

Earthquake: US Sanctions Preventing Syria From Receiving Aid - FM

Syrian Foreign Minister Faisal Mekdad tells Al Mayadeen about the latest developments in Syria in light of the earthquake that struck the country.

By [Al Mayadeen](#)

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The earthquake that hit Syria is a major catastrophe, and what exacerbated the issue is the status quo in Syria due to its war on terrorism and its backers, Syrian Foreign Minister Faisal Mekdad told Al Mayadeen on Tuesday.

"The sanctions on Syria made the disaster all the worse," Mekdad said. "The state is following up on the mobilization of aid domestically and abroad, and President Bashar Al-Assad requested that all the state's capabilities be employed in search and rescue operations."

"All of the hospitals in Syria have been asked to treat earthquake victims," Mekdad said, noting that Syria had asked through its ambassadors for international aid to confront the disaster it has been struck with.

"Many countries have sent aid to Syria, and we thank all the leaders who contacted us, sending their condolences and expressing their will to give us aid," the Syrian top diplomat told Al Mayadeen. "The situation is very hard, and regardless of the amount of aid sent to Syria, it needs much more."

"Aid from Europe does not need a request and bureaucracy, as humanitarian aid is not subject to sanctions," Mekdad explained. "Humanitarian aid is not subject to sanctions in accordance with international laws, so this is not an excuse."

Some Arab states were quick to provide aid while others pledged to send assistance, he said. "Syria has suffered from double standards despite there being numerous countries in contact with Damascus through back channels."

"Western countries provided millions of dollars to terrorism and failed, and now they

dream of rapprochement with Syria,” the foreign minister stressed, underlining that “Syria is steadfast in the face of terrorism, and it is suffering as a result of the earthquake, as thousands need relief.”

US sanctions standing in Syria’s way

Commenting on the harsh situation in Syria due to the war and blockade, Mekdad told Al Mayadeen that terrorist groups destroyed all of Syria’s capabilities, from vehicles to cranes and bulldozers, among other equipment, at a time when the competent authorities need them because people are trapped under the rubble.

“The US sanctions are prohibiting Syria from accessing anything, including medicine,” the top diplomat said.

The Syrian official directed a message to US President Joe Biden, asking:

“Didn’t the Syrian state open border crossings to allow humanitarian aid to make it to armed-groups-held areas.”

“The aid making it to areas held by armed groups were being sold to the people,” he said. “They planned that aid only makes it through to armed groups and terrorists, and Syria is ready to let aid make it to all regions on the condition that it does not make it into the hands of terrorists.”

Syria received no communication from Turkey

Mekdad told Al Mayadeen that Syria received no communication from Turkey as he was touching on coordination with Ankara under these circumstances. “There was no coordination between Syria and Turkey, even on the humanitarian level – though it is needed.”

[#Syrian](#) Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates Faisal Mekdad: "We didn't receive any communications from [#Turkey](#), and there are efforts exerted by our [#Iranian](#) and [#Russian](#) allies." [#SyriaEarthquake](#) <https://t.co/M6DcMenzay>

— Al Mayadeen English (@MayadeenEnglish) [February 7, 2023](#)

“There are efforts being made by the Iranian and Russian allies to help,” Mekdad revealed. “Iran desires to join the joint efforts.”

He also commented on the claims of Syria having asked for aid from the Israeli occupation, stressing that his country did not consider “Israel” to be a state, calling it the Zionist entity. “Many assassinations are carried out through Jabhat Al-Nusra and other groups with direct Israeli support.”

The Israeli *Yedioth Ahronoth* website claimed that the Israeli occupation received an aid request from Russia to help Syria based on Damascus’ request following the devastating earthquake that hit Syria and Turkey. Syria completely denied this claim.

A Syrian official source completely denied the claims of Israeli occupation Prime Minister

Benjamin Netanyahu of having received a request for aid from a Syrian official.

If Netanyahu ever received such a request, it is definitely from his allies and friends in ISIS and Jabhat Al-Nusra, among other terrorist organizations, the Syrian source said.

Israeli public broadcaster KAN revealed earlier in the day that Russia [did not ask “Israel” to send aid to Syria](#).

Israeli KAN political affairs correspondent Amichai Stein said a source in the Kremlin denied that Moscow had asked “Tel Aviv” to send aid to Syria. “We do not need to ask Israel to help Syria because we will be doing that ourselves.”

A Syrian source previously denied to Al Mayadeen the Israeli claims of “Tel Aviv” having [received a request for aid](#) from any Syrian party.

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Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu claimed Monday that he had agreed to a request from Damascus to send aid to Syria after the devastating earthquake that struck it.

On Monday, a [7.8-magnitude earthquake](#) struck Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine, killing thousands, mainly in Turkey and Syria, and leveling houses and other facilities, including public infrastructure.

Syrian sources also denied to *Al-Watan* Syrian newspaper the allegations of Israeli officials regarding a request submitted by Syria to the Israeli entity for relief aid.

Furthermore, the sources confirmed to the newspaper that everything published in the Israeli media “is not more than a propaganda campaign for its Prime Minister.”

“How can Syria ask for help from an entity that killed and participated in killing Syrians over the past decades?” the sources asked.

Syrian Foreign Minister Faisal Mekdad held earlier a meeting with UN representatives and various NGOs in a bid to explain the impact of the unilateral sanctions that are drastically affecting the situation in the country and the humanitarian response to it.

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