

RESPONDING TO THE EARTHQUAKE FROM A TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE PERSPECTIVE: POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FEBRUARY 6

MERTCAN DOĞAN
YAREN ARABACI

HÜZÜNÜMÜZ
İSYANIMIZDIR

CONTENTS

INTRO	02
BACKGROUND	04
WHAT IS THE TRANSNATIONAL JUSTICE?	06
THE IMPACT OF NATURAL DISASTERS ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE	08
WHY TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE?	11
EXPERIENCES FROM AROUND THE WORLD: CASES OF HAITI AND NEPAL	13
POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS	19



Research Association for Democracy, Peace and Alternative Politics
Responding to the Earthquake from a Transitional Justice Perspective: Policy Recommendations for February 6

July 2023

Authors

Mertcan Dođan, Yaren Arabacı

Editor

Güneş Daşlı

Proofreading

Sevcan Tiftik

Translation

Ođul K seođlu

Desing

Volkan Muyan

Cover Image

<https://gazetedavul.com/gundem/samandagda-kadinlarin-40-gun-yuruyusu-huznumuz-isyanimizdir-55227.html>

Contact

Kavaklıdere Mah. Beykoz Sk. No: 14/5

Çankaya/Ankara 06540

info@demos.org.tr

www.demos.org.tr

[Twitter](#)

[Facebook](#)

[Instagram](#)

[LinkedIn](#)

This report was issued with the support of Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) Turkey and European Endowment for Democracy (EED).



TABLE OF ABBREVIATIONS

AFAD	Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency
n.d	No date/Date Unknown
CNVJ	Commission nationale de vérité et de justice (The Haitian National Truth and Justice Commission)
CPN-M	Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist)
TJ	Transnational Justice
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
IHD	Human Rights Association
IHSDA	Human Rights Defenders Solidarity Network
STO	Non-Governmental Organization
TIHV	Human Rights Foundation of Turkey
WOREC	Women's Rehabilitation Centre

INTRO

The earthquakes that struck Turkey on February 6th resulted in a death toll numbering in the thousands, the destruction or critical damage of hundreds of buildings, and the displacement of millions of individuals living in the disaster area. In the aftermath of the earthquakes, the lack of access to basic necessities such as shelter, food and water were prominent, search and rescue efforts were insufficient, and steps towards establishing justice did not go further than arrests of several building contractors. Previous earthquake experiences in Turkey, such as the Marmara earthquake of 1999, display that over time, such files are often closed and the policymakers who were responsible are often not litigated. Nevertheless, overlooking the political dimension of a catastrophe also entails disregarding the inadequacies of governments in terms of mitigating risks, devising disaster plans, and undertaking reconstruction efforts. When natural disasters are viewed as inevitable perils, and when only the direct damages caused by the disaster itself are taken into consideration, the damages stemming from the violations by public administrators prior to and following the catastrophe are left unnoticed. Furthermore, the devastating impact of post-disaster rights violations



of groups that are already marginalized and exposed to structural violence is not duly recognized. As the aggrievement in the region intensifies and becomes permanent, the need to explore the means, methods, and strategies for implementing a system of reparative/restorative justice for those impacted by the earthquake becomes much more significant.

As DEMOS Research Association, we posit that the framework presented by transitional justice (TJ), a primary focus of our studies, along with the mechanisms it suggests, can play a role in fostering social justice in the aftermath of natural

catastrophes. We argue that disasters, just as in times of conflict and under authoritarian regimes, bring with them grave human rights violations, and therefore post-disaster access to justice processes should also be approached from a rights-based perspective. It is important to emphasize at the outset of the report that our adoption of the TJ is not based on a belief that it will serve as a “magical solution” to all post-earthquake challenges, but rather due to its potential to stimulate the development of alternative and innovative approaches. Built upon five foundational principles—truth-seeking, criminal justice, reparation, institutional reform, and memorialization—the TJ approach holds potential in providing a roadmap for decision makers and the civil society in navigating the course of necessary action in the aftermath of an earthquake.

In the scope of this report aiming to uncover this potential, we will firstly provide background information and outline transitional justice as an academic field of research and as a field of praxis. Secondly, we will try to assess the impact of natural disasters on human rights and social justice by including different social groups and identities in the analysis. Subsequently, we

will explore the potential application of TJ within the context of an aftermath of an earthquake, considering our present possibilities, and we will incorporate global experiences which can be interpreted through the perspective of TJ. And finally, we will put forth a set of policy suggestions that we deem crucial for the establishment of social justice in the aftermath of the earthquake. Although these suggestions primarily target the civil society and decision-makers, our main goal will be to maintain a plain language within the report and provide a guide that is easy to understand by anyone seeking justice.

Photograph: The 40th day march organized by women in the Samandağ district of Hatay, to commemorate those who have passed away. Source: <https://twitter.com/ekmekvegul/status/1637082574735433728>



1.BACKGROUND



An evaluation of the current situation in Turkey reveals that the humanitarian crisis remains unresolved, with further instances of rights violations surfacing on a daily basis. Issues like the lack of access to clean drinking water, infestation of insects due to rising temperatures, and the emergence of epidemics remains as major concerns for earthquake survivors.

The earthquakes on February 6th resulted in one of the most severe devastations in Turkey's history. According to official data, the death toll exceeded 50,000 people, with over 156,000 buildings either collapsed or damaged to the point of destruction, and millions of individuals were forced to relocate¹. The earthquake brought about severe human rights violations, echoing past occurrences with natural disasters not only in Turkey but also across the globe. Prior to the earthquake, the local population was compelled to inhabit agricultural lands rezoned for development due to governmental policies of income, illegal constructions, or structures that lacked proper earthquake resistance. Despite the accumulation of \$38 billion over the span of 23 years through the earthquake tax, formally referred to as the special communication tax², the negligence of the state before and after the disaster resulted in a surge in fatalities, and further exacerbated the humanitarian crisis. Due to a lack of effective crisis management and disorganized search and rescue efforts, thousands of individuals became trapped beneath debris, resulting in significant numbers of casualties. Those who survived the earthquake not only faced obstacles³ in accessing basic necessities like shelter and food, but also faced discrimination based on their identities.

Following the earthquake, political parties, democratic non-governmental organizations, rights advocacy organizations, and notably the earthquake survivors, began to voice their calls for justice. However, the AKP government, referring to the earthquake as the "disaster of the century" approached the disaster with a fatalistic perspective, and largely disregarded these demands. As the ongoing humanitarian crisis intensified in the earthquake-stricken area, the President Recep

1 "6 Şubat'taki Depremlerde Can Kaybı 50 Bin 500'e Yükseldi". BBC News Türkçe, 7 Mart 2023, <https://www.bbc.com/turkce/articles/c51kdv8d15jo> (Date of access: 26.05.2023).

