

# ARMENIA EMERGENCY REFUGEE RESPONSE

*Inter-Agency Update 15 November - 21 November 2023*



*A UNHCR colleague interacts with a refugee girl living with her family in Ghyulagarak village who tells about her everyday life and friends in the new school. November 2023. ©UNHCR*

## KEY FIGURES

**9,300** children and caregivers reached with mental health and psycho-social support (MHPSS) interventions and child-friendly spaces.

**4,800** family food parcels (18 metric tons) distributed to 19,200 refugees.

**2,909** households (11,308 individuals) received 8,825 core relief items.

**575** household (2673 individuals) have been interviewed for Protection Monitoring in 10 communities.

**80** refugee children are already attending early learning centres and kindergartens.

**4** partners proceeded with signing the Agreement for providing cash and voucher support with MLSA.

## SITUATION OVERVIEW

At the moment, 83 elderly people are receiving care in six round-the-clock care facilities, 17 of them are from the Stepanakert nursing home, 50 are single. As of September 24, 10 children, 5 girls and 5 boys, aged 1 to 17, living in Stepanakert boarding house were also transferred to a round-the-clock care facility on September 25. All children have biological parents.

To date MLSA provides services to the elderly through many certified organizations and representatives of the public sector, both in the form of home care and in day care centers. People with disabilities also receive services depending on their status. Measures are also carried out for children left without parental care, according to which the community appoints a guardian or trustee for these children. Another 500 million AMD was allocated for one-time support of 100,000 AMD. 104,200 people have already benefited from the program, the data of 3,800 people have already been processed and they will receive support after the allocation of the 500 million AMD.

40+10 thousand AMD were paid to 99,820 people during the month of October. 7,295 people were paid this week. Within the framework of 40+10 thousand AMD support, the acceptance of applications for November and the following months continues. Applications are accepted through the website socservice.am.

Government has allocated around 3.4 billion AMD to the regional administrations, in addition, 579 million AMD have been allocated to the Syunik regional administration. These amounts are intended for the implementation of housing, food, and certain necessities for refugees, 83.2 percent of the given money is spent.

## SECTOR UPDATES



### PROTECTION SECTOR (INCLUDING CHILD PROTECTION AND GENDER BASED VIOLENCE)

**Sector lead:** Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MLSA); **Co-lead:** UNHCR

**Members:** AGBU | UNHCR | UNICEF | Democracy International | Women's Resource Center | Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR) | UNFPA | Women's Support Center | GIZ | PINK Armenia | World Vision | Sexual Assault Crisis Center | IFRIC | Armenia Round Table | ACTED | Children Protection Center | HEKS/EPER in Armenia | KASA Foundation | Mission Armenia | ICRC | MSF - Médecins Sans Frontières | Action Against Hunger | OxYGen Armenia | Doctors of the World France in Armenia | New Generation Humanitarian NGO | WINNET Armenia | SafeYOU | Save the Children | Association of Healthcare and Assistance to Older People | Armenian Progressive Youth

- On 20 November Protection Working Group (PWG) and Child Protection and GBV (Gender Based Violence) Sub-Working Groups, convened a meeting with MLSA Deputy Minister and representatives of the Department of Equal Opportunities of MLSA. The meeting highlighted the importance of Protection Strategy to help articulate the vision for the sector, strategic objectives, areas of interventions, risks and assumptions and targeting the vulnerable population, persons with disabilities (PwD) and elderly. The sector members agreed on protection strategy for working with older person, person with disabilities and other persons with specific needs. There will be a standing agenda item during PWG meetings to report on issues related to older person and PwD.
- During the reporting period "Mission Armenia" NGO provided social services to 160 beneficiaries, psychological support to 30 beneficiaries, and legal assistance to 60 beneficiaries in Yerevan, Kotayk, Ararat, and Syunik provinces of Armenia.
- 575 households' families (2673 individuals) covering 10 communities interviewed by UNHCR Protection Monitoring Team. The protection monitoring aims to reach 2500 refugee households.
- To participate in the sector working group meeting please write to [daradkeh@unhcr.org](mailto:daradkeh@unhcr.org) and copy [melikset@unhcr.org](mailto:melikset@unhcr.org).
- In October 2023, "Armenian Progressive Youth" NGO (APY) established legal and psychological hotlines, alongside a labor market integration service, within its Community Center. The legal hotline serves as a vital resource for refugees seeking guidance on legal matters, offering assistance in navigating complex immigration and asylum processes. Simultaneously, the psychological hotline provides crucial mental health support, recognizing the emotional challenges faced by refugees. Since the launch of these services, 147 individuals have already benefited from the free assistance provided by APY.
- During the reporting period "New Generation Humanitarian" NGO has done legal counselling and referral for 32 refugees.

