

# Cruise to nowhere

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Members of the UK's International Search & Rescue team at work in Hatay, Turkey

Ben Johnson -Almost a month since the 7.8 magnitude earthquake hit Turkey and Syria, leading to the collapse of hundreds of buildings and over 50,000 deaths, both countries are still working to rescue and relocate survivors. For some, [repurposed cruise ships](#) have become temporary shelters. While carrying only a fraction of the estimated 1.7 million displaced Turks, one ship, the Gemini, is now home to over 1,000 survivors.

Docked on the coast of Hatay, one of the hardest hit provinces of Turkey, many of the Gemini's passengers feel out of place on board the luxury ship, a place starkly contrasting the recent destruction of their homes. [Places](#) refer to where we live or the environments of our experiences. Our attachment to and how we view a place involves identity. In the case of the Turkish survivors, they are grappling with a damaged identity from the loss of their homes and communities. Despite this, a new community has formed on the ship as residents interact and support one another. A makeshift daycare and barbershop have replaced a theater room and beauty salon as members seek to regain a sense of stability and normalcy. From hairdressers to doctors, some occupants have volunteered their skills to help fellow survivors. A powerful example of this growing community and sense of attachment is exemplified in the name of a baby born while on the ship. Named Miray, after the cruise ship company that owns the Gemini, the child has been gifted stuffed animals and diapers from fellow passengers and crew. One can see the power that identity plays in defining place.

The ship's occupants, representing some of the most vulnerable survivors (e.g., disabled, pregnant, with young children, elderly), are among the fortunate few. Over 650,000 residents of Hatay have fled to cities such as Istanbul and Mersin, seeing a 21 percent increase in population size since the quakes. The intensity and widespread destruction of this disaster raise questions about how long temporary fixes like this can continue to operate, and whether old places can be re-made and new ones established.

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