2 "Deprem vergisi: 23 yılda ne kadar vergi toplandı, bununla kaç konut yapılabilirdi?". Euronews Türkçe, 11 Şubat 2023, <https://tr.euronews.com/2023/02/11/deprem-vergisi-22-yilda-ne-kadar-vergi-toplandi-bununla-kac-konut-yapilabilirdi> (Date of access: 29.05.2023).

3 Burcu Çalık Göçümlü. 2023. "AFAD 'Afetzedede Barınma Desteği' konusunda merak edilen soruları yanıtladı.". (AFAD answers frequently asked questions about 'Housing Support for Disaster Victims') Anadolu Ajansı: Ankara. (Date of access: 31.05.2023).

Tayyip Erdogan said “In a disaster of this magnitude, it is inevitable to experience certain disruptions,” asking for “helallik” (reconciliation), which stood out as a tangible illustration of the government’s approach to prevent any discussion regarding its responsibility. In Hatay, one of the cities which were most severely impacted by the earthquake, people took to the streets, chanting “we won’t accept your apologies” to protest against this declaration by the President. By this way, the discussion around the “settling the accounts vs. reconciliation” which was initiated by the discourse of “helalleşme” brought forth by the main opposition leader Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu prior to the earthquake, and which DEMOS has critically examined in several publications from a perspective of confronting the past, has now broadened to encompass a

pursuit of justice following the earthquakes of February 6th, and once again “helalleşme” was used in the context of major disasters. As we have previously discussed, any efforts to seek reconciliation that does not aim at a sincere confrontation is merely a guarantee for the persistence of impunity.

An evaluation of the current situation in Turkey reveals that the humanitarian crisis remains unresolved, with further instances of rights violations surfacing on a daily basis. Issues like the lack of access to clean drinking water, infestation of insects due to rising temperatures, and the emergence of epidemics remains as major concerns for earthquake survivors. Moreover, the general elections held in May 2023 radically shifted the focus in Turkey, overshadowing the ongoing crisis. The promises made for the earthquake-stricken region during the election period by the AKP government are not yet fulfilled. With the upcoming local elections that are expected to be held on March 31, 2024, it is imperative that the urgent humanitarian crisis in the earthquake-stricken areas is not pushed to the background once again, and that the matter is tackled through a rights-oriented approach.

An evaluation of the current situation in Turkey reveals that the humanitarian crisis remains unresolved, with further instances of rights violations surfacing on a daily basis.



2. WHAT IS TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE?



As the ongoing humanitarian crisis intensified in the earthquake-stricken area, the President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said “In a disaster of this magnitude, it is inevitable to experience certain disruptions,” asking for “helallik” (reconciliation), which stood out as a tangible illustration of the government’s approach to prevent any discussion regarding its responsibility.

Transitional justice (TJ) is an umbrella term that encompasses both legal and non-legal approaches employed to face severe human rights violations that take place within periods of conflict or under authoritarian regimes, with the aim to foster the transition towards a peaceful and democratic society by effectively ending impunity. While TJ is dedicated to a retrospective examination aimed at revealing the truth behind past violations, prosecuting those accountable, and rectifying the damage inflicted by these violations, it also embraces a proactive strategy aimed at preventing future violations.

As a field of research of practice, TJ has been directly shaped through world experiences. When it is considered that the mechanisms and approaches suggested by TJ vary depending on specific contexts, it can be argued that there is no single set of rules that is required to be followed to be able to execute transitional justice. TJ mechanisms might be employed in various combinations, depending on the context and specific requirements

of each country. For example, some countries might prioritize criminal prosecution while others may prioritize truth commissions or compensation programs. Within TJ literature, approaches that focus on civil and political rights such as the right to life and the prohibition of torture, and mechanisms which suggest/impose the same mechanisms across all contexts are often met with criticism. Alternatively, local, context-specific and participatory processes which aim to transform structural inequalities such as discrimination based on gender, race, or ethnicity, and approaches that highlight economic, social and cultural rights gain further significance. However, it can be accepted that TJ has five steps/pillars that are common in many global experiences. These pillars can be listed as follows:

Truth-seeking, refers to the necessity to uncover the truth regarding human rights violations. The most prevalent TJ mechanism to reveal the truth is truth commissions. A truth commission can be employed to collect and assess testimonies

and disclosures, to document violations, identify perpetrators and victims, and analyze the underlying reasons behind violence.

The second pillar, **criminal justice** aims to hold those who cause violations accountable for their actions. Criminal justice can be established via either national or international criminal proceedings depending on the nature and the extent of the crimes committed. Criminal proceedings bear the potential to provide a sense of justice for the victims and survivors of violence, can discourage future violations, and reinforce the trust in the rule of law.

Reparations simply mean compensation and reparation for the victims and survivors of human rights violations. The aim of reparations is to rehabilitate the dignity of the victims/survivors and help them rebuild their lives after the trauma caused by violations. Reparation can be in various forms, such as financial compensation, restitution of material property, rehabilitation and medical aid, formal apologies

or a **non-repetition guarantees**.

Non-repetition guarantees demonstrate a political will to prevent future human rights violations by addressing the root causes of violence. They are promises of “never again.” This promise can be further reinforced with another step of TJ, institutional reforms, such as judiciary and police reforms, constitutional reforms, and other measures aiming to promote a culture of respect for human rights and the rule of law.

Institutional reforms aim to address the root causes of human rights violations by reforming and re-organizing the institutions which were complicit or negligent in causing violations. These reforms might include amendments to laws, policies and practices, as well as training and raising the awareness of staff active in the institutions that caused violations.

Memorialization aims to protect the memory of the past events by acknowledging the suffering of the victims, establishing a common understanding regarding past wrongdoings, uncovering the psychological, emotional and cultural impacts of painful experiences, and by doing so, contributing to social consensus⁴.



*The devastating effects of the earthquake were felt deeply not only in Turkey but also in Syria.
Photo: Abdulmonam Eassa*

4 Lawther, C., Moffett, L., & Jacobs, D. 2017. Research Handbook on Transitional Justice. Edward Elgar Publishing eBooks. <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781781955314>.

3. THE IMPACT OF NATURAL DISASTERS ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Disasters, which profoundly impacts social health, safety, and well-being, and in this context termed as “humanitarian crises,” brings together serious human rights violations. In the aftermath of disasters, the foremost endeavor is the establishment of social justice, which can be defined as a fair and equal social order, in which the significance of every individual’s life is recognized and their rights are safeguarded. The actions of top priority should be ensuring the safety of the survivors, followed by a fair identification of means of disaster recovery, and the implementation of disaster policies which responds to the local needs in the best way possible. Such steps towards alleviating the humanitarian crisis should be followed by building an inclusive process of accessing justice which is shaped by the demands of the survivors.

