

ARMENIA EMERGENCY REFUGEE RESPONSE

Inter-Agency Update 6 October- 12 October 2023

Overview

Situation Overview

As of 7 October, 101,848 refugees, including an estimated 31,000 children, entered the Republic of Armenia. Among them, some 99% of the refugee population have been registered by the authorities so far. Armenia’s Migration and Citizenship Service (MCS) continues to re-register and identify refugees upon settling in host communities, to update and prevent double registration in the government’s database.

As of 8 October, 58,000 have been provided shelter in hotels and hostels, guests houses and other government-run accommodation. Authorities reported that approx. 40% of school-aged children have been enrolled in local schools. Authorities indicated their intention to adapt the state employment schemes and development projects, to meet the needs and capacities of refugees and accelerate access to employment.

Inter-Agency Response

Coordination: The [Interagency Refugee Response Plan](#) was released on 5 October in coordination and collaboration among UN agencies, NGOs, and community-based organizations (CBOs). The plan brings together 60 partners, including 43 national NGOs, and covers relief efforts for a six-month period, until the end of March 2024. The plan aims to support some 196,000 people including 101,000 refugees and 95,000 members of local host communities. Partners jointly appeal for US\$97 million. The plan highlights acute protection and assistance needs among refugees due to sudden displacement and prolonged isolation. While supporting and complementing the government response, the plan recognizes the importance of considering both the short-term and long-term needs. In line with the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus approach, the plan aims to integrating inclusion, resilience, and solutions from the start, targeting both refugees and host communities with a longer-term view of strengthening public services.

Basic needs: NGOs and UN Agencies are supporting refugees with basic needs (non-food items, shelter, food), counselling, protection services and case management. Rapid needs assessments are ongoing to further inform about refugee needs and vulnerabilities, including a specific rapid needs assessment dedicated to children’s needs. To help refugee women and girls, dignity kits have been distributed alongside awareness-raising material about gender-based violence. Vulnerable groups, including women and children, are receiving life-saving services, such as psychosocial, health, mental health, legal and other type of assistance in multiple safe spaces established in locations with a high refugee concentration. Primary health is being provided through mobile clinics.

Support to the Government: RRP partners are supporting the Government and health care providers with training on the provision of psychological first aid to enable them to provide life-saving assistance. In the area of cash assistance, partners are working with MLSA to transition towards a multi-purpose cash assistance programme and enable refugees to procure items to cover their most pressing needs themselves.

Regional distribution of the 101,848 registered refugees, as of 7 October

Location	Number of refugees*
Yerevan	45,202
Syunik	12,185
Kotayk	8,235
Ararat	9,862
Armavir	7,645
Gegharkunik	3,400
Vayots Dzor	3,341
Shirak	2,721
Aragatsotn	3,822
Tavush	3,047
Lori	2,388

In addition to renovating collective centres, partners are also equipping them with foldable beds, mattresses, and bedding to create sleeping spaces.

SECTORAL RESPONSES



PROTECTION

Assistance at check points/registration centres: UNHCR, together with IOM, provided technical, material, and expert support to the Migration and Citizenship Service (MCS) to set up registration at check points and centres in Goris, Kornidzor and Vayk. Although registration activities have largely concluded, protection actors continue to provide needed services and assistance in the Goris city centre. NGOs People in Need (PIN), Mission Armenia and Médecins du Monde are providing counselling services and psychological first aid. The Armenian Red Cross Society is supporting the municipality with distribution processes. UNICEF jointly with ARCS, and People in Need continue to operate Child Friendly Spaces.

Information and counselling: With support from the KASA Swiss Humanitarian Foundation, UNHCR has strengthened its Hotline service.

Protection monitoring visits: UNHCR continued protection monitoring visits to the humanitarian registration centres to observe access to registration, information and, reception conditions as well as to identify the main protection concerns and needs of refugees. Protection monitoring visits were conducted to 33 humanitarian coordination centres in Kotayk, Ararat, Syunik, Vayots Dzor, Tavush, Gegharkunik, Aragatsotn, Armavir Province. During the visits, UNHCR met with 79 households residing in shelters and private accommodations. UNHCR staff members provided counselling to all the households as well as screened vulnerabilities and priority needs. The necessary referrals were made to local authorities and social protection services for relevant assistance. UNHCR provided information about UNHCR Hotline.