### CHILD PROTECTION SUB-WORKING GROUP

**Lead:** MLSA and **Co-lead:** UNICEF

**Members:** AGBU | UNHCR | UNICEF | Democracy International | Women's Resource Center | Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR) | UNFPA | Women's Support Center | GIZ | PINK Armenia | World Vision | Sexual Assault Crisis Center | IFRIC | Armenia Round Table | ACTED | Children Protection Center | HEKS/EPER in Armenia | KASA Foundation | Mission Armenia | ICRC | MSF - Médecins Sans Frontières | Action Against Hunger | OxYGen Armenia | Doctors of the World France in Armenia | New Generation Humanitarian NGO | WINNET Armenia | SafeYOU | Save the

Children | Association of Healthcare and Assistance to Older People | Armenian Progressive Youth Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs | Human Rights Defender's Office | Action Against Hunger South Caucasus Mission | Mission Armenia NGO | Medecins du Monde France | KASA Swiss Humanitarian Foundation | Children of Armenia Fund (COAF) | "Parenting School" Parenting, Educational and Psychological Support Center NGO | World Vision Armenia | Arevamanuk NGO | Armenian Association of Child and Educational Psychologists | Child Development Foundation | Armenian Red Cross Society | People in Need | Syunik Marzpetaran | ICRC | "Youth Initiative Centre" NGO (YIC) | Save the Children International | Armenian Caritas | Child Protection Centre Foundation | Armenian Association of Social Workers | World Health Organization | SOS Children's Villages Armenia | UNHCR | UNICEF | UNFPA | Children of Armenia Fund (COAF)

- UNICEF and partners involved in the Child Protection Sub-Working group have reached out to around 9,300 children and caregivers with mental health and psycho-social support (MHPSS) interventions and child-friendly spaces, including those established with UNICEF's support in recent years and sustained by community efforts.
- According to initial data, around 50 children with disabilities were reached with the mentioned support interventions.
- To date, 5,462 (over 1,000 additional this week) children and caregivers have been reached with case management and follow up support by social workers including through a call center with support of UNICEF. Out of 4,000 children and caregivers provided with Psychological First Aid (PFA) so far, 2,390 children and caregivers received follow up community-based psychosocial support services.
- More than 1,529 children were reached with group psychosocial interventions during the reporting week. To date, 20 unaccompanied/separated children identified were reunified with their families or placed in alternative care. Listed interventions were implemented in almost all marzes and in Yerevan.
- UNICEF continues to organize and provide training and capacity development for social workforce and other professionals, expanding the overstretched capacity of the system. The capacities of more than 260 frontline social service workforce professionals (39 during the last week) and 200 newly appointed national police officers were enhanced on PFA, psychosocial support in emergencies, child sensitive communication and "do no harm" approaches.
- Child Protection Sub-Working Group is conducting a mapping of service provision to children and caregivers and is harmonizing the needs assessment tools applied by different actors. Child Protection related activities and sub-indicators for the RRP indicators were defined and a methodological guidance was developed and shared with partners during SWG meeting. Offline template for 5Ws was adjusted accordingly and shared with SWG members for updates.
- To participate in the sector working group meeting please write to [hkhemchyan@unicef.org](mailto:hkhemchyan@unicef.org) and [anahit.hovhannisyan@mlsa.am](mailto:anahit.hovhannisyan@mlsa.am).

