

Earthquake in Iran, Syria and Turkey: Capitalism Means Earthquake, War, Poverty and Barbarism



Internationalist Voice

In recent days, we have seen earthquakes and shocking images of the aftermath of earthquakes in Iran, Syria and Turkey. These images of human desperation and powerlessness before the destructive power of earthquakes - the images tear at our very heartstrings - also reflect the real image of peripheral capitalism in crisis. Therefore, first of all, we share in the grief at the loss of the earthquake victims and express our sympathies to the earthquake survivors.

On 28 January 2023, an earthquake shook Khoy, Iran; the direct victims of the earthquake numbered only a few, but about a 100,000 people were displaced. Cold, snow, homelessness and hunger have created deplorable conditions for these displaced people. Following that, on 6 February 2023, two terrible earthquakes shook Syria and Turkey, in which more than 11,000 people (to date) have lost their lives, tens of thousands of people were injured, and hundreds of thousands of people became homeless. The cold winter has made the rescuers' work difficult and the survivors have little chance of being saved.

Unfortunately, the conditions of the earthquake victims in Syria and Turkey are terrible and painful. The BBC in conversation with a Turkish journalist, Ibrahim Haskoloğlu, said: “People are still alive under the rubble and are sending audio and video messages about their situation to him and other journalists. Ibrahim Haskoloğlu said that they are reporting themselves, but we can't do anything.” [1]

The Islamic bourgeoisie neither wants to nor can help the earthquake victims, and for fear of the formation of anti-regime protests, it has directed against aid getting to the people of Khoy making the conditions of the earthquake victims even worse. Words can barely describe the needs of the earthquake victims in Syria with each gangster controlled area lacking the most basic of facilities – this can only be called brutality and barbarism in its most literal sense. With regard to Turkey's membership in NATO and aid from NATO member countries and Arab countries, the conditions for providing aid in Turkey are a little better than in other countries. However, in his speech, Erdoğan violently threatened the critics of providing relief to the people affected by the earthquake, and then the Turkish security forces arrested the critics on social networks.[2]

Earthquakes, floods, pandemics, etc., are called unexpected events by capitalist governments, which are beyond human power, but the reality is that many “natural” disasters are not unexpected, but they are a product of capitalism. Peripheral capitalism has created very dangerous outcomes for humanity due to the destruction of societal infrastructure. It is not the earthquake that kills people, it is peripheral capitalism that massacres people.

The basic question that arises for every human being is why earthquakes in countries such as Japan, and America cause a few people to be killed, while a similar magnitude earthquake in countries like Iran or Turkey kills thousands of people? Labour is a commodity in a capitalist society, and the value of this commodity in a capitalist society, like any other commodity, is determined by the amount of socially necessary labour that is spent on its reproduction. In other words, the value of labour will be different at any point in time or place (e.g., certain country). In capitalistic metropolitan countries, the reproduction of this commodity (labour force) costs more, and its value is high, so it is more important to preserve it. But in the peripheral countries, the cost of its reproduction is low, so its care and maintenance are not of significant importance.

This is why tens of thousands of people die in environmental disasters such as floods and earthquakes in countries like Iran, Pakistan and Turkey. For example, in the Pakistan earthquake of 2005, 85,000 people were killed, 100,000 people were injured, and 3 million were rendered homeless. But in similar magnitude earthquakes in California in America in 1989, 1992 and 1994, only some people lost their lives.[3]

Earthquakes, pandemics, floods, etc., have become a serious problem not only for the working class but also for the lower classes of society. On the one hand, the deterioration of the infrastructure of peripheral capitalism and, on the other hand, the reactionary policies of the peripheral bourgeoisie have multiplied the effects of these phenomena in peripheral capitalism.

‘Natural disasters’ are an inseparable part of the metabolism of the capitalist system. A system in which the goal of production is not to satisfy human needs, but to obtain maximum profit at any price. It is only the communist society that can reduce the effects of natural disasters to their most minimal, because in that society the drive will not be more profit but the well-being of humans. To end the brutality of capitalism, more than ever, the future of humanity is in the hands of the global working class.

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Notes:

[1] [BBC](#)

[2] [The Guardian](#)

[3] [List of earthquakes in California](#)

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