

The Importance of Cultural Solidarity in Times of Crisis

Joint Statement on Supporting Cultural Relief Work after the Türkiye & Syria Earthquakes by Cultural Emergency Response (CER) - Prince Claus Fund - DutchCulture - European Cultural Foundation

Several weeks have passed since the devastating earthquakes in South East Türkiye and Northern Syria claimed tens of thousands of victims and affected the lives of millions. We express our condolences and offer our heartfelt solidarity to all those impacted. We sincerely hope for the safety of all communities and individuals affected.

While humanitarian aid remains crucial and ongoing, we believe that now is the time when supporting cultural relief work starts to play an essential role in recovery. Culture is an important lifeline for hope and vital for the resilience and well-being of both individuals and communities. It is part of who we are, of where we belong, and what makes us feel alive. It is a foundation for our identity, memory, and future. For this reason, we see the safeguarding, protection, and continuity of cultural life in the communities affected as an important complementary support to the many ongoing humanitarian relief actions.

The devastation of culture which we have observed in all affected regions, often through the eyes of our local partners in Türkiye and Syria, is truly catastrophic. In addition to all the damaged cultural heritage sites, museums, collections, and cultural spaces, many artists and cultural practitioners cannot carry on with their work. Many are faced with loss and the pressure of maintaining cultural practices, traditions, expression, and exchange while facing the repercussions of trauma. The humanitarian crisis caused by the earthquakes further threatened the local cultural life that had previously already been vulnerable in both Türkiye and Syria.

We call for the international community to come together to support, donate or set-up cultural relief actions for cultural institutions, heritage sites, spaces, artists, and practitioners. It is their work on the ground that contributes to a sustainable recovery of livelihoods, wellbeing, trauma processing, and continuity of culture. They need our urgent support now.

Our organizations are committed to the protection and recovery of cultural life in Türkiye and Syria as we believe that culture is a basic human need and right. Visit our websites for more information or to get in touch for recommendations on how to support:

- culturalemergency.org
- princeclausfund.org
- dutchculture.nl
- culturalfoundation.eu

