

Shock of quake in Turkey felt by UNL students

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"At 3:02 a.m., I woke up to an incredible loud noise. I don't know how I could find any words to describe what the noise was like," he said. "But I thought something had exploded nearby."

During the 45-second earthquake, Sezer said the windows were shaking and the furnace was pulled out of the wall.

"It was so powerful that we were constantly standing somewhere different. We were smashed on one wall and from there to the other wall," he said. "It felt like there were wheels underneath of the building. It felt like we were sliding."

After the earthquake was over, Sezer and his family ran down the stairs and out into the street.

This was the wrong thing to do, Sezer said, because in an earthquake, the stairway is the first thing to col-

lapse because of the lack of support. Luckily, they made it out of the building.

Once outside, Sezer went into shock for about two to three hours.

"I was ice cold. I was shaking and not able to get a hold of myself," he said. "I was not able to keep myself warm."

For the next 24 hours, there were aftershocks every five minutes. They were not long, but powerful.

It wasn't until much later when Sezer and his family found a small, battery-operated radio informing them that the town of Izmit, located about 30 miles from where he was staying, received the most damage. Many of their relatives and friends live in Izmit.

Most people sat outside on the streets or in parks for the next several days, he said. Roadways were cleared, but no traffic other than emergency vehicles was allowed in

the city.

"It's the biggest disaster our country could ever imagine or experience," he said. "I believe the whole country - all people - will suffer from this for years to come."

Gulay Ozkan, who is getting her master's degree in electrical engineering at UNL, was also in Istanbul during the earthquake.

After being woken up, she said she and her friend stood under the door frame of the fourth-story apartment she was staying in when the earthquake hit.

Quickly afterward they went to the nearest park, where they stayed for the next couple of days. Ozkan said she didn't learn of the severity of the earthquake until she flew home.

Ozkan and Sezer said they hope people can contribute to the country. The country needs money more than it needs supplies, Sezer said. Donating money will speed up the

recovery process by allowing the country to purchase the things it needs faster than supplies can be shipped.

Donating 50 cents or \$1 would provide simple things such as water or a meal, he said.

Ozkan also encouraged people to send money instead of supplies.

"Money is really what they need. It takes time to send items... (it) is not as efficient," she said. "Money is the quickest way to help them."

With the possibility of disease threatening the country, the need for help from outside countries becomes even more crucial, as it might take weeks to clear the dead bodies from the streets.

"They need all the help they can get. My country cannot deal with a problem like this alone," Sezer said. "There's no way."

Sezer, who returned from Turkey last Thursday, said he still is not able

to sleep at night.

"Coming back on the plane was bad," he said. "I couldn't stand even the smallest turbulence because the shaking was making me nervous."

Even though he is away from his homeland, Sezer said his mind and heart are there with his family and friends.

"I want everyone to really pray for them. Until it really happens to you or your people, you can't know what it's really like," he said. "It's very important that we help each other."

Hasan Otu, president of the Turkish Student Association on campus, said the organization has opened an account for students who wish to donate money to the people of Turkey.

"The earthquake has affected about 22 million people directly and indirectly," Otu said. "Even though the earthquake is physically over, the aftermath is just as devastating as the earthquake itself is."



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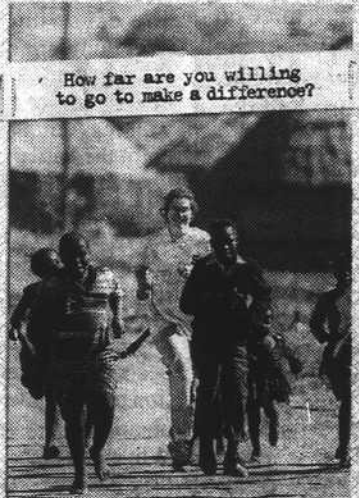


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