

ARMENIA EMERGENCY REFUGEE RESPONSE

Inter-Agency Update 8 November - 14 November 2023



Anna and Elina, refugee students, have successfully assumed their studies at the Law Faculty of the Yerevan State University thanks to the efforts of the Government of Armenia aimed to ensure access to tertiary education for refugee students.

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KEY FIGURES

109 household (516 individuals) s have been interviewed for Protection Monitoring in 10 communities.

4,269 children and adolescents reached with case management and follow-up.

2,894 school bags with supplies were distributed in the provinces of Tavush, Kotayk, Armavir and Gegharkunik.

1,415 (352 households) received 3,804 core relief items, namely blankets, bed linens, towels, and mattresses in the provinces of Tavush, Armavir, Aragatsotn, Vayots Dzor and Shirak.

7,615 in-kind family food parcels (123 metric tons), more than 40,200 portions of hot meals and about 4,800 ready-to-eat lunch boxes provided 38,811 refugees.

SITUATION OVERVIEW

- The Armenian authorities will amend the 2024 state budget draft to include the expenditures covering the pensions and benefits of refugees. On 3 November 2023, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs announced that refugees granted temporary protection status, can apply for pension to the regional centers of the Unified Social Service (USS).
- In addition to the existing Government programme of 6-month rental and utility cash assistance, Government announced an additional support of 50,000 AM (125 USD) for two months for vulnerable population based on vulnerabilities.
- As per the Government data, 3,490 refugees registered to access employment opportunities (in 49 territorial centers of the Unified Social Service). 1,336 were referred to various employers and 289 have already found a job.
- Government reported that 590 medical workers have been trained by the Ministry of Health, more than 70 medical workers are employed in various medical centers. Currently there are vacancies of 273 senior medical workers and 59 paramedical workers in the regions.
- UNHCR, Mission Armenia and People in Need provided a briefing about the Armenia Refugee Response Plan at the NGOs Regional Dialogue organized by the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA).

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

- **Protection Working Group Meeting**

Highlights of the meeting include discussion on the Protection and Solution Strategy, updates on Protection Monitoring, Child Protection activities and GBV (Gender Based Violence) activities. Médecins du Monde presented on burn-out prevention for frontline workers / vicarious trauma. The Sector agreed to strengthen interventions on protection and assistance needs of older person and persons with disabilities. UNHCR and UNFPA met to discuss the plan for older person. To participate in the sector working group meeting please write to daradkeh@unhcr.org and copy melikset@unhcr.org.

- On 10-12 November, UNHCR implementing partner Mission Armenia NGO in partnership with Migration and Citizenship Service and Yerevan State University organized the 12th three-day Refugee Law School for 25 law students from four universities of Armenia (Gyumri, Gavar and Yerevan). The event was held in Aghveran, with co-facilitation of sessions on both Refugee and Statelessness law by UNHCR and other national experts in the field. Participants included students who work in the legal clinics of these universities that provide pro-bono legal counselling in the country.
- To improve the quality of assistance provided to refugees, UNHCR together with Human Rights Defender's Office (HRDO) organized a session to provide support to 19 HRDO staff to deal with secondary traumatization and tools to prevent burnout on 13 November.
- Building on the longstanding cooperation with the border guards, UNHCR continues to extend knowledge and expertise to border guards standing at the frontline and ensuring access to the territory of Armenia for all those who are in need of international protection.
- 109 families (516 individuals) covering 10 communities interviewed by UNHCR Protection Monitoring Team. The protection monitoring aims to reach 2500 refugee households. An online dashboard is being developed to reflect the findings.
- Women's Rights House continue to provide free social assistance, psychological consultations and therapies, and legal support.
- Since 1 October 2023, UNHCR's hotline has received over 1,740 calls from refugees. Among the top reported needs were accommodation (37%), food (24%), bedding (15%), and household items (12%).



UNHCR together with Human Rights Defender's Office (HRDO) organized a session to provide support to HRDO staff to deal with secondary traumatization and tools to prevent burnout © RA HRDO

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 | 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)

- UNICEF and partners supported the expansion of services of 5 Child Friendly Spaces (CFS) to reach over 1,500 (300 additional this week) refugees, host community children and adolescents. To date, 4,269 (over 1000 additional this week) children and caregivers reached with case management and follow up support by social workers including through a call center with support of UNICEF.
- Out of 4000 children and caregivers provided with Psychological First Aid (PFA) so far, 2,229 children and caregivers received follow up community-based psychosocial support services.
- 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 221 frontline social service workforce professionals and 200 newly appointed national police officers were enhanced on PFA, psychosocial support in emergencies, child sensitive communication and "do no harm" approaches.

