

DEPLOYMENT ALERT

SPECIAL EDITION

SEVEN SDF-TRAINED SEARCH DOG TEAMS DEPLOYED TO TÜRKIYE, JOINING RESCUERS FROM AROUND THE WORLD TO ASSIST AFTER DEADLY EARTHQUAKE

Cory Baldwin & Diva in Türkiye searching for survivors. Photo: USAID

Early on February 6, 2023, a massive 7.8 magnitude earthquake rocked Türkiye, Syria, and the surrounding region, destroying buildings and leaving a swath of devastation stretching hundreds of miles. One of the

strongest quakes ever to hit the region, it produced aftershocks nearly as strong as the initial earthquake itself, with tremors felt as far away as Lebanon, Israel, and Egypt.

With the death toll rising in Türkiye and Syria, and several thousand others injured or buried beneath the rubble, the United States authorized immediate assistance, including two urban search and rescue task forces. Seven SDF-trained teams from Fairfax County Fire and Rescue and Los Angeles County Fire responded as part of this effort as USA-1 and USA-2, respectively, which are their call signs when deploying outside the United States.

The American teams arrived early on Wednesday, February 8, and immediately joined two- and four-legged rescuers from around the globe. Their countless hours of training prepared them for this mission and they worked tirelessly alongside other first responders in a united effort to find survivors.

As days turned to weeks, the probability of finding people alive diminished. Still, the few survivors that were found gave rescuers

hope, so the teams kept searching. Eventually, the rescue effort officially came to an end, and the operation turned to one of recovery.

For the canine search teams tasked with finding people alive, that signaled the end of their mission, and they returned home on February 20, after twelve days in Türkiye.

As the full extent of this crisis continues to unfold, our thoughts are with the people of Türkiye and Syria and all those affected by this tragedy. We also send our profound gratitude to the many rescue teams worldwide who responded and those still on the ground who continue to assist with humanitarian aid.

Witnessing a disaster of this magnitude reinforces the importance of our work. We can never know when or where a disaster will strike, but we can have confidence that our teams will always be ready the moment they're needed.

We are immensely proud of these teams and grateful for their courage, dedication, and self-sacrifice in service to our country and the world. We're also thankful to you, our SDF family, who make this work possible. Your generosity helps save lives—both human and canine.



Mike Toepfer & Deacon search the rubble in Türkiye. Photo: USAID

PAWS ON THE GROUND: SDF-TRAINED TEAMS DEPLOYED TO TÜRKIYE



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To read the full deployment report and learn more about our teams, scan here!



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**Thank you
for being
Part of the Search!**



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