

TBM provides shelters for families in Turkey

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Texas Baptist Men volunteers will journey to Turkey the first week in April to help build shelters for families who lost their homes in the Feb. 6 earthquake.

TBM crews plan to build 50 family shelters in Turkey with faith-based partners. They are expected to build four to six a day.

The shelters come in two sizes and are smaller versions of a Quonset hut, with a semi-cylindrical shape. The large shelters are about 193 square feet and can house up to 14 people. The small ones are about half the size and can house families of fewer than five people.

“Please pray for these volunteers as they work in Turkey,” said Rupert Robbins, associate director of TBM Disaster Relief. “And pray that God will raise up the funds and volunteers needed to build more of these shelters as we work to share the love of Jesus in a very tangible way.”

Next phase of TBM ministry in Turkey

The housing initiative marks the next phase in TBM’s continuing ministry in Turkey after the devastating February earthquake.

“It’s hard for people to comprehend the level of disaster based on what they’ve seen in the news,” said Mitch Chapman, director of TBM Water Impact.



A Texas Baptist Men-led team in

Turkey sets up the first of two water filter systems shipped from Texas to the earthquake-ravaged area. (TBM Photo)

Chapman traveled to Turkey to deliver two community water filtration systems and to build eight more with local parts.

“The geographical breadth of this was so amazing,” Chapman said. “You could drive for six hours and still be in the midst of destruction.”

Imagine a 70-mile-wide swath of land from Houston to Oklahoma City. “There would be ground zeroes all throughout that area,” he said.

The night of the first quake, Feb. 6, about 30 percent to 50 percent of buildings collapsed, Chapman said. Later, authorities condemned another 30 percent.



A Texas-made water filter is installed at a tent city and community center in Turkey by TBM’s water ministry specialist and Turkish workers: (TBM Photo)

The great loss of life staggered the imagination. “There was no one you met who hadn’t lost someone they loved,” he said.

In the days after the earthquake, TBM Water Impact built and installed two four-stage filtration systems in the area and helped locals build and install another eight systems. The first two stages removed sediment, a charcoal stage improved the taste and an ultraviolet filter killed any remaining bacteria.

“The water has to be crystal clear before it gets to the UV stage for it to work properly,” Chapman said.

The 10 four-stage systems provided water in the kitchens serving tent cities. Workers cooked two meals a day with the clean water, and the people also brought jugs to the kitchen to be filled for drinking in their tents.

Praying ‘God will open up doors’

TBM Water Impact leaders are shaping the next wave of response. Homeless residents are expected to be gradually moved into temporary housing with each unit having its own kitchen, Chapman said.

“My prayer is that God will open up doors for us to put a bucket filter in every temporary housing unit,” Chapman said.

The original filters built in Texas, transported to Turkey and refitted with local parts cost about \$4,000 each. The community-serving filters built in Turkey cost about \$800 each. Bucket filters for individual households would cost about \$40 each.

“There was much we didn’t know at the beginning,” Chapman said. “We needed to respond quickly, and that’s exactly what we did. Over the past few weeks, we have learned a great deal, and the situation is slowly but steadily improving.”