

mitted that the Al Qaeda-linked terrorist group Jabhat al-Nusra, also known as Hayat Tahrir al Sham (HTS), which controls much of Idlib Province, serves as a U.S. asset.

In short, the sanctions are an expression of the fact that U.S. policy toward Syria has been and remains one of regime change.

Sanctions Hinder Earthquake Response

Independent journalist Vanessa Beeley, who resides in Damascus, told *RT* in a video interview some hours after the earthquake that Syrian emergency services have been suffering from the lack of supply of equipment because of the sanctions. As a result, “they are dealing with a disaster that is really beyond their capability.”

Beeley noted that the sanctions have devastated the systems of hospitals “and rendered them incapable of providing certain medical operations, medical assistance.” Furthermore, the occupation of northeastern Syria by the U.S. military means that no oil is going to western Syria, which prevents the generation of electricity. There’s no shelter for people who have been made homeless, Beeley said, leaving many thousands out in a driving rainstorm Feb. 8:

So, everything is being complicated by the conditions, by the remnants of the war, and most of all by the sanctions.

Not one Western country, she added, had stepped up to provide aid to Damascus to actually deal with this emergency. This is despite an appeal made by Syria to the UN and international organizations to respond to the earthquake emergency.

Beeley posted on her Telegram channel the same day a statement of outrage attributed to Fares Shehabi, the head of Aleppo’s Industry Chamber:

Lift your God-damned sanctions so we can open our airports to receive international aid! In Aleppo alone more than 50 buildings have been destroyed resulting in more than 160 deaths so far and thousands of injuries. Thousands of families are now without shelter! What kind of evil governments pose economic & travel sanctions on earthquake devastated nations?!

Another statement she posted read:

International cargo planes are unable to land at

Schiller Institute Statement on the Earthquakes

The following statement was released internationally by the Schiller Institute on Feb. 6 to underscore the urgent need to lift all sanctions imposed on Syria.

The recent double earthquake in southern Türkiye and northwestern Syria is a terrible disaster which is generating a wave of emotion and empathy from around the world. The situation will likely worsen due to the forecast of extremely low temperatures throughout the region, which would result in the collapse of weakened buildings due to the cold and frost, not to mention the immediate consequences to children, women and men who have lost everything.

Time is of the essence. We welcome an international response. There are several countries that have already offered their assistance to the populations affected by the earthquakes. This being said, it is difficult to accept that the same disaster has a very different human impact on either side of the

border of Türkiye and Syria. On the Syrian side, this tragedy is affecting a population that has been hard hit by years of war and sanctions imposed by the United States and other nations.

This situation confronts us, as Western nations, with our responsibility to uphold the values we claim to embody. Are we going to continue to apply the measures that we very well know have led to the unimaginable suffering, misfortune, and death of innocent people? Or are we going to finally make the decision to lift these criminal sanctions? Don’t we know, after so many years of use, that the weapon of sanctions only hurts the people?

It is time for Western leaders to regain a minimum of moral fiber, by taking this tragedy as the opportunity to definitively lift all sanctions against Syria and, from then on, to organize the reconstruction of the country with those who are determined to contribute to it.