Rapid Needs Assessment: A Rapid needs assessment is being rolled out, scheduled to be finalized by 13 October.



GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

UNFPA provided 35 local service providers with GBV prevention pocket guides, which include information on referral pathways, in Syunik and Vayots Dzor marzes (regions). Information on GBV services is provided in reception centres in Syunik, Vayots Dzor, Kotayk and Ararat regions for refugee women and girls and other vulnerable refugees.

UNFPA also carried out specialized training to ensure survivor-centred support. Refugees with mobile phones have access to information on GBV prevention, safe reporting of cases and information on service points through the Safe YOU application.

13,000 dignity kits have been procured and distributed in reception centres and some shelters in Syunik, Vayots Dzor, Kotayk, Gegharkunik and Ararat regions for refugee women and girls and other vulnerable refugees.

UNFPA has established two Women and Girls Safe Spaces (WGSS) for refugees in the Syunik region, where psychosocial, health and legal assistance and other life-saving services are available.

Women Community Counsel NGO located in Martuni community provided food, hygienic kits, baby diapers and nutrition to 2000 refugees settled in Vardenis, Chambarak and Martuni communities.



CHILD PROTECTION

UNICEF trained 76 community social workers, who are continuously supporting the rapid needs assessments in the Goris Humanitarian Center, in child protection in emergencies and case management. Together, the Armenian Red Cross and UNICEF also established two Children's Corners in Syunik and Vayots Dzor provinces. Both facilities are operational, continuously receiving children from the refugee and local community in the town. Currently, at least 100 children visit the Corners daily, benefiting from MHPSS and recreational activities. UNICEF is working with partners to establish similar facilities in other regions of Armenia and expand the network of child-friendly spaces, focusing on communities with high concentration of refugees.

The NGO People in Need also created a child-friendly space in the registration centre in Goris to provide a safe and supportive environment for children. A Children's Corner remains operational in Goris and, to date, at least 100 children (both displaced and host community) visited the Corner during the time their parents and caregivers were engaged with registration at the local humanitarian centre. The Partnership & Teaching NGO provided child protection services.

UNICEF activated two contingency programme documents of for the provision of MHPSS and PFA services, and child protection case management, reaching already more than 1,000 children and caregivers with case management support, and more than 3,000 children and caregivers with psychological first aid and MHPSS interventions. Three more partnerships are being established for MHPSS and parenting support and one for multi-disciplinary support to children with disabilities.

UNICEF and its partners are also working on identification of children with disabilities among refugees, conducting at the same time comprehensive assessment to identify children's needs and support with individualized services as well as living space adjustments. UNICEF is closely coordinating with the MLSA and Organizations of People with Disabilities (OPD) to support needs assessment and provision of specialized services and assistive technology for children with disabilities.

UNICEF is procuring 160 tablets for social workers from Unified Social Services as well as local communities that will support the process of in-depth needs assessment, case registration and management. In the coming weeks, MLSA is expected to launch a new platform for registration of refugee children and UNICEF is actively working with MLSA to support this effort.

UNICEF and UNHCR in partnership with Child development foundation by 12th of October will have trained 100 patrol police officers on working with refugee children and caregivers, including child sensitive communication and Psychological first aid. Overall 428 patrol police officers from Syunik, Armavir, Ararat and Vayots Dzor regions will be trained by the first week of November.

"ASTGHAVARD" DISABLED CHILDREN PARENTS' is providing rehabilitation and Psycho-Social assistance to 3 refugee children with disabilities residing in Vardenis community.



EDUCATION

UNICEF is partnering with the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports (MESCS) to identify needs of the education system for effective inclusion of refugee children into education and learning, as well as to support expansion of the capacity of schools and preschools nation-wide to host new students. At present the MESCS is accelerating the process of registration of school-aged children also ensuring continuation of their education and learning. To date, over 55% of school-aged children have already been registered and enrolled in schools and the MESCS is committed to ensure 100% registration and enrolment soonest possible.