- Second meeting of the Child Protection Sub-Working group took place on November 8th co-chaired by MLSA and UNICEF. CP SWG ToR was consulted with the CP SWG and endorsed by MoLSA. 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 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

- GBV Sub-Sector meeting was conducted on 10 November. The adaptation of 5W was discussed, with identified need to ensure the clear understanding of service providers on their responsibilities in reporting to GBV Sub-Sector versus Protection sector and its other sub-sectors. The follow up session on orientation of the partner for populating GBV Sub-Sector 5W will take place during the next GBV Sub-Sector meeting. To participate in the sector working group meeting please write to Lusine Sargsyan sargsyan@unfpa.org and Elsie Aroyan AROYAN@unhcr.org.
- UNFPA conducted the training on Women and Girls Safe Spaces for 14 participants from the UNFPA implementing partners, including the representatives of MSLA, on 8 November.
- Partners continue to provide GBV MHPSS services for the affected women and girls.
- Women's right house provided psycho-social support (PSS) to 34 refugees.
- Winnet provided PSS support to 48 refugees women in Goris, including pregnant women. 11 pregnant women supported with PSS services in partnership with UNFPA.



UNFPA colleague talking with Mariam, a mother of a newborn, living with her extended family at a house offered to them by an older woman in Dzoragyugh. October 2023. Gegharkunik province. ©UNFPA/Aspo Manukian

- Awareness raising sessions on women's rights were conducted by Winnet in partnership with UNFPA as well, reaching 83 women and girls.
- Sose conducted PSS activities for 30 women, focusing on their skills, assets, and self-care; the meeting was also used to disseminate information on available services. The organization also provided individual PSS to 50 women.
- "For Equality" Human Rings NGO, organised awareness raising session on self-care, women's rights, and support service for GBV, reaching 16 refugees.
- Women support center is continuing to provide GBV Case management services, reporting one new case.
- Sector members are working to expand women and girls' safe spaces (WGSS) across the country. With the UNFPA support, the Women Support Center established 10 WGSS that will be available for women and girls within the next week.
- UNFPA supported Winnet to furnish and re-equip WGSS in Vernishen settlement.
- 34 women received professional training on sewing and fashion, and confectionery by Winnet.
- Winnet distributed 50 Dignity kits.



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 7 November, co-chaired by UNICEF and the MESCS with 16 participants representing 12 organizations. The issue of increased enrolment of school age children was acknowledged by members while also raising concerns on the fact of out of school children (OOSC) and those who are at risk of dropping out. The ministry official informed that the issue is under the education authority's attention and cross-sectoral collaboration and information exchange is key for identification and efficient referral of OOSC. Education related activities and sub-indicators linked to RRP indicators were defined and the methodological guides drafted and shared for review and finalization by partners.
- A total of 2,894 school bags with supplies were distributed, addressing mainly school aged population, in the provinces of Tavush, Kotayk, Armavir and Gegharkunik.
- UNICEF initiated a partnership to expand the overall capacity of early learning services. 20 preschool classrooms will be established and fully equipped in communities with high concentration of refugees with capacity to serve 600 young children. Meanwhile around 80 young children are already attending UNICEF-supported early learning centres and kindergartens.
- For school-age children, the establishment/operation of 11 learning spaces is in process in collaboration with an NGO partner and will allow the expansion of capacity of schools to include around 800 refugee children. To participate in the sector working group meeting please write to apoghosyan@unicef.org.



UNICEF has distributed school bags with stationery for students in primary, middle, and high schools across the Armavir, Ararat, Kotayk, Gegharkunik and Tavush regions.

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

- Distributions took place in the provinces of Tavush, Armavir, Aragatsotn, Vayots Dzor and Shirak. A total of 352 households (1,415 individuals) received 3,804 core relief items, namely blankets, bed linens, towels, and mattresses.
- In order to both upgrade existing conditions and increase accommodation capacity, renovation works started in a structure formerly used as a hospital in the municipality of Gyumri, Shirak province.
- UNDP continues the renovation of two shelters for the elderly and other most vulnerable refugees with capacity to host up to 130 people; 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 spring 2024, this building will host additional 150 refugees.
- UNDP supported introduction of mobile hybrid solar stations in host communities for facilitated access of refugee and local populations to clean energy for critical needs in emergency situations. The system encompasses solar power (PV) panels, a hybrid inverter, and a battery bank, that convert sunlight into chemical electricity in the batteries and back to electricity when needed. Overall, 52 stations are provided to public housing facilities, medical facilities, rapid response, emergency, and

essential service centers in the bordering communities of Gegharkunik, Vayots Dzor and Syunik regions.

