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Statement of Solidarity after the Earthquake in Turkey and Syria.

February 16, 2023

We wish to convey our heartfelt condolences to the family, friends, colleagues, and loved ones of those who lost their lives in the earthquakes of February 6, 2023 in Turkey and Syria.

The scope of this natural disaster is compounded by the consequences of social crises. Long-standing and significant inflation in Turkey undermined living standards before these quakes; the inattention to building standards (as mandated after the major earthquake in 1999) only compounded the devastation of the current earthquakes. In Syria, 12 years of civil war have led to the displacement of millions of Syrians internally and in the regions of Turkey impacted by the earthquakes (and beyond). Taken together, this means that efforts to support those affected by the earthquakes are made more challenging by significant social and geopolitical tensions.

This catastrophe profoundly affects students, staff, librarians, and faculty in the University of Toronto community, to whom we extend our solidarity. UTFA has donated a modest sum to the University of Toronto Turkish Students Association (TSA) fundraising efforts through https://ahbap.org/, and the TSA is matching those funds. UTFA is also contributing to relief in Syria through https://www.whitehelmets.org/en/. We encourage our colleagues to consider supporting these and other organizations that are providing on-the-ground relief to the people of Syria and Turkey.

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