## GBV-SUB WORKING GROUP

**Lead:** MLSA | **Co-leads:** UNFPA, UNHCR

**Members:** UNFPA Armenia CO | MLSA | Sexual Assault Crisis Center NGO | "Women Resource Center" NGO | "Spitak Helsinki Group" human rights NGO | OxYGen Foundation | RA Human Rights Defender Office | Democracy International | Women's Support Center | "WomenNet" NGO | UNHCR | UN Women |

World Vision Armenia | WINNET Armenia | Womens Center.Shushi | Real World Real People NGO | Women Fund Armenia | Women's Rights House NGO | Socioscope

- Another GBV sub-Sector meeting was held on 21 of November. The Sub-Sector developed and adapted its work plan and monitoring framework.
- GBV Sub-Sector facilitated the training on 15 of November for 20 GBV service providers on Woman and

Girls Safe Space programming; GBV Sub-Sector will continue to provide technical support to the Sector to ensure Women and Girls Safe Spaces are set up across the country to respond to the needs of affected women and girls.

- Recognizing the lack of available data on specific needs of girls and women, and GBV risks they are exposed to, UNFPA commenced data collection for its GBV Rapid Assessment, with the support of MSLA. The assessment will map key concerns and needs refugee girls and women have, discuss GBV trends and service gaps, and serve to humanitarian actors to design their GBV response in the tailored way.
- In partnership with UNFPA, Family Without Violence NGO provided PSS services for 40 women, Winnet Berd team provided psychological support to 68 girls and women and 5 girls, and economic empowerment activities for 11 women.
- Resource Center for Women Empowerment NGO provided case management to 2 refugee women, while its safe space project with the UNFPA became fully functional and served 30 women within the reporting period.
- For Equality NGO supported 2 women from Artsakh with given legal, including legal representation for 1 woman, while 2 received PSS services. The organization supported 1 woman with economic empowerment and capacity building, 16 women with GBV awareness activity, and 20 women and 15 girls with dignity kits.
- You Are Not Alone NGO is providing GBV case management to 21 GBV survivors; 13 women benefited from PSS support was provided to 21 victims of domestic violence. 13 people benefited from the psychologist, and 4 women were supported with legal services. GBV awareness activities provided to 15 people.
- To participate in the sector working group meeting please write to Lusine Sargsyan [sargsyan@unfpa.org](mailto:sargsyan@unfpa.org) and Elsie Aroyan [AROYAN@unhcr.org](mailto:AROYAN@unhcr.org).



*UNICEF and partners scale up their response before winter approaches, distributing humanitarian supplies to children in need in 9 provinces of Armenia ©UNICEF*



## EDUCATION SECTOR

**Sector lead:** Minister of Education, Science, Culture, And Sports and **Co-lead:** UNICEF

**Actors:** UNICEF | UNHCR | UNFPA | World Bank (WB) | Asian Development Bank (ADB) | Armenian Red Cross Society | People in Need (PIN) | Save the Children | AGBU | KASA | Teach for Armenia | Ministry of Education, Science, Culture, and Sport (MoESCS) | Civil Initiative for the Right to Education - Umbrella Coalition for 30 CSOs | UNESCO