Factors such as insufficient response and negligence, discrimination in collecting and

distributing disaster relief, and long-term displacement add on top of the primary trauma of witnessing the earthquake. This can create a secondary trauma for disaster survivors, consequently damaging community ties and the trust between the state and citizens. Furthermore, this trauma can be intensified by the slow and ineffective bureaucratic procedures that are required to be followed in order to access assistance after a disaster. The priority of the state and its institutions should be to facilitate bureaucratic processes such as funeral and burial procedures, access to relief, etc. as much as possible in order to avoid reproducing the trauma experienced by the earthquake survivors.

However, unfortunately in practice bureaucracy stands out as an administrative evil, as was the case in the aftermath of February 6th. As a tangible example, with the “Disaster Victim Shelter Support” announced



Photo: <https://time.com/6253346/turkey-earthquake-syria-how-to-help/>



*Afet için Feminist Dayanışma Twitter account

by the Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD) on February 18, 2023, residences that were either destroyed or heavily damaged were put into the e-Government system as “minimally damaged” and the rent aid that disaster survivors were to get was calculated as per this system. The fact that the infrastructure also collapsed after the disaster, and the difficulties in submitting applications for families through the e-Government system due to internet access problems were among other bureaucratic obstacles. Furthermore, numerous survivors were unable to access the remains of their loved ones, lack of transparency and preventative actions by the Institute of Legal Medicine Institute and the Ministry of Justice resulted in the denial of access to information regarding the missing people after the earthquake caused an unethical loss of their right to burial and mourning⁵.

5 Gülsen Solaker. 2023. “Depremde kaybolanlar nerede?”. (Where are the missing in the earthquake?) DW Türkçe. (Date of access: 20.06.2023)

People who struggle to meet their basic needs after a disaster may face a process of “massification” and “generalization” in which they are not seen as individuals, and their personal needs are ignored. This situation might primarily be due to a lack of focus on the specific needs of individuals in emergency management and relief processes, in the face of workload and resource limitations. This process of massification, the trivialization of people’s demands and priorities, can make them feel ignored or undervalued.

3.1. Gender Related Consequences of Disasters

Natural disasters may bring about consequences that perpetuate or exacerbate existing gender inequalities. When disasters are viewed through a perspective of gender, it might be observed that women and LGBTI+ people face unique challenges in accessing rights and services such as health, shelter, and emergency assistance during and

after disasters. In the aftermath of February 6th earthquakes, women and LGBTI+ individuals encountered various challenges related to safety, privacy, and security in temporary shelters. A report titled “Temporary Shelters After the Earthquake: LGBTI+ Survivors of the Earthquake in Diyarbakır” which was published on March 7, 2023, revealed that LGBTI+ individuals encountered discrimination, harassment, and rejection due to their sexual orientation and/or gender identity, within shelters that were segregated based on a binary gender system⁶. One of the most challenging consequences of the earthquake for LGBTI+ persons was the radical increase in house rents in the cities they had to migrate to. When discrimination was added on top of the increased rent costs, LGBTI+ persons had difficulty in finding accommodation in the cities they migrated to, and this problem was only tried to be solved with the collective efforts of LGBTI+ solidarity networks established after the earthquake.

In situations of displacement and forced migration caused by natural disasters, women and girls have become vulnerable against threats of human trafficking, sexual exploitation, and violence. As an example, the United States General Accounting Office highlights that 90% of displaced persons encounter direct physical attacks and threats, while 46% of displaced women report being vulnerable to sexual assault, indicating that the risks women already confront beyond the disaster periods are

6 Atalay Göçer, “Deprem Sonrası Geçici Barınma Mekanları: Diyarbakır’da Depremden Hayatta Kalan LGBTI+’lar”, (Post-Earthquake Temporary Shelters: LGBTI+ Earthquake Survivors in Diyarbakır) Keskesor Amed LGBTI+ Initiative, Cultural Research for Peace, March 7, 2023.

highly intensified after disasters⁷. Furthermore, displaced women frequently encounter challenges in accessing sanitation and health services. For instance, a prevalent issue observed in the aftermath of the February 6 earthquakes was the difficulty in accessing menstrual hygiene products. The demand for sanitary pads was largely overlooked by many institutions, and in situations where such products were supplied, women experienced embarrassment and discomfort when obtaining them, due to the societal taboo surrounding menstruation. The Feminist Solidarity Group for Disaster, formed promptly after the earthquake, acted to address the distinct requirements of women, LGBTI+ people, and children in the region. Most certainly, the challenges encountered by women and LGBTI+ people in the aftermath of disasters extend beyond these examples. Within the scope of this report, we are only able to touch upon a fraction of the existing issues. Nevertheless, even within this concise narrative, it becomes evident that addressing the gender-based consequences of natural disasters for women and LGBTI+ people, and creating specific interventions and policies is of utmost importance.

3.2. Impact of Disasters on Migrants and Refugees

Disasters can have devastating impacts on refugees and migrants, who are already vulnerable groups due to conflict-related displacement or forced migration. These impacts are extremely dominant due to factors such as limited access

to resources, language barriers, legal status, and discrimination. Refugees and migrants frequently find themselves in precarious living conditions, struggling with restricted access to essential services and resources. Disasters can amplify the vulnerability of these groups by further damaging already insufficient infrastructure, causing issues of food insecurity, disrupting access to clean water, electricity, internet, as well as health services. Moreover, language barriers and unfamiliarity with the area can hinder their capacity to receive timely warnings and access assistance. Regrettably, during the February 6 earthquakes, many Syrian refugees residing in the earthquake-affected region experienced all of the aforementioned challenges. After the earthquake, a discourse of victim-blaming, directly accusing Syrian refugees, was employed by the authorities seeking to divert the public attention from the state's failures in crisis management. As a result of such accusations, refugees were denied access to post-earthquake assistance such as food and shelter, and became targets of both physical and psychological abuse. The earthquake's impact on Syrian asylum-seekers, many of whom were forced to engage in informal or precarious employment, resulted in job losses, diminished income, and heightened vulnerability to exploitation. The absence of legal safeguards and access to social safety networks further exacerbated their financial hardships⁸.

**“
People who struggle to meet their basic needs after a disaster may face a process of “massification” and “generalization” in which they are not seen as individuals, and their personal needs are ignored.**

7 Caroline Clarinval, Matthew R. Hunt. 2014. “Disaster, displacement, and justice: Powers and Faden’s theory of social justice and the obligations of non-governmental organizations towards Internally Displaced Persons”. *Bioethica Forum*: Volume 7 / No. 2.

8 Deniz Sert, Didem Daniş, Eda Sevinin. 2023. DURUM TESPİT RAPORU: GÖÇ VE DEPREM. (FACT FINDING REPORT: MIGRATION AND EARTHQUAKE) Association for Migration Research: İstanbul.

