, or concrete breakers for drilling concrete. Mehmet says,

“A doctor from Samandağ camp area had to go to a sick child. The child had a seizure, and there was no medicine. I immediately picked up the doctor and brought him to that address. We were waiting on standby to carry whatever was needed. One day, we received a call from AFAD. It was around 01-02 at night. A human noise was coming from a building, and they needed an emergency drill to break a wall. We took 5-6 concrete breakers directly there. We waited at the rubble for quite a while. Fortunately, an earthquake victim was rescued alive.”

Almost everyone pointed out the lack of coordination in the earthquake zone. People could somehow find food and drink. Even if they could not, they may wait. But people with chronic diseases could not afford to wait for vital medicines for bedridden patients. Although the addresses of some of the patients were known, there was no information about some of them. Davut from Bandırma depicts this situation: “There was a lack of coordination. It was our biggest deficiency. There were problems at the point of medicine distribution. Although the point-by-point addresses of some patients were known, we identified some of those in need by traveling. The more we traveled, the more people's needs became clearer. We distributed medicines and supplies to remote villages where vehicles could not enter. Institutions can only take one vehicle to a place and need permission for such activity. But

we do not need such permission. There is only a need, and that need has to be fulfilled. We would say we would do it and leave to distribute supplies and medicine.”

Davut continues: “The first time I went there, we were distraught when an AFAD official said, ‘I wish you had come two or three days earlier.’ They needed a concrete breaker’s bit. They couldn’t save the lives of a few people because they couldn’t get it at that moment. For an AFAD officer to say, this touched me very much then. You can go on a motorbike from wherever you want, whenever you want. For example, when the traffic was heavy, a civil servant would see and ask us, or we would say, “Let us take you to your destination.” We also carried basic needs, stoves, medicine, food, etc.”

### **Delivery Workers Without Borders**

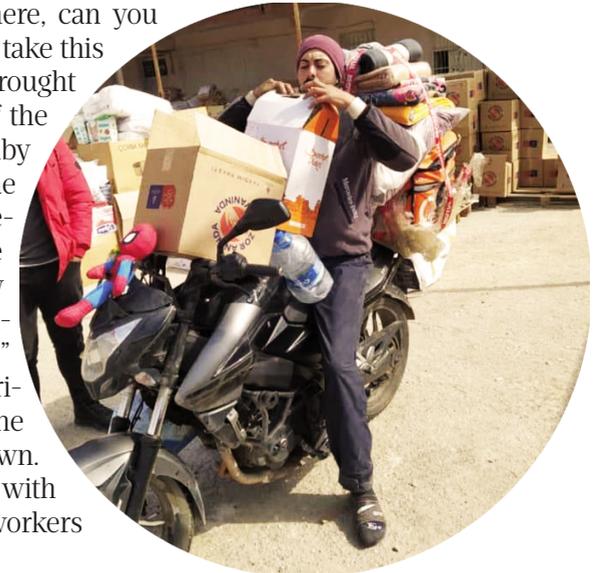
“When we arrived, we unloaded our engines from the lorry and waited an hour or two. We were trying to understand what happened, looking at the surroundings. After that, we tried to drive safely, not to damage our tires with broken glass as the buildings have collapsed on the roads. We took materials from the AFAD center by passing our motorbikes inside three by three. Then we asked where to go and what to do and took destinations. Since I knew the addresses there by heart, we were already experiencing internet problems there; I distributed directly to the villages without needing location information. We noticed

that the material landed everywhere in the city centers, but people did not eat or drink because of the grief. Of course, we

coordinated with AFAD to find the required addresses. We carried supplies to the villages. Some of our friends stayed away from the rubble because they feared infection. Some of our friends entered the wreck and worked with the authorities there. In addition, our phone numbers were given to AFAD, and we were constantly receiving phone calls saying, for example, ‘A pipe burst over there,’ ‘The pipe of the machine burst, the



car cannot pass through there, can you go by motorbike?’, ‘Can you take this pipe? Could it be fixed and brought back?’, ‘A baby came out of the rubble over there.’, ‘The baby needs this medicine’. The ambulances could not be reached urgently because the ambulances were full. They asked us to bring medicines and formulas for babies,” said Muhammed, who is originally from Hatay and came from Antalya to his hometown. He continued to explain with examples of how delivery workers did various jobs:



“On the road, for example, security forces stop us and say that the cars cannot enter, ‘Can you drop me off urgently on the Narlica road?’ Some asked this for their family, and some said it was purely for duty. We helped some ambulance attendants. There were people we helped in congested areas. Most of us took care to carry them. We were careful not to take passengers because we had our backs and baskets packed full. Of course, there were times when we had to take passengers in such a situation. I know that at least ten motorbikes helped in that regard.”

