

ARMENIA EMERGENCY REFUGEE RESPONSE

Inter-Agency Update 29 November - 5 December 2023



*A refugee woman is learning to embroider at the handicrafts club for refugee women.
Hrazdan, Kotayk province. ©UNHCR*

KEY FIGURES

30,000 refugee women and girls supported with GBV services and different types of assistance (e.g., dignity kits) in all provinces of Armenia.

2,831 children and caregivers reached with mental health and psycho-social support (MHPSS).

1,086 refugees (276 households) received 2,606 core relief items. In total, 71,660 core relief items to **15,951** refugees (4,728 households)

314 winter specific items were distributed, namely: heaters, winter jackets and winter gloves. In total distributed **1,840** winter specific items.

10 partners signed contracts with MLSA to support Government-led schemes, targeting both rent and utility support and multipurpose cash for basic needs programmes for refugees.

HIGHLIGHT: PENSIONS AND ALLOWANCES

The National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia approved regulations regarding the payment of pensions and allowances to refugees. As a result, the Government was authorized to define certain features regarding the realization of the right to pension and allowances of the refugees. In the next few days, the platform will be launched, through which persons up to 75 years old can apply, which will allow them to integrate into the pension system of the Republic of Armenia. Refugees over 75, as well as persons with the 1st or 2nd degrees of disability can currently receive the pension in cash on a voluntary basis, but there is a toolkit to encourage them to receive the pension and allowance noncash. Accordingly, in the case of cashless transactions, it is possible to receive a refund of 10 percent, but not more than 5,000 AMD.

It should be noted that the new Government Decree N 2100-N (adopted on 30 November 2023) provides specifics for refugees granted temporary protection. Particularly, they can be identified through the data of the state population register of the Republic of Armenia, which means refugees granted temporary protection should have a residence registration in Armenia. Meanwhile, pensions are not issued through online application if 1) the person is not a refugee under temporary protection; 2) does not have residence registration in the Republic of Armenia; 3) the electronic file of the person's pension is not available in pension database; 4) the payment of pension has been stopped as of the date of online application.

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 | IFRC | 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

- Migration and Citizenship Service of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Armenia updated humanitarian actors in the protection sector on the legal status of refugees in light of the Decree of the Government of the Republic of Armenia No. 1864-N "On Granting Temporary Protection to Refugees" from 26 October 2023.
- During the reporting period, protection monitoring interviews were conducted with 32 refugee households (covering 114 individuals) in 4 provinces and Yerevan. In total, since 1st November 1,527 households were interviewed to identify protection risks and individuals with specific needs (covering 7,041 individuals) in 10 provinces and Yerevan.
- During the reporting period, UNHCR's hotline has received 216 calls from refugees. Since 24 September 2023, UNHCR hotline has received over 2,433 calls from refugees, inquiring about accommodation, financial support, hygiene kits, household items, bedding sets and clothes. Refugees were referred to UNHCR's partners for NFI provision.
- More than 120 refugee families received counselling, including psychosocial support and referrals by WV Armenia Social workers on existing state and non-state support programs for refugees in Tavush, Gegharkunik, Syunik, Lori, and Aragatsotn regions.
- Mission Armenia NGO continued with provision of social services, legal assistance and psychosocial support in Yerevan and provinces of Armenia. 154 refugees were provided with social services, 93 refugees received legal assistance, and 39 refugees received psychosocial support in administrative districts of Yerevan, and Kotayk, Ararat, and Syunik provinces of Armenia.
- To participate in the sector working group meeting please write to daradkeh@unhcr.org and copy melikset@unhcr.org.