4. WHY TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE?

In this report, we maintain that we can harness the opportunities and advantages presented by the framework of transitional justice to facilitate a transitional process to establish social justice. Similar to its role following conflicts, wars, and transitions from authoritarian regimes to democratic systems, transitional justice (TJ) has the potential to act as a leverage in attaining justice after earthquakes. In this context, we argue that approaching disasters through a political lens, rather than solely as natural phenomena, will lend greater significance to the mechanisms put forth by transitional justice. By looking at the disaster through a perspective of human rights, we can observe and highlight that disaster relief provision, shelter establishment, and subsequent reconstruction efforts are intricately intertwined with grave and systematic forms of violence such as discrimination and exploitation. This perspective enables us to take preemptive measures to address such issues. Through a right-based approach, we can also highlight the fact that women and LGBTI+ individuals are subjected to

sexual harassment and abuse in the aftermath of disasters, encountering hate crimes which are frequently met with impunity.

In this context, we are of the opinion that the current criminal justice system might fall short of meeting expectations, similar to post-war periods, that reparations could be inadequate in relation to the inflicted harm, and that alternative methods and tools are required to hold those responsible to account. In the case of Turkey, we observe that the government does not uphold the principle of accountability, and the victims' capacity to pursue justice is hindered by the limitations imposed by the current criminal justice system after the disaster, which is similar to post-conflict and post-war periods. Based on this assessment of needs, we are of the opinion that we can draw upon the TJ approach and its proposed mechanisms. We recognize the paramount significance of actively listening to the voices of disaster survivors, acknowledging their requirements for justice, healing,

and reparation. As the ongoing crisis in the earthquake-stricken region persists, with earthquake survivors endure hardships in accessing clean water and healthy food, we increasingly comprehend the urgency of addressing these demands. We firmly believe that revealing the intersecting layers of truths within disasters will play a pivotal role in not only establishing justice, but also in preventing the recurrence of losses and rights violations in prospective disasters in an earthquake-prone region like Turkey, and in turn, contributing to rebuilding social trust.

We also hold the opinion that reparation programs, one of the most significant mechanisms of TJ, can play a central role in post-disaster periods. If inclusive and needs-oriented reparation programs are established in collaboration with the governmental and non-governmental organizations, the challenges confronted by displaced persons can be effectively relieved in reconstruction processes. Reparation programs not only

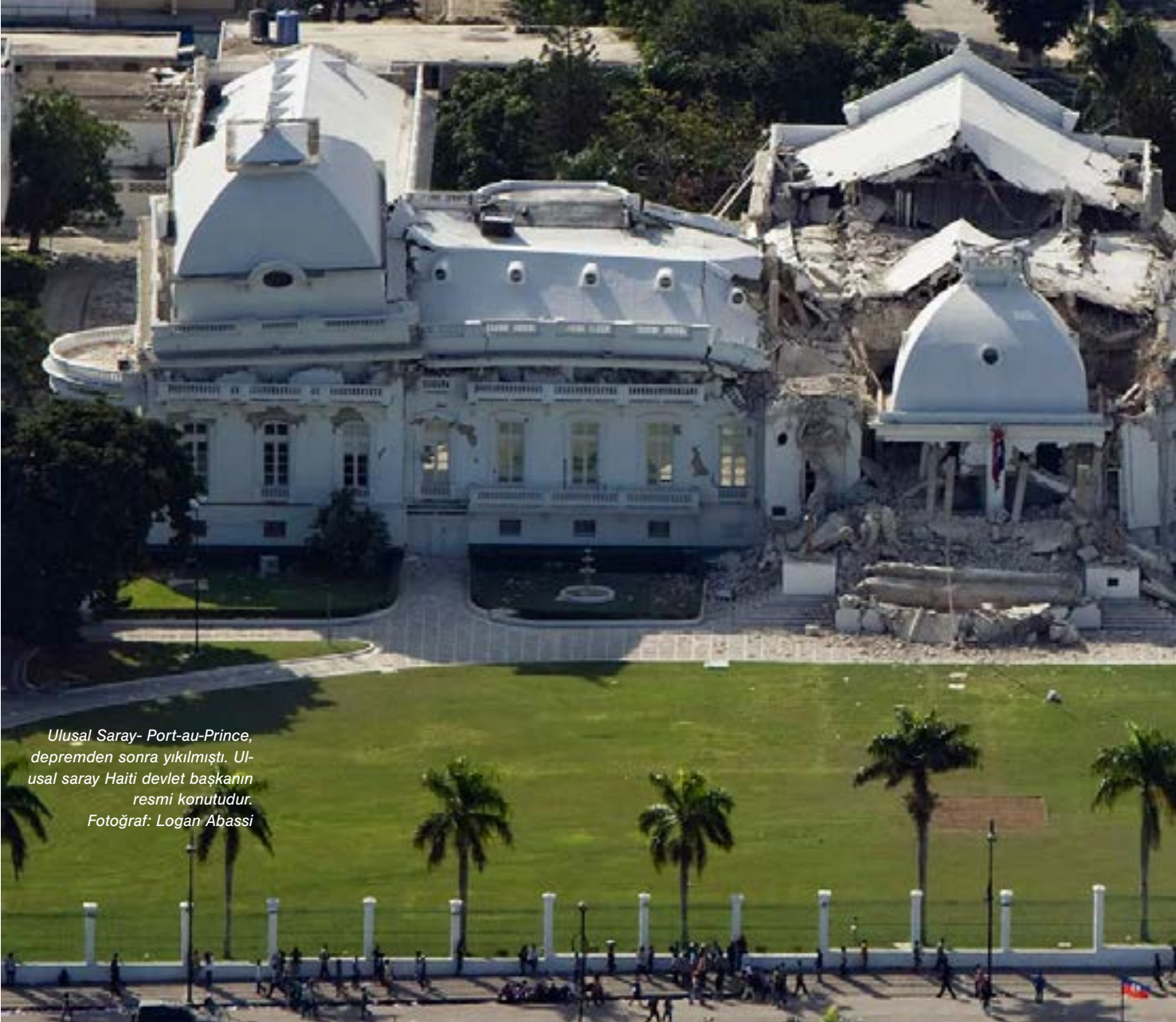


provide material compensation, but they also come forward with a capacity to foster collective healing. Formation of commissions to seek and reveal the truth, even if not as formalized as a truth commission, perhaps in the form of a parliamentary commission of inquiry, can address injustices after disasters to aid in documenting and rectifying violations. Earthquake investigation commissions, which had been repeatedly formed on various occasions in the past, might this time work to reveal the truth. These commissions could be endowed with the authority to probe injustices in the context of disasters, and oversee whether governments execute disaster planning and reconstruction efforts with upholding the principle of accountability, and by taking the truth into account. While acknowledging the significance of official, external institutions such as central courts in managing

administrative procedures, an alternative approach could involve considering the suitability of survivor-led initiatives for social restoration and support, with a focus on proactive disaster risk reduction. Memorial ceremonies and various other forms of commemorative practices also may encourage acknowledging the losses of victims, and can prompt a reevaluation of official policies⁹.