Although delivery workers rushed to everything, they could not attend to every need they saw. Muhammed expresses this with the following words: “When we went there, life stopped completely. You are trying to do something. But since you have been assigned a certain task, you feel you are responsible for fulfilling that task. You cannot stop and do something else. For example, you cannot stop for someone who needs help there because you are already going to help another person and have been given a task. If you go beyond that, the organization and the efforts made by the people there will go to waste, so we were going somewhere in a coordinated way as a team. We also provided a lot of work machines there with diesel. We helped in that way. Apart from that, some of the materials of the vehicles were malfunctioning. For example, we had to get the pipe from the repairman when the pipe burst. For example, there is a distance of 5 kilometers. If you try to go those 5 kilometers by car, it will

take 3-4 hours, maybe 5. But with the motorcycle, it would take us half an hour. We were asked for help in such matters. Of course, when the authorities said, 'OK, take it, bring it,' we did accordingly."

Apart from those who went to the region with group organizations, some went on their initiative. The delivery worker Ibrahim was one of them. He is originally from Hatay and lives in Antalya. Besides going to Hatay on his motorbike, Ibrahim also organized his colleagues from different cities. He explains what he did in Altunözü, on the Syrian border, with other delivery workers from Manavgat, Alanya, Kocaeli, and Istanbul as follows: "Most of the roads in Altunözü were already destroyed. You know, they were closed. We opened them, fixed them with our friends, and adjusted them so people could enter and exit easily. Let me tell you this: I swear, my family did not need that much compared to people who needed it. I didn't give anything to my family from the incoming aid. We didn't give anything to anyone who didn't need it. I mean, we gave it only to those in need. Nevertheless, we tried to run to whoever needed anything. We had a chainsaw, and we were cutting wood for people."

It was the land where I was born and grew up, and I knew everywhere what to get and from where. In the first days, there was a tremendous shortage of gas. Gas stations were closed. We needed it for vehicles and generators. We knew who sold gas under the table across the border. We brought it from there with the money we collected. Apart from our own needs, we could even give gas to a military vehicle. News of looting was also coming to our ears. Everyone was anxious. We were in the village, and it was easy to get weapons. We traveled around in groups at certain hours to protect ourselves and deter those who came and looted."

There were delivery workers who ran from distant cities to their hometowns and those who lived in the earthquake zone. Cihan, the President of Malatya Delivery Workers Association, is a delivery worker who received the necessary search and rescue training from AFAD and encouraged other delivery workers to receive training. However, we also learned that the number of delivery workers participating in the training was extremely low. He and his family talked about the earthquake before going to bed on the night of the earthquake. When he introduced the 72-hour kit to his wife and told her she should keep it with her in case of an earthquake, it was 01.30. The earthquake occurred just about 3 hours later.

They left the house safe and sound, taking their children with them. Cihan, who placed his family in a safe place, immediately went to the field as a trained

and responsible person. Afterwards he told:

"Before the earthquake, since I had attended AFAD's training, the director of AFAD's Training Branch called me and said, 'Take the team and go to the field.' But there wasn't a team on standby. They asked me for the photos and locations of the collapsed buildings, and they would prepare a team accordingly. I left my family, got on my motorbike, and immediately got to work. I started in my neighborhood first. I went everywhere as far as possible, took photos of the destroyed buildings, and sent them."

Cihan continued to work regardless of the gravity of the situation and the lack of a team. He voluntarily took part in the wreckage of Avşar Hotel, which is also well known to the public: "I had worked part-time at the Avşar Hotel before, so I knew the building well. I called the training branch and asked to join the search and rescue team there, and I did. There was a search and rescue team, but they had no equipment. There was nothing. For three days, no work could be done. Since there was no organization on standby, we were lifting stones with our hands," said Cihan. He saw his family briefly and coordina-



ted with both the institutions in the city and the delivery worker groups that would come to help from outside the city for days in the field. He told us: “I went to AFAD to meet the tent needs of my neighborhood. We were able to get 72 tents for the Kaynarca neighborhood. One of our friends helped us buy bread. Another friend of ours contributed a lot in providing food. We provided fuel for all the vehicles in the neighborhood. There were six delivery workers in total in Malatya. Apart from us, various delivery worker associations and volunteer delivery workers from Düzce, Çanakkale, and Sakarya participated in our coordination. We established voluntary coordination to send aid to 12 neighborhoods. We created Food, Hygiene, and Clothing tents and distributed them from here.”