UNICEF is discussing with the MESCS and relevant local authorities the establishment of temporary learning spaces and early childhood education (ECE) spaces in the marzes (regions) with highest concentration of refugees, as per the observed needs and request from the Government.

UNICEF has prepositioned School-in-a-box and Recreation kits sufficient to cater for the needs of at least 1,400 children and Early Childhood Development (ECD) kits sufficient to cover the needs of 1,800 young children. Both types of kits are already being distributed for the refugee children most in need of assistance, while working with its partners to identify additional locations where those kits will be most needed. In addition, UNICEF and its partners are distributing a total of 1,000 schoolbags for children.

Teach for Armenia is providing job matching and placement of teachers among refugees, as well as operating an emergency education scheme for children who have limited access to schooling. The Youth Palace NGO (Gyumri) initiated homework support for children.



HEALTH AND NUTRITION

On 1 October 2023, WHO facilitated the deployment of two senior-level specialists on burns management from the Israel's EMT (Emergency Medical Team) Type 3, at the request of the Armenian Ministry of Health (MoH). They carried out the initial burns management needs assessment. From 3 October, WHO then facilitated the scale up to 15 burn experts from Israel's EMT Type 3, to support hospitals in Yerevan hosting burns patients.

An international call for additional specialized Emergency Medical Team for burns management was published upon the request of the Ministry of Health (MoH) and Medevac options for the patients in critical needs are being discussed with the bilateral partners. In the meantime, WHO is dispatching 10 burns modules of the trauma and emergency surgery kits (called TESK kits) to support the advanced care need for 500 burns patients.

To support the general health needs of the refugees, WHO is preparing to send medicines for non-communicable diseases, that will cover 3 months of treatment for up to 50,000 persons. To date, WHO has dispatched 1,672 kgs of supplies worth over USD\$71,300.

The Armenian Red Cross provided psychological first aid as well psychological support at Syunik and Vayots Dzor reception posts. The NGOs Family and Community (Metsamor) and the Resource Center for Women's

Empowerment provided mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) to newly arrived refugee children and women. The Arevamanuk children's centre (Gyumri) provided MHPSS to vulnerable children and art therapy classes.

VIVA doctors and Volunteers for Armenia provides first aid in the Goris registration centre. The Association of Healthcare and Assistance to Older People mobilized a specialized health assessment team for displaced elderly in Hankavan and Aghavnadzor of Kotayk marz (region).

The New Generation Humanitarian NGO provided psychological support for 12 people. People in Need also provided psychosocial support.

Astghazard, an NGO for children with disabilities in Vardenis city, provided wheelchairs, round-the-clock psychological counselling, and art therapy to children with mental health concerns.

For Equality Human Rights NGO in Ijevan provided 300 hygiene packages to the Municipality to support their response to the refugee inflow.

UNFPA distributed 20 interagency reproductive health kits to key health facilities in Syunik, Tavush, and Gegharkunik regions, in partnership with the Ministry of Health. The kits are intended to be used for safe child delivery, prevention of STI/HIV and the prevention, and management, of complications during child delivery. More than 60 healthcare providers (including midwives, nurses, and family doctors) received a training on sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and increased their knowledge on minimum initial services package. More than 40 health care providers have been trained on provision of psychological first aid in Goris and Kapan with support from UNFPA, to enable them to provide lifesaving first assistance.

UNICEF delivered critical medicines and medical supplies to the Ministry of Health (MoH) for distribution to health facilities in areas with high concentration of refugee population, while the procurement of additional supplies, including first aid kits and life-saving equipment, is ongoing.

UNICEF is coordinating closely with the MoH and regional health authorities and is on standby to deploy mobile paediatric units in response to immediate needs of refugees. UNICEF is also partnering with the MoH in monitoring the situation of immunization status of the refugee children and their rapid inclusion into the national Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) programme.

