Statements by Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock and Interior Minister Nancy Faeser prior to their departure for Turkey

2023-02-21

Foreign Minister

Baerbock

:

Even from a distance, the devastation caused by the terrible earthquakes with a current death toll of almost 50,000 is absolutely staggering and extremely distressing. Behind each and every victim, there is a person’s fate, there are mourning families and those left behind not knowing where to turn. All across Germany, our thoughts are with them and we feel for the mourning, the injured and those in Turkey and Syria who have lost their homes in the quakes. My colleague Nancy Faeser and I are travelling to the region to make clear to the people that our sympathy does not stop at just words and will also not wane when the disaster and its repercussions are no longer front-page news. We know that the people in the region will need tremendous strength and energy for the reconstruction process. After the rapid practical assistance that the Federal Government provided directly after the quakes by sending rescue teams, transporting aid, facilitating visas and setting up a mobile visa application unit, we now together want to see the situation on the ground, listen to those affected and look at how we can best continue to help and play our part to give the people hope for the future. We are of course fully aware that the circumstances in Turkey and Syria are very different – not least due to the ongoing conflict in Syria and because the Syrian regime uses international aid efforts for its own ends. And even if, for this reason, the ways and means of providing assistance are very different, our solidarity with those affected is certainly not – no matter where they live.

Federal Minister of the Interior Faeser:

We are travelling to Turkey today to demonstrate our deeply felt solidarity in light of the many lives lost to the devastating earthquake. We want to coordinate our further aid and support as effectively as possible. It is heartbreaking for us all to see the tremendous destruction and boundless suffering that this earthquake has caused in Turkey and Syria.

It was also very important to us as Germany’s Federal Government to offer broad-based help immediately and in close coordination with the Turkish authorities. Helpers from our Federal Agency for Technical Relief, our Federal Police and the relief organisation International Search and Rescue Germany – who have experience in areas affected by earthquakes – have done everything possible to save lives and rescue survivors from the rubble.

The survivors who have lost everything urgently need shelter from the winter cold. This is the most urgent form of relief that we can currently provide on the ground. Germany’s Bundeswehr has carried out 20 flights to Turkey, delivering more than 340 tonnes of relief supplies. This specifically includes supplies provided by the Federal Agency for Technical Relief, the Federal Police, the Federal Ministry of Health, and various federal states, which are showing solidarity and providing support. Today the German Air Force is delivering another 13 tonnes of supplies to Turkey, including 100 tents, 400 camp beds and more than 1000 sleeping bags. The Federal Agency for Technical Relief is providing northwest Syria with 73 tonnes of relief supplies, in particular tents, blankets, heaters and generators.

All of this is an act of European solidarity and of helping in an emergency. The

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Civil Protection Mechanism has shown that in a crisis, many countries can react to natural disasters in a quick, targeted and unbureaucratic way, and stand by each other in a spirit of solidarity.

Overview "Newsroom"

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