Child Protection Sub-Working Group

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

Members:

Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR) | UNFPA | Women's Support Center | GIZ | PINK Armenia | World Vision | Sexual Assault Crisis Center | IFRC | 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) | AGBU | Democracy International | Women's Resource Center

- 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.
- This week, UNICEF and partners involved in the Child Protection Sub-Working group have reached out to around 2,831 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.
- 1,273 children and caregivers reached with case management and follow up support by social workers including through a call center with support of UNICEF.
- To participate in the sector working group meeting please write to hkhemchyan@unicef.org and 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

- A recent GBV Sub-Sector meeting on 5 December 2023 marked the introduction of capacity assessment results. The collaboration with Sub-Sector members commenced the development of a robust capacity building plan.
- More than 30,000 refugee women and girls have already been reached through provision of GBV services and different types of assistance (e.g., dignity kits) in all provinces of Armenia.
- Winnet Goris has been actively providing vocational training in confectionery, cooking, sewing, and design. Additionally, introductory computer courses have commenced for 10 women, with a total of 41 refugee women engaged in professional training.
- For Equality NGO collaborated with the Women's Support Center, offering legal, psychosocial support, and case management services to refugee women.
- The Women's Resource Center educated 20 pregnant women in the Aragatsotn region on pregnancy, childbirth, and childcare. They also supported 150 women from Ararat and Kotayk regions with dignity kits.
- Women's Rights House provided social consultations to 33 refugees, along with legal and PSS services. They also targeted 24 women and children by providing vouchers for winter essentials.
- You Are Not Alone NGO delivered PSS services to 25 GBV survivors and women and girls at risk in the Vayots Dzor region. Additionally, they supported refugees in both PSS and legal services in the Ararat region.
- Resource Center for Women's Empowerment distributed dignity kits to refugee women supported from Women's Resource Center and UNFPA.
- UNFPA supported Women and Girls Safe Spaces to 72 refugee women, offering various services including sewing, embroidery therapy sessions, and psychological support.

- Family Without Violence NGO conducted Art Therapy PSS sessions, aiding 40 refugee women within their Women and Girls Safe Spaces.
- To date, GBV interventions reached 16,950 refugees organized by UNICEF, focusing on GBV prevention and mitigation. 311 service providers and organizations received capacity building activities on GBV in emergencies.
- To participate in the sector working group meeting please write to Lusine Sargsyan sargsyan@unfpa.org and Elsie Aroyan AROYAN@unhcr.org.



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

- UNICEF launched a joint programme on mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) in schools in collaboration with the state Pedagogical-Psychological Support Center (RPPC). The basic components of MHPSS in schools are the mainstreaming of a comprehensive MHPSS policy within existing education policies, and plans, including more targeted interventions for refugee children. UNESCO supports RPPC in contextualizing MHPSS diagnostic tools, guidelines, and training materials. The intervention would be accompanied by the capacity building for around 2,000 teachers and 630 school psychologists. These interventions will complement the provision of MHPSS to children, adolescents, and caregivers by other partners and throughout all relevant RRP sectors.
- In the last week, Armenian Red Cross society provided non-formal education to 431 children, including 389 refugee children through non-formal education settings.
- Step by Step Benevolent Foundation is planning to reach overall 1,997 pre-school age children and their families. Currently, the organization is conducting mapping to identify communities with the highest number of refugee population to select 20 preschools with higher potential to expand early learning spaces to enroll new students.
- To participate in the sector working group meeting please write to 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 276 households (1,086 individuals) received 2,606

core relief items through UNHCR support. The distributions took place in the provinces of Lori and Shirak covering a total of four communities.

- 314 winter specific items were distributed through UNHCR support, namely: heaters, winter jackets and winter gloves. The distribution trends show that most needs communicated to partners have been largely met and the distributions are shifting to a more targeted approach. You can find more information about the distribution of core relief items and winter specific items in UNHCR's external update.
- The technical assessment of buildings individuated by MLSA on 24 November is currently ongoing. Approximately 35 percent of the buildings have already been assessed by three partners (UNHCR, UNDP and AAH/ACF).
- In the framework of the PM, UNHCR Senior Shelter Officer also paid visits to the shelters provided by MLSA in Kotayk, Lori and Shirak provinces. The visits aimed to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the conditions, challenges, and needs within the shelter facilities. Out of the 7 shelters visited only 3 have the potential to be repurposed for accommodation purposes. Technical assessment of the buildings is ongoing in order to provide an estimated cost of refurbishments.
- Basic Needs group will meet bi-weekly, and to participate in the sector working group meeting please write to sobral@unhcr.org.