IOM provided primary healthcare via mobile clinics. These were first launched on 2 October and two visits - covering 100 individuals - have already been conducted, including the provision of MHPSS where needed.

With UNAIDS support, the NGO Real World Real People provided hygiene packages for one hundred women living with HIV and started social-psychological support.

IOM Armenia deployed two mobile clinics with multi-disciplinary health teams to provide primary health care services to the beneficiaries. As of 11 October, the mobile clinics have implemented nine visits in seven communities of Syunik, Gegharkunik, Ararat, and Vayots Dzor marzes. About 300 adults and 200 children benefited from the mobile clinics' services. The psychologists of the mobile teams consulted about 60 adults and children.

WHO Armenia trained 10 psychologists to create Emergency Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Teams to provide much needed MHPSS to about 200 victims of explosion at Berkadzor and their family members. Training on basic psychosocial skills will be provided for at list 50 healthcare workers, with priority for those who are working with victims of explosion in Yerevan hospitals. WHO will pilot Mental Health and Psychosocial Mobile Teams to cover MHPSS needs of refugees and host communities in all Marzes of Armenia. Technical support will be provided to re-establish and operate national Mental Health Hotline.



RESILIENCE

UNDP initiated the renovation of two collective shelters (under MLSA) which will accommodate up to 150 single older persons and vulnerable groups. In addition, two municipal buildings in Masis and Metsamor will be renovated to provide dignified conditions for living for about 25 families- up to 120 people.

Public places with high concentration of refugees in the cities of Goris and Kapan are equipped with 8 bio toilets.

The first batch of green energy solutions and equipment- 45 PVE mobile hybrid stations / 10 solar panels / 4 water heaters has been procured by UNDP and is ready to be dispatched to the most affected localities with the capacity to cover the emergency needs of up to 2,500 refugees.

UNDP mobilized established networks and partnership for rapid roll out of livelihood support activities by introducing durable solutions such as paid on the job training schemes; targeted upskilling and reskilling; career counselling, job matching and small grant support to benefit about 650 refugees and locals in host communities.

BASIC NEEDS



FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

Since 26th September, WFP has provided emergency food assistance to 16,082 refugees at registration and crisis centers in Syunik, Ararat, and Armavir regions. Assistance included provision of hot meals, ready-to-eat lunch boxes, and in-kind food parcels. The distribution of food parcels is in progress, with 4,000 in-kind family food parcels being distributed to 16,000 refugees. Recognizing that food needs exist in all regions, WFP is collaborating with the Government and local authorities to expand its reach, by currently procuring more in-kind food parcels to support food needs of an additional 34,000 refugees.

The Armenian Red Cross Society, in Syunik and Vayots Dzor reception points, provided water, dry food and energy bars to refugees.

The NGO New Generation delivered 8,624 food packages, while People in Need provided lunch boxes to refugees in Syunik.

The NGOs Resource Center for Women's Empowerment and Astghazard provided food to newly arrived refugees, while the Armenian General Benevolent Union provided food in the registration centre in Goris.

UNICEF has directly observed cases of children among the refugees' showing signs of malnourishment. There are also reports of cases of low birth weight among refugee children from the area affected by the military hostilities. Taking this into account, UNICEF has organized the establishment of mobile paediatric units equipped to monitor and address these cases that can be activated upon request of MoH. UNICEF is finalizing

the procurement of 3,000 food boxes for young children and 1,500 therapeutic biscuits ready for immediate distribution amongst children most in need.



SHELTER/ NFI

UNHCR distributed 315 foldable beds, 120 mattresses, 325 warm blankets and 122 pillows, as well as 84 hygiene kits to more than 100 families (targeting large family), as well as 220 bed linen sets, 50 diapers for children, 30 jerrycans and 40 kitchen sets hosted in remote areas of Syunik and Vayots Dzor provinces. Earlier, UNHCR provided 106 bed linen, 160 mattresses, 160 foldable beds, 86 hygiene kits, 160 mattresses, 387 warm blankets, 83 pillows, 150 solar lamps and 150 kitchen sets to families in Syunik and Vayots Dzor, and in remote districts of Yerevan.