9 Megan Bradley. 2017. "More than Misfortune: Recognizing Natural Disasters as a Concern for Transitional Justice". *International Journal of Transitional Justice*, 2017, 11, 400–420, doi: 10.1093/ijtj/ijx024.

5. EXPERIENCES FROM AROUND THE WORLD: CASES OF HAITI AND NEPAL



*Ulusal Saray- Port-au-Prince,
depremden sonra yıkılmıştı. Ul-
usal saray Haiti devlet başkanın
resmi konutudur.
Fotoğraf: Logan Abassi*

“

Prior to the earthquake, like Turkey and Syria, Haiti was not prepared to deal with such a disaster, and this absence of preparation created further crises in emergency response, rescue operations and providing relief to affected groups. The earthquake also exposed structural and systemic problems in Haiti, such as corruption, poor governance and lack of infrastructure.

Among experiences from other parts of the world, there are no cases directly linked to transitional justice or instances where TJ mechanisms were directly implemented following a disaster. Nonetheless, there are several significant cases in which practices advocated by a transitional justice perspective have been employed to establish post-disaster justice, characterized by a rights-based recovery. We believe that drawing lessons from these experiences and discussing best practices can serve as inspiration for the pursuit of post-disaster justice in Turkey. However, we do not intend to confine the report solely

to good practices; we also aim to address challenges, obstacles, and limitations. Naturally, each locality must be assessed considering its distinct circumstances. In fact, one of the pivotal aspects underscored in this report is the importance of constructing post-disaster recovery processes through a bottom-up approach. Consequently, comprehending the specific locality, listening to those who have been negatively impacted, and taking actions that are aligned with necessities and demands should be the priorities for both decision-makers and civil society.

Nevertheless, within this report, we endeavored to assess the situations in Haiti and Nepal, both of which bear resemblances to the Turkish context, where the primary focus lies in uncovering the negligence that contributed to post-disaster violations. We believe that these two countries share similarities with Turkey, as well as with Syria, which was significantly impacted by the earthquakes but often remains overlooked, particularly due to its recent history of conflict. Furthermore, none of these societies can be categorized as “post-conflict” societies, in the sense that they have not yet undergone any process of reconciliation following the conflict or war. In these instances, social conflict persists, albeit in different forms. For individuals and communities who experience violence historically and systematically due to ongoing conflicts, natural disasters rub salt into open wounds. We believe that the cases of Haiti and Nepal, and the efforts made by decision-makers and civil society organizations in these cases to address the wounds exacerbated by the disaster, together can serve as a guide for a process of recovery and justice in Turkey.



5.1. Haiti

On January 12, 2010, Haiti experienced a 7.0 magnitude earthquake, the epicenter being the capital city of Port-au-Prince. The earthquake inflicted extensive damage in the country, causing around 220,000 deaths, hundred-thousands of injuries, displacing more than a million of individuals. The earthquake destroyed a large number of buildings, including government buildings, hospitals and schools, with devastating effects on the Haitian society, who had been struggling with increasing poverty already before the disaster. Prior to the earthquake, like Turkey and Syria, Haiti was not prepared to deal with such a disaster, and this absence of preparation created further crises in emergency response, rescue operations and providing relief to affected groups. The earthquake also exposed structural and systemic problems in Haiti, such as corruption, poor governance and lack of infrastructure.

Haiti's process of reconstruction was slow and challenging, and primary issues were the provision of basic services, rebuilding houses, and providing opportunities of employment for groups that lost their means of livelihood after the earthquake. Beside all issues, perhaps the most important challenge for Haiti was to restore the judicial system, and establish the rule of law, transparency and accountability. The Ministry of Justice and the National Palace which hosted the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeal, and the Courts of First Instance were destroyed by the earthquake. Numerous courthouses and police stations were also damaged, and judges, lawyers, prosecutors, ministry employees and police officers were among those who lost their lives. Furthermore, nearly 5,000

prisoners escaped from prisons in several regions of the country¹⁰.

One of the main areas of struggle was to establish the rule of law, and it wasn't solely due to the earthquake's disruption of the legal system. The Haitian society had been struggling for a long time with the traumatic memory of French colonialism, political and economic instability, violence, and social inequalities. The authoritarian Duvalier regime, which lasted from 1957 to 1986, left a legacy of human rights abuses, political repression, and poverty in the country. After the regime was ended by civil insurrection, the country started its painful transition to democracy. The slow and sickly process was interrupted by a military coup on September 29, 1991, and Haiti's first democratically elected president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide was exiled. However, he returned to his country in 1994 with the support of the United States, and he came back to power to complete his term in office¹¹.

A truth commission named The Haitian National Truth and Justice Commission (CNVJ) was established in 1995. The aim of the commission was to reveal the truth regarding violations of human rights committed between the years of 1991-1994 during the military junta, to end impunity and to reform the justice system in Haiti. CNVJ suffered from political interventions and limited resources, however worked towards documenting the violations, hearing the testimonies of the victims, and analyzing the causes of the violence.

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ Dupuy, A. 2008. "From Jean-Bertrand Aristide to Gerard Latortue: The Unending Crisis of Democratization in Haiti". *Journal of Latin American Anthropology*, 10 (1), 186-205. <https://doi.org/10.1525/jlca.2005.10.1.186>

The final report was published by the CNVJ in 1996, and it featured a comprehensive set of recommendations, including compensations, institutional and administrative reforms, criminal prosecution and non-repetition measures. The report underlined recommendations such as proper training for law enforcement officials to tackle issues such as sexual violence against women, and efforts to establish the independence of the judiciary, and to fight corruption. However, the political will to implement those recommendations was feeble, and there were disagreements within the Aristide government, questioning the accuracy of the commission's findings. Therefore, CNVJ's recommendations were never properly implemented.

Haiti was compelled to fight against structural problems brought upon by an intense humanitarian crisis, before it had a chance to face the burdens of its past. Under such circumstances, a process of legal reforms was initiated which displayed some progress, albeit slow. The reforms were taking shape by the very recommendations provided by the final report by CNVJ. Within this context, issues such as amendments to laws, building an independent judiciary, rebuilding legal frameworks, and fighting corruption were dwelled upon. In addition, with institutional capacity-building initiatives the focus was brought on proper training for judges, prosecutors and lawyers, and improving administration. This was exactly the kind of institutional reform process that the CNVJ had recommended. Additional measures were also taken to speed up the access to justice, legal assistance services were expanded, and further steps were taken to establish mobile courts. In this way, demands, requests and complaints of the people

living in the earthquake-inflicted areas were swiftly collected and documented.