The delivery worker from Çanakkale explained that delivery workers rushed to multiple jobs simultaneously: “Friends from the Malatya Delivery Workers Association welcomed us. They had already coordinated with AFAD. We started to work together with their guidance.” However, like many delivery



workers we talked to, he paused and took a deep breath. Probably, those days flashed before his eyes as he told his story: “From the distribution center, we started to carry many food supplies, especially daily hot bread, to those in need. Baby food, diapers for the elderly, feminine hygiene supplies, you name it, we were filling our baskets with it. In addition, there were urgent medicine needs, and we were delivering them to the addresses given to us. In Malatya, the roads were relatively better because there was not as much destruction as in Hatay, Maraş, and Adıyaman. Likewise, the internet connection was not bad. Even though we did not know the city, we could go to the addresses given us using navigation systems. When we went there, we searched for survivors still in the rubble. Occasionally, we would take supplies to the people in the rubble. When there was no significant need for distribution, we stood near the wrecks in case we could help. A lot of aid material was coming in and the trucks were forming long queues. We tried to make way for the ambulance by going ahead in the traffic jam a few times. In fact, we tried to do whatever we could with both our motorbike and our physical strength.”

### **What Challenges Did Delivery Workers Face?**

There were some common expressions in the first impressions of the delivery workers: “Chaos everywhere,” “This must be an apocalypse,” and “It was like scenes from war films.” We had similar feelings when we were there. The earthquake not only destroyed buildings but also turned public order and routine daily social life upside down. Even for basic human needs, such as shelter, food, and hygiene, extraordinary efforts and organization were required. Neither the people who lost their loved ones in the rubble, nor people waiting for their relatives to be pulled out from under the ruins nor the people who traveled to the region to help them expected their personal needs to be met. We are talking about people who tried to survive on a few hours of sleep for days on end, had to eat biscuits and fruit juice, had no means of hygiene, and were looking for secluded places even to go to the toilet. These are the people who run from one place to another in order not to waste even a second.

When we asked the delivery workers about the problems they experienced, almost all hesitated to talk about them, and were even “ashamed”! The general mood was “What do our difficulties matter in such an environment? It is not worth mentioning”. They told us things like: “I stayed for 7-8 days. I didn’t do much about hygiene. From the day we left, we couldn’t change our clothes. There was no toilet, we couldn’t take a shower, we could only wash our hands and feet. We tried to eat whatever we could find. After a while, hot food started

to come out. In the first days we stayed outside, we didn't sleep much, to be honest. Then a tent was arranged", a delivery worker from Ankara summarized the experiences of almost all delivery workers.

Another Ankara delivery worker says, "We stayed for eight days. We did not have any problems in sheltering there. We stayed in a container in the garden of the Highways Office. Thanks to them, they offered us food and stuff. We had some friends who left, and we took their place. We stayed in a room with 8-10 people. Shower cabins and toilets were mobile. Everyone met their needs from there. It was like that in terms of hygiene. When we left, we took our underwear, clothes, etc. There was only a shortage of underwear."

"I stayed in Hatay for about a week. In the first days, there were few tents, and we stayed in tents with many people. Later, the tent problem was solved. There



was no problem with eating and drinking. Hot food was constantly coming out since we stayed in the distribution area. But we had problems with hygiene like everyone else. We could not take a shower during our stay there. Later, we heard that the shower problem was also solved. But while we were there, we were trying to maintain our hygiene by changing our underwear," said the delivery worker from Izmir.

Another delivery worker from Bursa, who stayed in Hatay for three days, shared the following: "There was no toilet anyway. We were doing it wherever we could find. They were mostly suggesting we eat biscuit-like things there and make ourselves constipated. I didn't stay that long. There was no shower. Food and drink were always soup with disposable plates. We solved the shelter problem by staying at AFAD's place."