To families residing in temporary shelters in Sevan region of Gegharkunik - known for early harsh winters - UNHCR provided foldable beds, mattresses, warm blankets, pillows, and bed linen sets - 55 items in total. Moreover, 140 families received 240 warm blankets, 120 kitchen sets and 100 solar lamps in 5 settlements of Kotayk province.

Since the emergency, UNHCR has received 8 trucks with humanitarian aid cargo, with the last 5 trucks (weight of 62 tons in total, 6,900 bed linen sets, 4,300 warm blankets, 7,200 pillows, 210 family tents and 2,730 hygiene kits arrived on 12 October and was offloaded in UNHCR warehouse. More are scheduled to arrive in Armenia in the coming weeks to assist 17,000 vulnerable refugees in total.

UNHCR, through its partner Mission Armenia NGO has kicked off a large-scale distribution of humanitarian assistance to refugees throughout the host communities in Armenia, which is carried out in close coordination with the state and local authorities. UNHCR continues to support the government and the local authorities by providing life-saving assistance to extremely vulnerable families by reaching them out in remote areas, delivering warm blankets, foldable beds and mattresses crucial in early winter in most of the remote communities such as in Gegharkunik and Kotayk.

UNFPA has positioned 13,000 dignity kits at the transit centres in Syunik, Vayots Dzor, as well as in communities in Ararat and Armavir provinces.

The Ethos Foundation NGO distributed bedding sets, and the Ukrainian Forum NGO provided food, hygienic items, and clothing to 500 refugees residing in Yerevan and nearby communities.

The Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR) provided 175 packages of hygiene kits to Vayk (Vayots Dzor) and 125 to Berd (Tavush). Many other community-based organisations, among them Resource Center for Women's Empowerment NGO and Diaspora-funded agencies, such as the Armenian Relief Society, provided hygiene kits to refugees, as well.

The Association of Healthcare and Assistance to Older People provided non-food items (NFI) to vulnerable single elderly living in shelters in Yerevan and provinces in Armenia. UNICEF and the Armenian Red Cross Society stationed 15 mobile bio-toilets at registration centres in Goris and Vayk. UNDP also distributed 8 mobile bio-toilets, with two in Kapan and six in Goris, adjacent to registration centres.

UMCOR provided mattresses and hygiene kits to refugees in Armavir, mainly accommodated in collective shelters. The Goris Youth Union provided shelter and NFI. WINNET Goris Development Foundation provided support in the crisis centre in Goris, distributing warm clothing and blankets to the refugees. The Sose

Women Issues provided diapers, hygiene items, blankets and warm clothes to refugees, and the Partnership & Teaching NGO on their turn provided school supply and warm clothing to children.

The Women's Support Center assisted refugees in Yerevan through provision of 120 packages of diapers, 200 food ration boxes for basic sustenance and nutrition to individuals, hygiene kits to 200 persons, water bottles to 500 people, bedding items to 20 persons, underwear to 50 people and shelter to one family.

UNICEF has provided ad hoc assistance to refugee families, including some 200 blankets and mattresses for families with children living in shelters or crisis centres.

UNICEF delivered hygiene kits to 100 families in Yerevan, and 54 winter blankets and 200 bedding items to vulnerable families residing in state-provided shelters/institutions.

ADRA Armenia provided accommodation to 35 refugees in Goris, as well as mattresses and other items.

"Hzor Mitq" Youth Development NGO provided food, hygienic kits, clothing, and shelter assistance to 1500 refugees residing in Yerevan and nearby provinces (Kotayk, Aragatsotn, and Ararat).

The New Generation Humanitarian NGO provided temporary shelter to three people, financial support for three people, and clothing for 15 others. The Syunik Development NGO in Yeghegnadzor, provided shelter for 200 refugees. The Voskeporik development centre, based in Martuni, provided accommodation to 80 refugees in a summer camp in Tsovinar, as well as hygiene items, washing machine, heaters, and warm clothing. They also provided specialized treatment and care to refugee children with specific needs.