- Education WG meeting took place on 14 November, co-chaired by UNICEF and the MoESCS with 14 participants, including the representative of the Civil Initiative for the Rights to Education-an umbrella coalition for 30 CSOs. The education working group members reported increased assistance in supporting the access of refugee children to education. This became possible since the displaced population is settled and more than 80% of children have been enrolled in secondary schools.
- UNICEF, ARCS and Teach for Armenia are supporting more than 3000 refugee children in 47 schools, including the provision of psycho-social support in schools, facilitation of social inclusion in host communities, and support in closing the learning gap.
- The working group members stressed the importance of MHPSS in schools and the enhancement of cross-sectoral coordination and establishment of referral mechanisms. UNICEF in partnership with Step-by-Step BF launched a project aimed at expansion of early learning spaces in 20 kindergartens of Kotayk, Gegharkunik, Armavir, Ararat, Vayots Dzor communities with high concentration of refugees.
- 80 young refugee children are attending UNICEF-supported early learning centres and kindergartens. To provide comprehensive and multifaceted support to youths aged 12-18 refugees, the Tumo Center for Creative Technologies launched the multi-year initiative "Tumo for Artsakh Youths" with a target to reach around 8000 beneficiaries in coming years.
- To participate in the sector working group meeting please write to [apoghosyan@unicef.org](mailto:apoghosyan@unicef.org).

## BASIC NEEDS SECTOR



## SHELTER/ NON-FOOD ITEMS

**Sector lead:** MLSA and **Co-leads:** UNHCR, UNDP

**Members:** UNHCR | UNDP | UNICEF | IOM | UNWFP | UNFPA | ARCS (Armenian Red Cross Society) | APY (Armenian Progressive Youth) | Mission Armenia | World Vision | People in Need | CARE | Caritas | CRS (Catholic Relief Services) | ACF Spain | ACTED | ICRC | Rescue | Democracy International | HDIF

- During the reporting period, a total of 2,909 households (11,308 individuals) received 8,825 core relief items (563 hygiene kits, 2,286 blankets, 2,406 pillows, 2,453 bed linens, 513 body towels, 312 mattresses and 292 folding beds). The distributions took place in the provinces of Tavush, Lori, Aragatsotn, and Syunik covering a total of nine (9) communities.
- Shelter assessments continue to take place to both assess current conditions and individuate potential interventions that will enable dignified and adequate living conditions.
- Sector co-lead agencies took part in a workshop held 15 November at the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs. The discussion addressed Long-term residence programs for refugees. Ministry representatives conveyed the government's position around a multi-diverse approach also ensuring access to title of property, namely around the following: 1) Affordable housing schemes addressing population that has had access to employment; 2) Social housing addressing vulnerable population and 3) Community based housing addressing persons with specific needs.
- Basic Needs group will meet bi-weekly, and to participate in the sector working group meeting please write to [sobral@unhcr.org](mailto:sobral@unhcr.org).



## FOOD SECURITY

**Sector lead:** Ministry of Economy and **Co-leads:** WFP, FAO

**Members:** Democracy International Inc. | ICRC | ACTED | REACH | ACF Spain | World Vision International (WVI) | ARCS/IFRC | AGBU | WFP | FAO | UNHCR | FAO

- Since 28 September, WFP has provided in kind food assistance to 38,811 refugees, accounting for 78 percent of the initially targeted caseload for the immediate food response. Food response included 7,615 in-kind family food parcels (123 metric tons), more than 40,000 portions of hot meals and about 4,800 ready-to-eat lunch boxes to 38,811 refugees by WFP, following the Government's request. Immediate food assistance has been provided to refugees in all provinces of Armenia.
- 4,800 family food parcels (18 metric tons) are being distributed to 19,200 refugees.



## RESILIENCE SECTOR

**Sector lead:** MLSA and **Co-lead:** UNDP

**Members:** Action Against Hunger | ACTED | AGBU | Aleppo-NGO | Armenian Caritas | Armenian Red Cross Society | CARE International | Catholic Relief Services | COAF | Confederation of Trade Unions of Armenia | Democracy International | DRR National Platform | EU Delegation | FAO | Fund for Armenian Relief | Goris Women's Development "Resource Center" Foundation | Green Lane | HDIF | Hungarian Interchurch Aid | ICRC | ILO | IMWG | International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies | International Rescue Committee | IOM | Kooyrigs NGO | Médecins du Monde France | Miaseen NGO | OxyGen Foundation | People in Need | REACH | Republican Union of Employers of Armenia | RCO | SALAR International | Samaritan's Purse International Disaster Relief | Save the Children | UNDP | UNFPA | UNHCR | UNICEF | UNIDO | UMCOR | UN Women | WCC Armenia Round Table Foundation | WFP | WHO |