Burak from Konya, one of the delivery worker groups who stayed the longest in the region said: "We took our belongings for 3-4 days with us when we left home. We were cautious because we did not know how many days we would stay. We set up our tents in the hospital garden. The hospital was like an aid center; food was being cooked there, bread was being baked, and meals were coming. We didn't have much of a food problem, but we had problems with hygiene. For the first five days, we couldn't find proper water and couldn't take a shower. Then we started taking showers inside the hospital. We stayed in Hatay for 15 days, including the road. But we had friends who returned the next day and couldn't stand it. Because, unfortunately, the situation and conditions in the earthquake zone were not something everyone could handle."

The duration of the delivery workers' stay in the region varied. Some stayed for 2-3 days and returned, and others stayed in the region for a week or two weeks despite all the difficulties. Likewise, there were those who participated in search and rescue for the first ten days, then returned to their cities, collected the urgent needs they had identified, and returned to the region. Again, a shared feeling was that no delivery workers had their hearts set on leaving the area. Even though it was psychologically challenging, trying to stay there until the last moment was one of the common behaviors of the delivery workers.

## Part III

### **Recommendations of Motorcycle Delivery Workers on Earthquake Preparedness:**

After the 6 February Kahramanmaraş Earthquake, many statements and reports were published. Experts from many professional groups shared their research and recommendations on disaster management, especially earthquake preparedness, with the public. Almost everyone drew attention to the fact that earthquake preparedness is a public duty, and that preparation for all possible significant earthquakes, especially the Great Marmara Earthquake, is a great responsibility that cannot be postponed. They also stated that existing institutional mechanisms should be improved, and a separate Earthquake Ministry should be established.

As the Delivery Worker Rights Association, we wanted to present the experiences and suggestions of the delivery workers who took part in the field after the 6 February Earthquake as part of our responsibility in earthquake preparedness. Throughout the report, we have presented the narratives of delivery workers within a certain subject coherence. In the recommendations section, we will include general recommendations as well as singular but functional recommendations under the subject headings. It is possible to summarize the suggestions under three main headings: preparation before the earthquake(s), coordination and organization during and after the earthquake, and what to do after the fieldwork in the earthquake zone.

### **How Should Delivery Workers be Prepared for Earthquakes?**

- Provide Disaster Awareness, Search and Rescue, First Aid and Amateur Radio training to all delivery workers, especially those who volunteered in the earthquake zone, and ensure certification.
- Establish motorized teams affiliated with AFAD. Critical institutions like 112 and the Fire Brigade should have dedicated motorized groups, with delivery workers offering support.



- For the Great Marmara Earthquake preparation, establish “Emergency Delivery Worker” groups in cities near active faults, particularly in cities around Istanbul. These groups should consist of individuals who have completed training and are ready for immediate action.
- Encourage and support all delivery worker associations in providing training. Associations submitting projects to local governments and relevant state institutions should receive prompt responses. Experienced association presidents should be included in local or national planning for delivery workers.
- Provide free Advanced Motorcycle Driving Training to delivery workers. This training is crucial for navigating challenging environments and time-sensitive situations.

- Implement training for basic motorbike maintenance and repair. Delivery workers should have the ability to address sudden mishaps independently.
- Develop the skills of delivery workers in areas like camping to address fundamental problems such as accommodation under challenging conditions.
- Create opportunities for delivery workers to operate in the field with motorbikes suitable for crossing terrain, especially in challenging conditions and mountain roads.
- Consider the dual role of delivery workers in emergency personnel transport alongside logistics, when choosing motorbikes and vehicle equipment.

### **Coordination and Organization in the Earthquake Moment and Region:**

- Form communication networks for trained delivery workers, utilizing platforms like WhatsApp, e-mail groups, or specialized apps designed for earthquake response.
- Assign trained delivery workers in contact with central coordination to organize and lead the delivery workers who may volunteer during the earthquake.
- Maintain readily available supplies at airports for efficient deployment of delivery workers to the earthquake zone with the best equipment.
  - Every delivery worker association and trade union should procure a tent and establish a center at the activity site.
- Prepare for communication challenges by providing radios for alternative communication and offline mapping programs for addresses, considering potential disruptions in phone networks and the internet.
  - Incorporate an “Earthquake Emergency” button in applications of large delivery platforms, activating it during earthquakes to facilitate communication between those in need and available delivery workers.
- Establish “Motorbike Maintenance Stations” corresponding to the number of delivery workers in the regions, providing fuel and necessary maintenance services.

