

FEBRUARY 6 EARTHQUAKE REPORT

2024-2025 Comparative Assessment



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**February 6 Earthquake Report:
2024-2025 Comparative Assessment**

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This publication has been produced with the financial support of the European Union. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of Uluslararası Şeffaflık Derneđi and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.

Introduction

Two years have passed since the devastating earthquakes in Kahramanmaraş and Hatay on February 6, 2023. Throughout the first year, we comprehensively assessed the scale of destruction, disaster management, reconstruction process, and the irregularities that occurred in the region. In our report published in 2024, we addressed the institutional shortcomings, corruption, and vulnerabilities in control mechanisms before and after the earthquake and highlighted the criticisms due to the lack of transparency in the reconstruction process.

At the end of the second year, we will compare the main issues identified in 2024 with the current situation as of 2025. We will analyze developments, which problems persist, and what steps need to be taken to prevent similar disasters in the future.

Reconstruction, Urban Renewal, and On-Site Transformation

As of 2025, within the scope of on-site transformation projects in the earthquake-affected area, homeowners are being provided with grants and loans of 750,000 TL (20,000 Euros) and 40,000 TL (1,075 Euros) of project support, while businesses are receiving grants and loans of 400,000 TL (10,757 Euros), and 40,000 TL of project support. Citizens who receive support for their first residential or commercial property can also benefit from project support and loan opportunities for their second and third properties.¹ Additionally, TOKİ (*Housing Development Administration*) continues to organize tenders under the disaster housing and urban transformation projects, with tender dates and details published on TOKİ's official website. However, criticisms continue regarding the transparency of the tender processes.

Although TOKİ has announced that all tender information and amounts are published on the Electronic Public Procurement Platform (EKAP), concerns persist that the tender processes are shaped in favour of certain institutions and that the process is not equally accessible to all companies.² The Ministry of Environment, Urbanization, and Climate Change is attempting to expedite the urban transformation efforts in the earthquake zone by accelerating planning, project, licensing, and permitting processes within the "Directorate of Urban Transformation" to make the process more effective.³

Legal Processes

According to the 2024 report by Families Seeking Justice, the disappearance of license files, unenforced arrest warrants, and issues accessing case files have negatively impacted the judicial process.⁴ Earthquake victims have expressed concerns that the judicial processes are not transparent, particularly highlighting that public officials have not been held accountable.

As of 2025, significant challenges and non-transparency continue in the legal proceedings initiated after the February 6, 2023 earthquakes. Although numerous cases have been opened in Criminal, Administrative, and Civil Courts in the affected cities, serious flaws persist in the trial processes, and the failure to initiate criminal proceedings against public officials has caused significant public concern. Among the legal challenges earthquake victims face are the loss of license files, some case files being incomplete or inaccessible, and the non-enforcement of arrest warrants, all of which adversely affect the progress of cases and accountability.⁵

In terms of legal support mechanisms, the Earthquake Victims' Legal Guide prepared by the Union of Turkish Bar Associations serves as a guide on how disaster victims can pursue their rights in legal processes and includes legal support mechanisms.⁶ However, there are doubts about the practical effectiveness of such guides. Additionally, 2,031 investigation files related to collapsed buildings have been opened in the earthquake zone. Under this scope, 1,342 criminal cases and 105,291 cases in administrative courts have been filed. A total of 682 first-instance courts have been established in the earthquake zone, including 654 judicial and 28 administrative courts. Moreover, ten regional courts of appeal chambers and five regional administrative court chambers have been set up.⁷

During the investigations, concrete and iron samples taken from buildings were analyzed in laboratories, and expert evaluations were carried out in collaboration with 14 universities. However, it is claimed that there have been delays in the preparation of expert reports, the reports contain inconsistencies, and some expert findings have slowed down the progress of legal proceedings. There are ongoing deep concerns about the impartiality of expert reports and the transparency of legal processes in the public eye.⁸

When reviewing the cases opened about the earthquake, it is observed that many files are progressing slowly, defendants have been released in some critical cases, and legal proceedings against public officials have not progressed. For example, in the case of the collapsed **Derya Apartment** in Hatay, the last detained defendant was released at the fourth hearing, leaving no detained defendants in the case. Similarly, the defendants were released in the **Nilüfer Apartment** case, and the trial has been postponed to 2025. In the **Özkan City Blocks** case, the contractors were released, and it was stated that “no evidence sufficient to create reasonable suspicion” was obtained regarding the allegations of column removal.⁹ On the other hand, in the **Atilla Eren Apartment** case, the contractor and building inspection officials responsible for the building that caused the deaths of 219 people are being tried in custody. At the same time, some defendants are fugitives, and no actions have been taken against public officials.¹⁰ Similarly, in the **Sueda Kent Apartments** case, there is no detained defendant in the trial for the building that caused the deaths of 65 people; the contractor and partner were released after 7.5 months in custody.¹¹

In the case of the **Alpargün Apartment**, where 96 people died, the contractor, H.A., has been sentenced to 62 life sentences and 865 years in prison. This trial has been a precedent with a conviction for probable intent without any reduction applied. The court also decided to file a criminal complaint against the relevant public officials.

One of the most notable trials post-earthquake is the ongoing legal process against the responsible parties of the **Rönesans Residences**, where 269 people lost their lives. However, only three defendants are currently in custody, with no progress in capturing the fugitives. Similarly, there are inconsistencies in the expert reports in the **Ebrar Apartments** case, and no legal action has been taken against public officials. In the **Palmiye Apartments** case in Kahramanmaraş, the contractor was released on grounds of “incapacity to stand trial,” and other building cases are still ongoing. In the **Isias Hotel** case in Adiyaman, the hotel owner was sentenced to 18 years and 5 months in prison, but the court did not accept the charge of “probable intent,” causing public backlash.¹²

Out of the ongoing trials related to **21 buildings, only 26 people are detained**, while 8 are fugitives. **No public officials are detained, and no officials have resigned in any of these cities.** Earthquake victims particularly regard the non-prosecution of legal processes against public officials, delays in the trial processes, and the release of some defendants in certain cases as a delay of justice.¹³

In conclusion, although some progress has been made in legal processes, significant deficiencies continue, such as lack of transparency, failure to prosecute officials, and slow legal proceedings. Inconsistencies in expert reports, unresolved investigations against public officials, and non-transparent case progress create a deep distrust in the public. Earthquake victims and rights advocates continue to call for the acceleration of legal processes, the prosecution of public officials, and the operation of legal mechanisms in a more fair and accountable manner.

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