



This is not an exercise...

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Rarely before has the Scout motto "Be prepared" been so timely. Just one week after the JOTA-JOTI, a 7.2 earthquake struck Eastern Turkey. It was the most powerful earthquake to hit the country in ten years.

One of the themes of this year's JOTA-JOTI was "Natural Disasters". On this occasion, World Scouting partnered with IRESC (International Radio Emergency Support Coalition) and ShelterBox, an international disaster relief charity.

"Earthquake in Scoutonia" was an exercise conducted at the JOTA-JOTI. Its purpose was to activate and use the amateur radio emergency networks and to simulate, as realistically as possible, a chaotic situation in the aftermath of a natural disaster. Three countries mainly led this exercise - Portugal, Malaysia and Turkey.



Another activity was to mobilize the Scouting Network to help emergency professionals conduct fieldwork. ShelterBox's Response Team members David Eby (US) and Mark Pearson (UK) arrived in Turkey's Van, the closest city to the epicenter of the earthquake, on October 26th. They have been in contact with the Turkish Scouts through Turkey's Chief Scout Mr Hasan D. Subasi, who is also an amateur radio operator.

"Of course we never thought that the activities ran during JOTA-JOTI could become reality a week later in Turkey," said Richard Middelkoop, World JOTA Coordinator, "But since we established relations between Scouts, ShelterBox and radio people, we were able to use this to everybody's advantage and react faster and easier to this emergency situation."

This collaboration shows that partnerships on paper are one thing. To put them into practice is every Scout's common challenge.

Update: Scout activity in the Van area in Turkey.

Scouts working with the Turkish Red Cross to set up a tent camp and distribute food to children and families in the area.



More information:

[David Eby from ShelterBox US interviewed on CNN](#)

[ShelterBox Photo Gallery on Flickr](#)

[IRES Turkey](#)