- Develop plans to regulate and control arrivals to the earthquake zone, outlining which teams will go where at each stage. Establish an Earthquake Emergency Delivery worker telephone line for volunteer delivery workers not involved in preparations or training but willing to take action after the earthquake; publicize the number through public service announcements.
- Emphasize rotation for sustainable relief operations, prioritizing the health and efficiency of delivery workers. Replace field-working delivery workers with new ones based on need and for adequate rest periods.

### **Post-Earthquake Activities for Delivery Workers**

- Create an information pool collecting the experiences and suggestions of each delivery worker participating in earthquake zone activities, considering the unique aspects of each earthquake.
  - Immediately include volunteer delivery workers who participated without preparation in training programs.
  - Mobilize relevant institutions to provide psychological support for delivery workers, encouraging them to seek and receive such support.



## CONCLUDING REMARKS



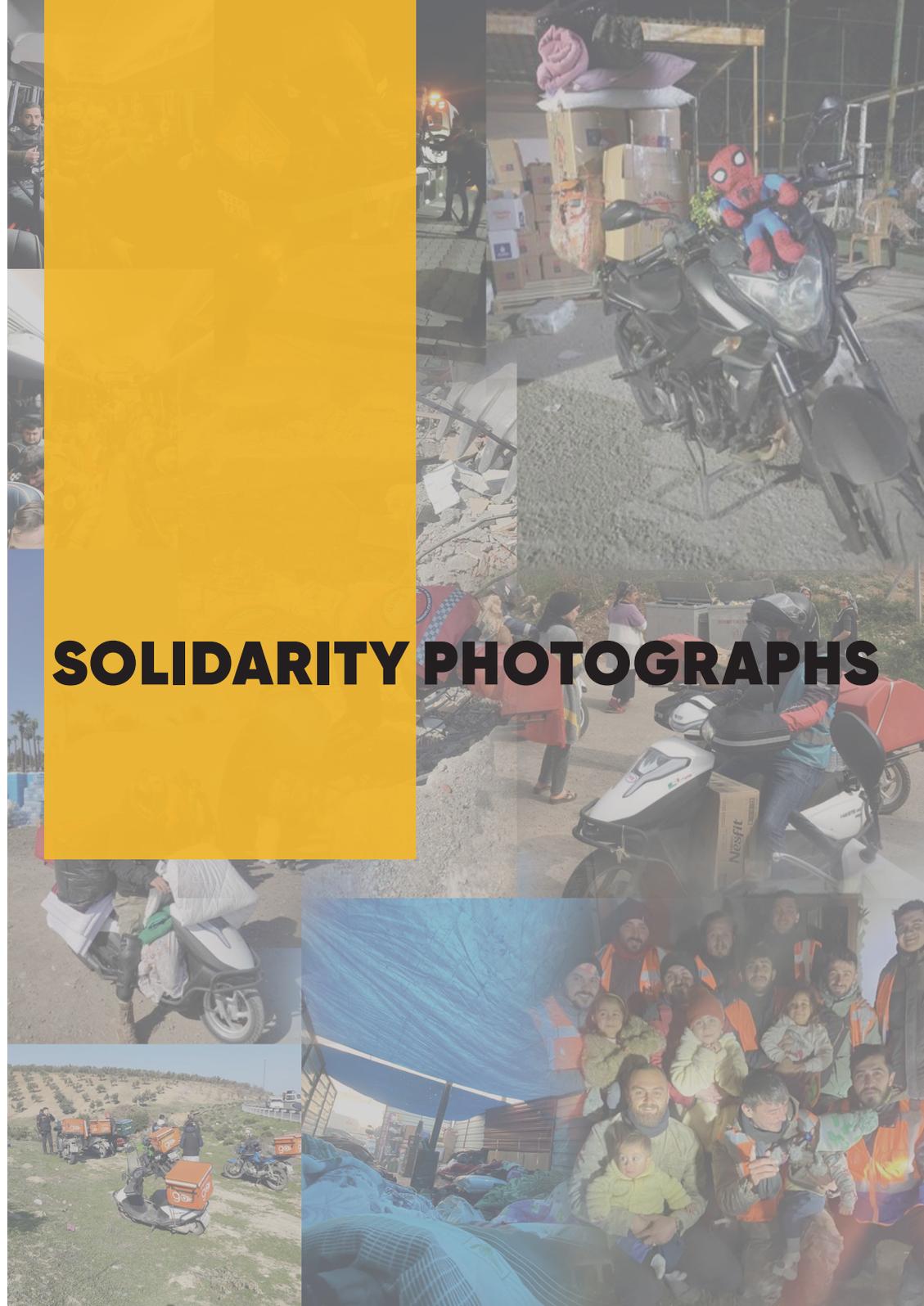
Cihan from Malatya, his wife, and their baby survived the earthquake. They had enough supplies for the three of them for 72 hours. Cihan, who relocated his family to a safe place, took an active role in search and rescue and relief efforts as a trained delivery worker and in the surrounding neighborhoods. His experience highlights the importance of earthquake preparedness:

“In December 2022, I completed all the trainings of AFAD. I told all the delivery workers around me and the waiters in the restaurants in the shopping mall where I work, ‘Come volunteer for AFAD.’ I told over 200 people, only four people responded positively. Online training started in January. Two of them completed their training, and two still need to. We agreed that AFAD would prepare information brochures on earthquake preparedness throughout the city, and we would distribute them. After the brochures, face-to-face training would start with volunteers. On 5 February, I completed the deficiencies in the ‘Disaster and Emergency Bag’ I received from AFAD. At 01.30, I told my wife, ‘If something happens, take our child and the bag and don’t look back.’ The earthquake hit at 04:17.”

Throughout our six weeks in the earthquake zone and subsequent 14 weeks of interviews, the recurring themes were “preparation” and “training”. We listened to numerous delivery workers underscoring the vivid and vital nature of earthquake preparedness. The regret expressed by untrained delivery workers, saying “I wish I had completed the training on time,” emphasizes the critical role of training. Delivery workers who actively participated in search and rescue, relief, and solidarity activities in Kahramanmaraş, Hatay, Malatya, and Adıyaman, where the earthquake had the most significant impact, provided detailed and holistic recommendations.

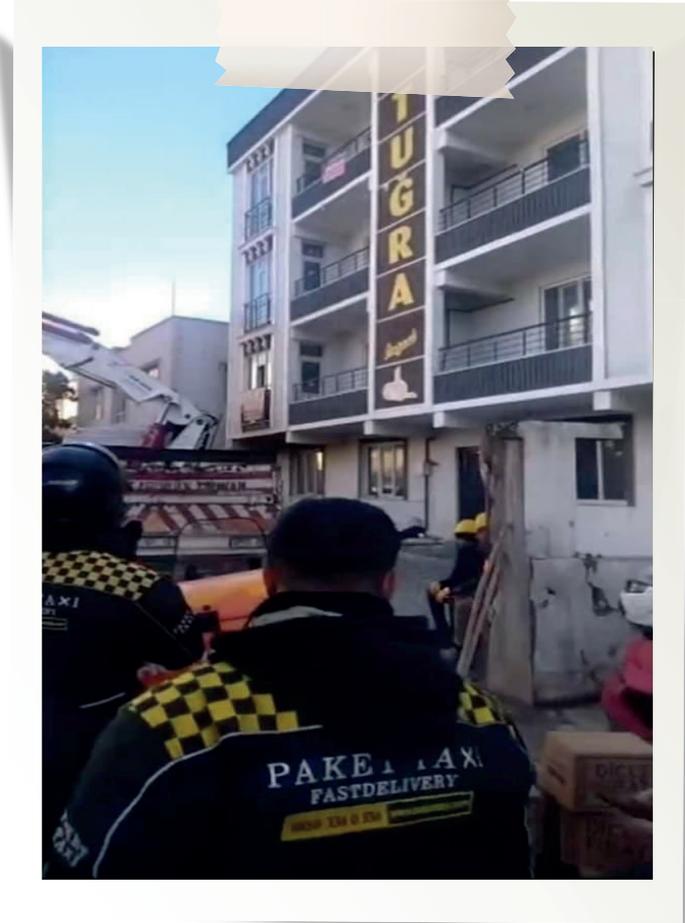
It is incumbent upon central and local administrations to implement the recommendations of delivery workers. Delivery worker associations and unions should take on a special role in systematically organizing and overseeing earthquake preparedness. We advocate for regional and central meetings involving delivery worker organizations and workers who were on-site to discuss earthquake experiences, deepen and develop the recommendations, and organize online meetings for broader participation as needed.