The Armenian Caritas provided shelter at the residential building of the Catholic Church in Toros village in Shirak province.

Mission Armenia NGO continues to support the government by provision of shelter to 84 older refugees, in addition to 200 hot meals, and supporting the Government of Armenia's Unified social service (USS) in the registration of refugees through the primary needs assessment platform in Vayots Dzor, Kotayk, Aragatsotn, and Armavir provinces.

CROSS CUTTING: CASH

In the area of cash assistance, UNHCR and UNICEF, as co-leads of the Cash-Based Interventions Working Group, are working with MLSA for the delivery of cash assistance programmes. This transition is aimed to enable refugees to access a range of goods and services.

In that vein, UNICEF activated a partnership to provide voucher support for clothing for children and is in discussions with MoLSA on implementation of this activity – initially targeting at least 6,000 children (0-3 years of age, children with disabilities). MoLSA is currently reviewing the previously defined mechanisms for distribution of various cash-based interventions by members of the Cash Working group:

detailed SOPs are expected to be shared by MoLSA shortly, which will clarify the detailed arrangements for the provision of cash assistance by humanitarian partners.

Currently, ADRA is working on an initial emergency response project aimed to aid 237 refugee families. This will be a Multipurpose Cash Transfer. Each one of the beneficiary families will receive a one-time-payment of 40,000 AMD to help them respond to the various needs they have, according to our rapid needs assessment in the territory.

Cross-Cutting Response



Government and partners put in place several hotlines aimed at preventing and/or mitigating incidents of exploitation and abuse, and to facilitate reporting of possible issues faced by refugees while respecting confidentiality principles. Numerous protection monitoring visits to the communities have been conducted.



The PSEA Coordination Group is actively involved in initiatives to deter Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA). The UN agencies are making PSEA information readily available to refugees through distributing information materials including No Excuse Cards and posters among the refugees and field partners. Furthermore, the inter-agency rapid needs assessment carried out on October 9th and 10th featured inquiries regarding safety and security, which will provide insights into potential cases of physical abuse among the refugees.

Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS)

Partners are working to maintain the protection and well-being of persons of concern by strengthening community and family support, ensuring that persons distressed by mental health and psychosocial problems have access to appropriate care, and ensuring that persons suffering from moderate or severe mental disorders have access to essential mental health services and to social care. As part of preparedness, the humanitarian community established contingency arrangements with implementing partners that could be immediately activated to provide psychosocial first aid and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support.

Psychologists of the mobile clinics deployed by IOM provided psychological consultations and screenings to 60 adults and children as of 11 October.

UNICEF and its implementing partner Armenian association of social workers is providing a lifesaving assistance and strengthening resilience through individual case management Support for 300 children and Psychological First Aid/Psychosocial Support to 3,000 children and their families.

UNICEF is establishing three more partnerships for MHPSS and parenting support and one for multi-disciplinary support to children with disabilities. UNICEF and its partners supported the recruitment and training for volunteers to support the case managers from the Unified Social Services (USS).

PSS activities were conducted through ADRA's volunteers in this accommodation facility near the border in Goris, providing safe spaces for children and emotional decompression activities.



Partners are working together to ensure that emergency responses are safe, dignified, participatory, community-owned, and socially and culturally acceptable. There are differences among the refugees in age, gender, and other characteristics such as social or legal status, ethnicity, and disability. These identities can exacerbate inequalities and limit opportunities. Partners are considering each person's unique needs,

priorities, and strengths, and working to provide specialized assistance to people with specific needs, i.e., isolated elderly or children with disabilities.



Government Ownership/Localization

The Government continues to lead the humanitarian response. The host community demonstrated a spirit of welcome and unwavering generosity, with families and communities opening their doors to refugees. The local response, led by national and municipal authorities across the regions, has been equally remarkable, with large numbers of volunteers, national and local non-governmental organizations, and civil society actors coming together to support those in need. This spirit is captured in the inclusion of more than 35 local and national NGOs in this first Inter-Agency Update and their interest and commitment to joining the coordinated refugee response captured in the Refugee Response Plan.

