

AKUT



SEARCH & RESCUE ASSOCIATION
AKUT
ARAMA KURTARMA DERNEĞİ

TUR-03



During the significant Kahramanmaraş earthquake, our experience as AKUT and having deployed nearly 1000 personnel, reaffirmed the strength of our solidarity culture during exceptional circumstances. This dynamic environment demonstrated our ability to operate our resources and equipment more effectively than in training scenarios. The readiness of our equipment, our knowledgeable local teams, and our capacity for large-scale operations across multiple regions were evident. This earthquake impacted a vast area and simultaneously affected ten provinces, leading to initial shortages in security and healthcare personnel. Managing the distraught relatives of disaster victims without a support system posed a challenge for our teams. The proficient interventions by our medical personnel on the ground and their effective communication with the victims' families proved crucial.



Limited communication posed another challenge, prompting us to establish a face-to-face communication team. We designated contact persons to relay notifications, fostering harmony with other teams. Additionally, we encountered issues with unfounded notifications, necessitating caution to avoid redundant deployments. Notably, there were shortcomings in realizing ASR1 and ASR2 standards. National and international teams were insufficient in the field due to more widespread incidents and survivors requiring assistance than anticipated. While the willingness of unaccredited volunteers from the public offered benefits, it also introduced difficulties, especially when some teams lacked knowledge of INSARAG procedures, hindering compliance with its standards and overall coordination.

Based on our experiences, we recommend including medical personnel in field teams conducting similar work and

ensuring that safety officers remain vigilant against external influences. Teams should familiarise themselves with the cultural and geographical characteristics of the region and collaborate with local experts. Coordinating the transportation of fortification materials and logistics alongside relevant teams is critical. Proper marking of worksites and their delivery to classified and trained teams is essential. NGOs should be activated for regional relays, radio communication, and security support should be facilitated for search and rescue teams, minimising potential risks. Additionally, consistent information sharing by local authorities is paramount. For INSARAG/UCC setup, improving coordination, communication, and logistics guidance to authorised local institutions can yield a more efficient response.



This major disaster in Türkiye underscores that even with the involvement of numerous international teams, rescue efforts may fall short. It emphasizes the importance of ensuring buildings are resilient and public awareness of basic search and rescue principles and first aid practices, as critical rescues within the “golden hours” often rely on immediate community response.

[Team Website](#)