Had there been the political will to implement the CNVJ recommendations during the 14-year period before the earthquake, and if the society had embraced the CNVJ, the earthquake would not have been necessary for such steps to be taken, and probably, the disaster would not have gone beyond a humanitarian crisis to cause a devastation on the system as a whole. However, despite such negative experiences, it became clear that the recommendations by the CNVJ, which discovered structural problems in the country in the 90s, did in fact have the potential to play a transformative role in Haiti's post-earthquake recovery. Although the earthquake further exacerbated pre-existing problems, it also presented Haiti with an opportunity to rebuild a more just and resilient society. In this respect, although the path to a holistic implementation is still challenging, the determination and resilience of the Haitian society, if combined with a support from the international

community, can still offer hope for Haiti. By ensuring that the CNVJ recommendations are fully integrated into the disaster recovery process, Haiti can potentially create a society that embraces the principles of truth, justice and accountability, and ultimately promote sustainable development and a strong democracy. Yet unfortunately, despite spending billions of dollars, Haiti is still struggling to recover, due to the weakness of public institutions and the disorganized situation of national and international relief efforts, especially of its NGOs. The country remains fragile in the face of natural disasters, and its population currently grows around its capital without any proper policies of urban planning¹².

Through an examination of the Haiti experience, it is clearly visible that structural reforms and a strong institutional capacity

are required to be able to deal with the consequences of natural disasters. Also for Turkey, the priority needs to be placed on taking steps to reinforce the legal system, fight against corruption, and establish the rule of law. Only in this way Turkey can minimize the devastating effects and the suffering caused by disasters, so that the Turkish society can be empowered to build a safer, more resilient and just future.

5.2. Nepal

On April 25, 2015, a 7.8 magnitude earthquake struck Nepal's Gorkha region, resulting in the death of nearly 9,000 people, leaving more than 20,000 injured, and forcing hundreds of thousands of Nepali people while to displace, leaving them homeless after the destruction of 750,000 houses. The earthquake profoundly affected the people who had not yet recovered from the traumas of the civil war which ended in

12 Sael, E. (n.d.). A decade after the earthquake, Haiti still struggles to recover. The Conversation. <https://theconversation.com/a-decade-after-the-earthquake-haiti-still-struggles-to-recover-129670> (Date of access: 10.06.2023)

Photo: <https://www.actionaidusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Volunteers-save-bricks-Vlad-Sokhin-150945scr.jpg>



2006. In this context, we think it is essential to briefly examine the civil war and the events leading up to it, to be able to get a better comprehension regarding the impact of the earthquake on Nepali people, their political instability, and the injustices related to the disaster.

After the monarchical government suppressed the communist activities in the country and prevented the Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (CPN-M) from participating in the 1994 elections, tensions between the government and the CPN-M escalated into a civil war in 1996¹³. Meanwhile, the Communists gained the support of the Nepali people living in poverty in the rural areas by fighting corruption, poverty and social injustice in the country, with the aim of abolishing the monarchy and establishing a people's republic. The initial years of the insurgency were marked by violence and human rights violations committed by Nepali security forces. When the Communists maintained control over significant portions of Nepal, majorly in rural areas, and several other political parties aligned with the Communists to form a united front against the monarchy, King Gyanendra stepped down in April 2006, and a peace agreement was signed between the newly established democratic government and the CPN-M¹⁴.

For almost a decade, the disaster response plan was overshadowed by the pressing agenda of constitutional politics. The incompetence of emergency relief and rescue teams, the mobilized army and police forces and inadequate planning was

13 Briana Mawby, Anna Applebaum. 2018. "Rebuilding Nepal: Women's Roles in Political Transition and Disaster Recovery". Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security.

14 Ibid

referred to as the "silent killer" of the civilian population¹⁵. It can be argued that in the country that had been governed by a largely unaccountable political system, the responsibility for the damage caused by the earthquake lies with the government which failed in the redistribution and mobilization of resources, coupled with the lack of earthquake-resistant buildings and infrastructure, rather than the natural disaster itself¹⁶. During the subsequent period, disparities persisted in the allocation of disaster aid, favoring individuals with political affiliations to the government, and this further exacerbated the challenges faced by earthquake survivors.

It can be stated that women were particularly affected by this earthquake. Faced with a myriad of challenges, women and feminist civil society organizations (NGOs) focusing on women's issues played a pivotal role in addressing the specific needs of the region during the post-conflict and post-disaster reconstruction processes, with their significant role in fostering sustainable peace and supporting the country's reorganization. We emphasize the key advocacy efforts discussed in this report:

Women's organizations engaged in rights advocacy on national and international levels, both for the establishment of justice and for a long-term change that ensures non-repetition.

NGOs such as WOREC, Saathi, Nagarik Aawaz and Action Works have worked to hold

15 Krishna K. Shrestha, Basundhara Bhattarai, Hemant R. Ojha, Ayusha Bajracharya. 2018. "Disaster Justice in Nepal's Earthquake Recovery". International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijdr.2018.10.006>.

16 Ibid

the government accountable through activities of reporting and monitoring, to create resources that connect victims with transitional justice, to establish courts to guide their pursuit of rights, to build networks between state institutions, local organizations and women to ensure women's access to justice¹⁷. During the earthquake period, the activities of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) remained incomplete and it was much less active than intended, as it was often influenced by the political climate in Nepal. However Nepali NGOs transformed themselves into bridges between the victims and the formal justice process. The afore-mentioned organizations escalated the testimonies and experiences of the survivors of the disaster and violence to the TRC, lodged applications to the Local Peace Committee regarding the rights violations during the conflict, and have successfully connected the people affected by the disaster with the legal courts the TRC might organize¹⁸.

The primary lobbying efforts of women's NGOs focused on several key areas, including the Local Peace Committees, increasing women's representation in the TRC and the cabinet, extending the period of limitation for sexual crimes, granting property rights to women, and ensuring that families can receive assistance from the government, as well as receiving help from the NGOs. Many women also expressed the view that significant progress has been made in terms of women's rights since the end of

17 Briana Mawby, Anna Applebaum. 2018. "Rebuilding Nepal: Women's Roles in Political Transition and Disaster Recovery". Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security.

18 Susan Risal. 2016. "Interview with the research team, 'A Year after the Earthquakes'". UN Women. (Date of access: 06.12. 2023)

the conflict and the earthquake. Developments such as an emergency fund for widows, a minimum of 33% female participation in Local Peace Committees, lower taxes on land registered on women, and more senior political positions for women in Nepal could be listed as positive results of women's quest for justice.