The Japanese delegation and UNHCR met with a refugee family in Areni community to learn about their well-being and evolving needs. December 2023. Vayots Dzor province. ©UNHCR



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 is currently renovating two shelters targeting elderly and most vulnerable refugees, providing space for up to 130 refugees. The project is aimed to be finished by December 2023. Furthermore, the assessment of another building, which requires more extensive interventions, is underway. It is anticipated to be finished by late spring 2024, which will accommodate an additional 150 refugees.
- To participate in the Resilience sector working group meeting please write to dianna.areyan@undp.org.



UNDP-UNHCR-supported renovation works of the community center in Verishen are close to completion. November 2023. ©Goris Municipality/UNDP



HEALTH AND NUTRITION 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 of Educational Psychologists (AACPEP) | 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

- IOM facilitated mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) for both refugees and local community members across three settlements: Kotayk, Ararat, and Armavir regions. 70 refugees benefited from these services (5 men, 6 women, 29 girls, and 30 boys). The support encompassed a range of interventions including group therapy/psycho-drama sessions, psychoeducational sessions, and individual therapy sessions.
- The Armenian Psychoanalytic Association organized a two-day training session on MHPSS for nurses, held on 2-3 December 2023 hosted at the American University of Armenia. The training involved instructing nurses in fundamental psychosocial skills through concurrent sessions conducted in five groups.
- The Union of Armenian Psychologists is conducting a study on mental health status among refugee groups residing in temporary locations. The aim is to evaluate the effectiveness of mental health interventions. According to the Union, refugees are encountering multiple challenges, all of which can cause psychological issues and potential mental health risks, leading to diverse symptoms such as apathy, anxiety, phobias, and depression.
- Several organizations continue to provide support to refugees across the country. The Armenian Psychiatric Association, Resilient Syunik NGO, and MSF continue to provide MHPSS. Ambra Mental Wellbeing Center NGO, UNAIDS, and ICRC provide refugees with access to health services and mental health consultations. Change Armenia, UNFPA, and AMAA maintain training for service providers. The Armenian Red Cross Society continues mental health consultations and training service providers. Henar has been providing primary health consultations. The Children of Armenia Fund has been supporting access to health services.
- To participate in the sector working group meeting, please write to esenamanovv@who.int.



UNAIDS and WFP have joined forces with a Cooperation Agreement to ensure access to crucial care for 80 refugees living with #HIV, and to break barriers and eliminate stigma. Yerevan, Armenia. ©UNIADS/WFP

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

- 10 members of the Cash cross sectoral WG co-chaired by UNICEF, UNHCR and MLSA proceeded with signing the agreement for providing cash (6 partners) and vouchers (4 partners) with MLSA, including in alignment with the Government-led schemes, targeting both rent and utility support and multipurpose cash for basic needs programmes. Considering payment timelines and partners' eligibility criteria, Nork Technology Center prepared respective beneficiary lists, pending transfer to partners upon signature of the Tripartite contract, including commitment letter/data sharing arrangements with the USS and the bank of choice (one partner has signed already).

- The Armenian Red Cross Society is conducting verification of beneficiary lists for rent and utility support in alignment with the Government programme to proceed with payments in the next reporting period.
- Following finalization of specific considerations for providing voucher support with MLSA in collaboration with the Cash cross sectoral WG, partner organizations are updating their planned voucher support activities (including locations, eligibility criteria, partner shops/vendors, transfer values etc.), which will be analyzed to avoid duplication and ensure a standardized approach. Indicative transfer values for food baskets, hygiene items and clothing shared by MLSA for reference, which will be finalized at a later stage also in consultation with other sectoral Working Groups.
- In the reporting period, 578 refugee families were reached with multipurpose vouchers by People in Need.
- To participate in the cross sectoral WG working group meeting please write to ahovakimyan@unicef.org

CROSS-CUTTING THEMES

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

Within the reporting period, UN Women organized a workshop focused on the “Introduction to Gender in Humanitarian Emergencies”. This workshop specifically addressed the topic of PSEA, encompassing both theoretical discussions and case studies. In parallel, UNICEF provided PSEA training to 20 professionals affiliated with 10 implementing partners.

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