Women's Rights House in Gyumri | Women's Support Center NGO | World Bank | World Vision

- UNDP continues the renovation of two shelters for the elderly and other most vulnerable refugees with capacity to host up to 130 people. Renovation will also include construction of new toilet facilities and installation of solar water heaters. The works are expected to be completed by December 2023; in addition, assessment of another building requiring deeper retrofit is in progress; expected to be completed by late spring 2024, this building will host additional 150 refugees.
- UNDP completed distribution of 52 Mobile Hybrid Solar systems (97 kW of total installed capacity) in critical facilities (medical, rapid response and emergency and other essential service centers) in host communities of Gegharkunik, Syunik and Vayots Dzor regions. Approximate number of beneficiary population is estimated to exceed 2,500.
- To participate in the Resilience sector working group meeting please write to [dianna.areyan@undp.org](mailto:dianna.areyan@undp.org).



## HEALTH SECTOR

**Sector lead:** Ministry of Health and **Co-leads:** WHO/IOM

**Members:** WHO | IOM | UNICEF | UNFPA | UNDP | ICRC | MSF Operations Center of Geneva | Jinishian Memorial Foundation | WFP | Armenian Psychiatric Association | Traveling Doctors | AMAA | Fund for Armenian Relief | Sante Armenie | Henar | SGMHF "Intra" MHC | COAF (Children of Armenia Fund) | Project HOPE | New Generation Humanitarian NGO | Association of Healthcare and Assistance to Older People | Habitat for Humanity Armenia | Armenian Red Cross Society | Pan-Armenian Psychological Association | Armenian Association of Child Educational Psychologists (AA CEP) | Yerevan State University Center of Applied Psychology | ARPI | Armenian Union of Psychologists | Armenian Association of Social Workers | City of Herouse | KASA Swiss Humanitarian Foundation | "Ambra" Mental Wellbeing Center | Psychosocial Recovery Center | MdM France (Medecins du Monde) | "Centre for Psychosocial Recovery" | Frontline Therapists | Armenian Red Cross Society | IFRC (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies) | People in Need | Oxygen

- The Armenian Psychiatric Association (APA) continue providing mental health and psycho-social support to patients with severe burns, as well as their family members and hospital staff. In addition, APA runs a multi-disciplinary mobile team, with the social worker, child and adult psychiatrist and psychologists providing services to refugee population. The support is being implemented within the scope of WHO assistance programmes.
- "Ambra" Mental wellbeing center continue operating MHPSS hot line. The capacity of the hot line has been strengthened through WHO support.
- Union of Psychologists of Armenia have started the assessment of the MHPSS needs of refugees and provision of psychological first aid and psychiatric support. The activity started from 13 November and as of 21 November 80 refugees have participated in the assessment. This activity has been supported by the UNFPA.
- UNFPA is conducting a comprehensive assessments of mental health needs and delivering mental health and psychosocial support activities in Syunik region (encompassing Sisian, Aghitem Ahsotavan, Gorayq, Shamb, Noravan, Ishkhanasar, Tsghuk, Shaqi, Tolors communities) and Gegharkunik region (encompassing Sevan, Zovaber, Ddmashen, Tsaghkunq, Geghamavan, and Varsar communities). In total needs of 270 people have been assessed and 70 people were referred to local expert for further follow



up. In addition, 88 health professionals from Hrazdan and the Charentsavan medical centers were trained on psychological first aid skills" and stress management.