Post-disaster rights struggle of women's NGOs in Nepal shows us that it might not always be viable to implement access to justice through formal mechanisms, especially in conflict-affected areas. During the post-disaster period, the pursuit of truth by discriminated groups can be obscured by both conflict and disaster. It can be crucial for these groups to have the opportunity to express their truths, identify cases of violation and negligence, assess the need for reparations, in order to be able to persist in pursuit of justice. In the case of Nepal, WOREC's work towards documenting violence against women in the aftermath of disasters has resulted in the widening of the window for reporting sexual assault, which has been a significant gain for truth recording, and we believe that a similar approach is highly valuable for Turkey as well. We also anticipate that NGOs with expertise in the ongoing conflict and discrimination in the disaster-affected region, along with strategies to fight against these issues, can play a role in post-disaster recovery processes by considering the unique conditions and requirements of the area. We reiterate the significance of the advocacy efforts that these NGOs will undertake to address the specific post-disaster reparation needs of groups facing systematic discrimination. In Nepal, NGOs employed reporting, monitoring, fundraising, and networking strategies to secure women's

access to justice, bridging the gap between survivors and the formal justice system in the aftermath of the earthquake, and we hold the belief that these approaches are of paramount significance for facilitating access to justice in the aftermath of disasters in Turkey.

6. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for the Parliament:

1. Earthquake regulations should be revised to place accountability and the supremacy of human rights at the center.

Amendments to existing laws and regulations for urban planning and disaster management should address issues such as development in earthquake-prone areas, updating construction standards, and administrative inspections. Urban development policies should be revised based on current scientific data, and stricter standards should be set to ensure the earthquake resistance of buildings. Additionally, inspection mechanisms should be strengthened to ensure regular compliance with these standards in construction. However, this by itself is insufficient.

Concrete steps must be taken to prevent negligence, lack of planning, and structural injustice from being overlooked under concepts such as fate or disaster, and to ensure that they do not happen again in future disasters. It should be recognized that the earthquake tax (special communication tax) collected from the public since 1999 was

not used effectively in disasters such as the February 6 earthquakes, and this tax should be abolished. Instead, pre-disaster risk analysis and disaster planning should be strengthened. This planning should be conducted in a manner that accounts for factors such as gender, ethnicity, socio-economic conditions, class, and cultural diversity.

2. Accountability is essential to ensure the effective enforcement of laws and adherence to regulations. In the aftermath of February 6, serving justice requires holding accountable not only those within the construction sector, such as construction companies or contractors who prioritized profit over proper materials but also those with political responsibility for negligence. This includes local governments that granted building permits for land not zoned for development and the central bureaucracy responsible for setting national standards and conducting inspections. Cooperation between supervisory institutions and the judiciary should be ensured, effective investigation and prosecution processes should be conducted.

The establishment of independent courts can provide a reliable legal foundation for disaster survivors seeking justice. Following the Haitian example, efforts should commence to reform the dysfunctional judicial system, particularly by primarily addressing corruption. The experience in Haiti underlines the importance of the justice system in post-disaster recovery. Turkey should focus on institutional reforms in its justice system to effectively address the damages caused by disasters and rebuild public trust. This should include items such as revising legislation, ensuring the independence of the judiciary, and fighting corruption. Additionally, given the prevailing mistrust of the state, civil society organizations and international entities should closely monitor the progress of judicial reform efforts in Turkey. Such external monitoring and active engagement can increase the transparency of the reform process, promote accountability and increase public trust in the justice system.

3. Revised legislation must uphold the supremacy of human rights and

should not tolerate any form of discrimination in the provision of post-earthquake assistance, shelter, and reconstruction.

Severe criminal sanctions should be applied to all instances of discrimination and violence against earthquake survivors. In this context, adopting a gender-oriented approach to earthquakes becomes a fundamental necessity. It should be primarily acknowledged that disasters affect women and LGBTI+ individuals differently, resulting in distinct consequences in their lives, and that gender norms directly influence the outcomes of disasters. Disaster response strategies should be formulated by incorporating gender analysis, guided by this acknowledgment. Both before and after disasters reliable, disaggregated gender-based data should be collected and recorded.

4. Transparency should be upheld as a guiding principle in the post-disaster data collection processes. Survivors and casualties of the disaster should be identified, and data about these individuals should be made accessible. Data demonstrating the allocation of aid from the state, non-governmental organizations, or individuals to disaster survivors should also be made transparent and accessible. Transparent access to this data is crucial, as it also plays a vital role in post-disaster truth-seeking processes. In addition, providing platforms for disaster

survivors to share their experiences helps reveal the complex and multifaceted truths emerging from the disaster, and this challenges the state's imposition of a singular truth and facilitates the pursuit of justice.

5. A commission should be formed to oversee the establishment and operation of post-earthquake justice mechanisms and to conduct truth-seeking investigations. Although a comprehensive truth commission may not be realistic under existing circumstances, setting up a parliamentary inquiry commission can ensure taking swift action. This commission can work to uncover the truth about events before and after the earthquake, determine the scale of violations, identify the victims and perpetrators, and ultimately report the obtained information. Within this commission, sub-commissions can be set up on a provincial level to evaluate the unique conditions of each locality and collect the survivors' testimonies directly in the region, minimizing bureaucratic hurdles. With this approach, an accessible process that does not exclude survivors and victims, recognizes their agency and ensuring their active participation can be established. Additionally, observations and experiences of NGOs working in the field should be necessarily considered by the commissions.

6. The commission's authority should be grounded in principles of independence and impartiality. Mechanisms should be provided to enable such a commission's access to necessary resources for research, the right of witnesses to testify, and the collection and evaluation of relevant evidence. It is also of utmost importance that the activities of the commission are conducted in a transparent manner, its findings are shared with the public, and its recommendations are respected by the government. The responsibility for monitoring the implementation of the recommendations primarily falls on the political opposition. Opposition parties should oversee the process with a collective political commitment.

7. The government, as well as the Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD) under the Ministry of Interior, and local governments should issue apologies to citizens for the negligence and the violations of their rights both before and after the earthquake. As previously discussed in recommendation 3, the secondary trauma resulting from negligence before and after the earthquake, particularly in the disaster management process, erodes the trust between citizens and the state. An official apology can serve as an initial step towards normalizing the relations between the state and

its citizens. Nonetheless, an official apology alone will not suffice to address the reparations required by earthquake survivors. In this scope, it is crucial to develop and execute a comprehensive reparations program.

8. To acknowledge the suffering of earthquake survivors and compensate them for their material and moral loss, a comprehensive reparations program should be formulated. This program should aim to support the recovery process of the earthquake survivors in several branches. It should provide earthquake survivors with fair and swift compensation for their material losses. The state should bear a significant portion of the costs needed for repair or reconstruction of damaged housing. In current practice, victims are provided support in the form of loans, which is not a fair method for the thousands of citizens who not only lost their homes but also their workplaces, or became disabled and unable to work as a result of the earthquake. Due to these reasons, the reparation program should be based on an assessment of actual needs, conducted through the commissions recommended here. A human-oriented approach should be adopted to meet the unique needs of earthquake survivors. Moreover, the program should not be restricted to addressing material damages, but it should also establish psycho-social support mechanisms to help earthquake survivors cope

with the trauma and losses they had to endure.