## SOLIDARITY PHOTOGRAPHS

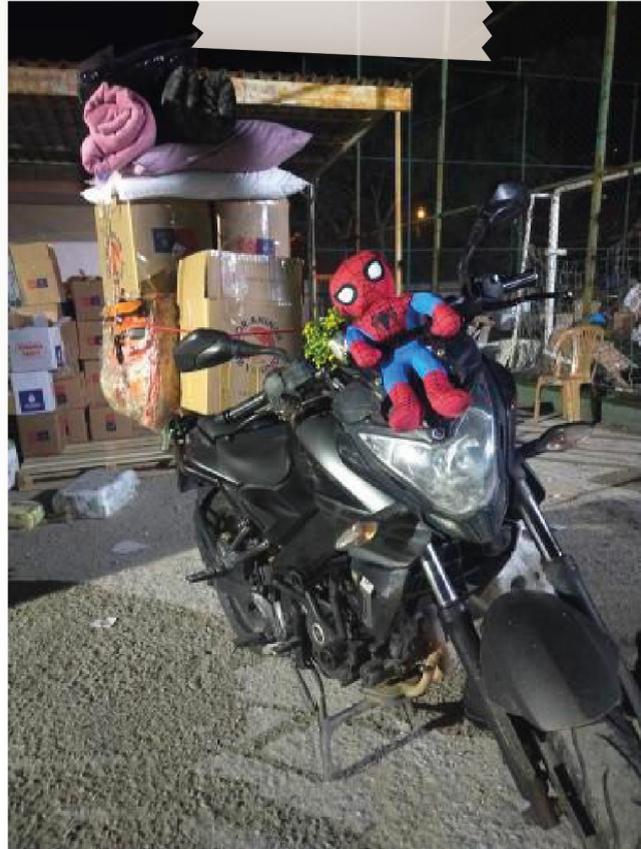


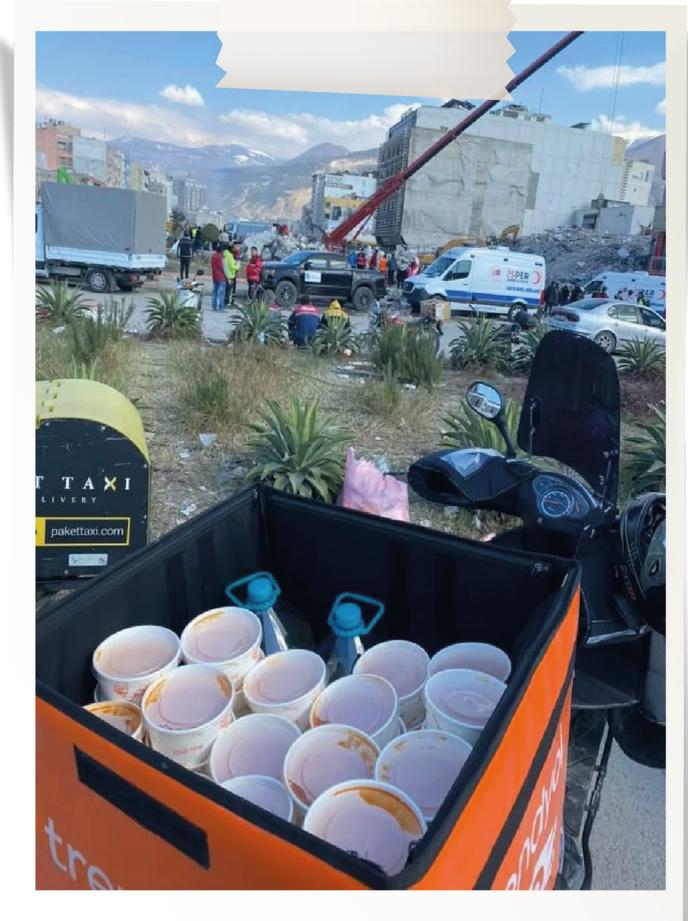












Leaving our helplessness to the influence of the narcosis of time and closing our ears to the hum of the faults moving under our feet means underestimating nature. Underestimating nature creates a heavy burden on our lives.

On February 7, we went to Hatay - one of the most affected cities - to participate in aid and solidarity activities. After 1.5 months of working in the region, we decided to conduct research with one of the professional groups mobilized in the earthquake: motorcycle delivery workers. Since then, we have conducted field research examining the experiences of motorcycle delivery workers who participated in search and rescue, aid, and solidarity activities in earthquake zones. We compiled their policy recommendations regarding possible earthquakes in the future.

*kuryehaklari.org*