- Armenian Red Cross Society provided psychological and psychosocial support to more than 1,100 children throughout Armenia. Through the community counsellors psychological support was provided in Tavush, Syunik, Vayots Dzor and Gegharkunik regions. In addition, operating hot line provided psychological first aid to about 15,000 individuals.
- From October to November 2023, Garo Meghriyan Institute for Preventive Ophthalmology (Meghriyan Institute) at the Avedisian Onanian Centre for Health Services Research and Development of the Turpanjian College of Health Sciences performed eye screenings to identify vision problems or other eye disorders among 197 refugees aged 50 years and older residing in the Kotayk province of Armenia. This program aimed at reducing visual impairment and blindness in the target population by providing comprehensive ophthalmic examinations and distributing spectacles and medications to those in need. Following the screening, the Meghriyan Institute will distribute 218 spectacles and 32 people will receive medication assistance in December 2023. The team also referred individuals identified with eye diseases needing further attention to specialized ophthalmic centers for appropriate advanced care.
- Mental health and psychosocial support were provided to more than 600 refugees by Armenian Missionary Association of Armenia, to about 800 refugees from Kotayk and Ararat regions by Medecins Sans Frontieres; to 303 families by Children of Armenia Fund (COAF)
- Medical supplies and equipment were provided to the National Burn Centre and Kapan Medical Centre by International Committee of the Red Cross in Armenia (ICRC), Therapists for Armenia and Armenian Medical International Committee (AMIC)
- In cooperation with the MoH and regional authorities, Henar and Sante Armenia operate two mobile units that provide primary health consultations to refugees in remote communities of Kapan and Goris. Mobile unit is led by a general practitioner, equipped with the laboratory and medical equipment to provide full scope of PHC services.
- To participate in the sector working group meeting, please write to [esenamanovv@who.int](mailto:esenamanovv@who.int).

## CROSS SECTORAL GROUPS

### CASH

**Sector lead:** MLSA and **Co-leads:** UNICEF, UNHCR

**Members:** Armenian Red Cross Society | UNICEF | UNHCR | CARE Caucasus | People in Need | European Union Delegation to Armenia | AGBU Armenia | Acted Armenia | Asian Development Bank | "Armenian Caritas" Benevolent NGO | "Mission Armenia" Charitable NGO | World Bank | ICRC | Armenian Progressive Youth NGO | USAID | UNFPA | Save the Children International | Action Against Hunger | USAID Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance | UN Women | IFRC | WFP | New Generation Humanitarian NGO | Partnership and Teaching NGO | Armavir Development Center | WCC Armenia Inter-Church Charitable Round Table Foundation | FAO

- Following the Cash sector working group meeting co-chaired by UNICEF and UNHCR and MLSA, with participation of 38 members on November 14, at least 4 partners proceeded with signing the Agreement for providing cash and voucher support with MLSA, in alignment with the Government-led schemes, targeting both rent and utility support and multipurpose cash for basic needs programmes. The signature of respective Tripartite Contracts, including commitment letter/data sharing arrangements, with the USS and the bank of partner's choice are in process. The payment timelines and partners' eligibility considerations were shared with Nork Technology Center under MLSA to ensure that all payments can

be processed in due course considering end-of-the year financial closures.

- Specific considerations for providing voucher support are also being finalized by MLSA in collaboration with the Cash WG and will be presented to all partners on the next Cash WG meeting on 23 November. To participate in the sector working group meeting please write to [ahovakimyan@unicef.org](mailto:ahovakimyan@unicef.org).

## CROSS-CUTTING THEMES

*(Protection Mainstreaming, Accountability to Affected People, PSEA, Age, Gender, and Diversity)*

- SEA coordinators with the support of WHO will start working on the draft PSEA 2024 Action Plan.
- Regarding the PSEA training sessions for RRP and non-RRP organizations, the sector leads will share the focal points and alternates information to ensure the engagement in the PSEA trainings. Consequently, a series of training sessions may commence starting from the beginning of December, depending on the number of participants.

See the [Operational Data Portal for the Armenia Emergency](#) for more details on refugee population figures and information resources and the [Refugee Funding Tracker for RRP](#) funding information.