Recommendations for Local Governments:

1. The coordination capacity of local governments should be enhanced for efforts towards community-level relief, recovery and access to justice. After an earthquake, local governments play an important role in evaluating the needs of the community, managing resources and ensuring an equitable recovery process. Local government staff should be trained on post-earthquake recovery practices. Such trainings would strengthen the capability of local government staff for assessing earthquake risks, emergency planning and providing support specifically tailored for the needs of communities. The central government should allow local governments to manage post-earthquake recovery efforts more effectively by allocating more resources and expanding their scope of authority.

2. The cooperation and coordination between the local governments in the region should be strengthened. Strong mechanisms of cooperation and coordination between local governments ensure rapid responses to emergencies. They enable them to work together to meet urgent post-earthquake needs, take security measures, and provide coordinated efforts for relief. Strengthening the cooperation and

coordination between local governments creates space for mutual exchange of know-how and experience. Local governments that are successful in post-earthquake recovery can guide others and share best practices. This helps to develop better strategies and avoid repeating past mistakes.

3. Local governments should encourage the active participation of local population in the post-earthquake recovery process. Local governments should work in cooperation with the truth commission(s) to be created to uncover the truth, and to ensure the participation of local people in decision-making processes, so that the needs of earthquake survivors can be better understood. The reconstruction of disaster-affected cities should extend beyond quick debris removal and merely constructing new buildings. It should be acknowledged that they are not merely physical buildings that are destroyed by the earthquake, but they are important structures for Arabic, Kurdish, Alevi, Christian, Nusayri, Circassians, and Armenian communities to sustain their cultural existence. Reconstruction efforts that are based on this acknowledgement should focus on preserving existing cultural diversity, and not erasing it. As the March 2024 local elections draw near, it is imperative to conduct election campaigns tailored to the unique requirements of each locality in that respect.

4. Local governments should include memorialization initiatives into their reconstruction processes. To uncover the emotional and cultural impact of the suffering and allow earthquake survivors to memorize the losses of lives in dignity, memory sites/spaces can be created in earthquake-affected cities. Local governments can engage in activities such as building monuments and establishing memory museums while reconstructing the cities. When creating such spaces, the wishes of survivors, their own commemorative rituals and cultural differences between local communities should be considered and valued. Memorialization efforts are of utmost value to look to the future with hope while keeping the memory of the painful past.

Recommendations for Civil Society:

1. For both pre-disaster planning and disaster response processes, the solidarity network created by civil society should not be rejected. It should be acknowledged that each civil society organization has strengths and valuable skills in their respective fields of activity, and mutual exchange of information and solidarity should be ensured both between the state and NGOs, and also between separate NGOs to reinforce already existing contacts.

2. Civil society organizations should advocate for the rights and interests of earthquake survivors and promote

their right to truth, justice and reparation. In this scope, rights-focused organizations can organize campaigns to raise public awareness, and engage in national and international advocacy activities both individually and collectively. In the event that commissions to investigate the truth about the earthquake are established, civil society should develop policies and build up pressure on decision-makers to ensure their participation in the process. Psycho-social support should be provided or sustained for the affected communities, as well as legal support to guide survivors through bureaucratic processes. It is critical that human rights organizations and networks such as the Human Rights Association (İHD), the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey (TİHV) and the Human Rights Defenders Solidarity Network (IHSDA) build this process in solidarity with rights-based NGOs engaged in humanitarian aid activities in the field to support the search for rights of disaster-affected communities.

3. Civil society organizations should document and archive earthquake-related human rights violations, casualties, and destruction for potential future transitional processes. Documentation and archiving work by the civil society will help record the destruction, loss of life, and human rights violations caused by the political aspects, as well as natural aspects of disasters. Issues such as the disparities in

accessing search and rescue and the survivors' basic needs after the disaster, and discrimination based on identities of the survivors should be studied, as such documentation of truth would give strength to the pursuit by the survivors for justice. Such studies would guide the parliament and local governments through developing policies to reduce/prevent destruction and human rights violations after future disasters. Furthermore, in the event that a truth investigation commission is established, collected data can also serve as resource for the activities of such a commission.

4. As demonstrated by the post-earthquake experience in Nepal, the role of civil society organizations is essential for the pursuit of justice and reparation processes of women and LGBTI+ people. In this context, the aim is to strengthen NGOs to meet the post-disaster needs of women and LGBTI+ people, and support them in their pursuit of justice. By providing support such as financial resources, capacity building programs and participation mechanisms to organizations, the efficiency of NGOs should be enhanced so that they can respond to the needs of disaster survivors, and make that the voices heard by larger parts of the society. This policy would strengthen women's and LGBTI+ people's access to justice and therefore support social justice.

Recommendations for International Civil Society:

1. International civil society can provide capacity building initiatives for local civil society organizations involved in justice efforts after the earthquake. In this scope, they can provide training towards documentation, advocacy, and community involvement. They can support capacity building activities, instead of solely allocating resources for humanitarian relief projects. In this context, international organizations with the capacity to provide humanitarian assistance and those offering institutional support can make a principal distinction in resource distribution. In this way, the empowerment of local NGOs to initiate a process to access justice following the earthquake will not be pushed to the background.

2. International civil society can facilitate means of sharing information and exchanging experiences between Turkey and other countries that experienced similar post-disaster processes. Such exchanges would illustrate how civil society organizations operating in disaster-affected areas address the needs of survivors in their post-disaster activities, and how they contribute to recovery and disaster-planning processes. Civil society organizations and decision-makers in Turkey can benefit from this exchange of experiences regarding the necessary steps to be taken, and by examining these experiences in their specific socio-cultural contexts, they can devise novel methods

of managing post-disaster processes. An exchange of knowledge and experience allows communities with backgrounds in different cultural and geographical contexts to understand the challenges they face and share their suggestions for solutions. Such a process can contribute to an equitable and sustainable post-disaster recovery through joint projects, technical assistance and equitable distribution of resources.

3. International civil society can pursue advocacy efforts and lobbying activities with decision-makers, to support an implementation of justice mechanisms after the earthquake in Turkey. Through advocacy efforts, these organizations can highlight the rights of earthquake survivors, put pressure on decision-makers to ensure justice, and promote a fair implementation of laws and policies in post-earthquake processes. In addition, international NGOs can engage in lobbying activities to make sure that the voices of earthquake survivors are heard, to raise awareness among decision-makers, and to encourage policy revisions.