- Shelter assessments are ongoing in Yerevan, Tavush, Kotayk, Lori and Syunik in order to inform programmatic intervention on shelter.
- Basic Needs group will meet bi-weekly, and to participate in the sector working group meeting please write to 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 40,200 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 8 out of 10 provinces Syunik, Armavir, Ararat, Lori, Kotayk, Shirak, Gegharkunik, and Tavush.
- 5,000 family food parcels (80 metric tons) are ready for distribution to up to another 20,000 refugees in November.



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 with generous assistance from SIDA will launch a program to support 400 refugees and host populations through three month paid on-the job modality which provides an opportunity to reskill/upskill and receive income for the whole period of internship.

- UNDP supported rehabilitation of the irrigation system in Tsovak settlement of Vardenis community by constructing a grid-connected PV facility of 20 kW capacity to subsidize irrigation pumping cost and renovation of distribution system. The average number of beneficiaries is over 500 farmers (at least 1800 people), including both refugees and host population.
- Four Women and Youth Advisory Councils adjunct to the Head of Communities formed with UNDP support co-designed four solutions for strengthening social cohesion and improving community services for both refugee and host community residents.
- ADB is currently exploring two avenues for possible support: enhancing the database for the refugees, including the digitalization and secure storage of personal data, and supporting the second stage of the E-Disability Platform implementation, with a particular focus on the integration of the data of displaced individuals with disabilities into the system. A project to address long term housing needs of refugees.
- Armenian Caritas started the implementation of the project "Reconstructing Lives for Strengthening" with the financial support of Secours Catholique Caritas France. The project aims to support refugees to regain social and economic self-reliance. Within twenty months, the project will target at least 120 households in Lori province, selected according to the criteria defined by the project. It's planned to provide social work services for the refugee's households, which envisages individual and group social work, referrals to state and non-state institutions, trainings, and formation of self-aid groups. Through provision of marketable skills, light livelihood assets and business micro-grants, they will be able to enhance self-employment opportunities, improve financial well-being, as a result meet the basic needs of their households based on their priorities. Advocacy efforts will raise public awareness within society regarding the issues faced by conflict-affected population.
- To participate in the Resilience sector working group meeting please write to dianna.areyan@undp.org.



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 (AACEP) | 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

- Health sector partners collaborate extensively to provide comprehensive mental health support, access to essential health services and primary healthcare. To participate in the sector working group meeting, please write to besenamanovv@who.int.
- The Armenian Psychiatric Association (APA) continue to provide 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.
- UNDP provided 12 tablets to the MoH to speed up the registration of refugees in the ArMed health information system to ensure their access to the health care services. In addition, UNDP supports registration of the refugees in Shirak region of Armenia in the ArMed health information system via mobile health care unit.
- In coordination with the Ministry of Health and regional health authorities UNICEF deployed 20 mobiles pediatric units in five regions. Over 3,000 refugee children have been reached. Each team includes two pediatricians, one nurse and one psychologist, who conduct identification and screening of children for mental health and other health and nutrition issues. The teams also refer children to psycho-social support and healthcare services and provide parents with age-specific counselling on health and nutrition-related childcare practices. UNICEF supported the development of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for mobile teams and frontline health specialists to provide quality primary health care services, including outreach. UNICEF is partnering with the MoH in monitoring the immunization status of refugee children and their rapid inclusion into the national Expanded Programme on Immunization programme. UNICEF delivered critical medicines and medical supplies to the MoH for distribution to health facilities, while the procurement of additional supplies is ongoing.
- UNFPA is continuing its support to the healthcare sector by enhancing the capabilities of healthcare professionals in delivering high-quality life-saving services for sexual and reproductive health. In pursuit of this objective, UNFPA is actively engaged in the provision of essential medical equipment and commodities, facilitated through the distribution of Reproductive Health (RH) kits.
- WHO co-developed a package of RCCE-IM materials with the MoH. The package included set of materials targeting access to health, navigating the health system, staying healthy in fall/winter, responding to the spread of Influenza, COVID-19 and other respiratory viruses, and mental health (including stress, depression, dementia, suicide, postpartum depression, mental health disorders, mental health myths and facts). In addition, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) page on provision of medical care for refugees was developed and placed at the MoH webpage. WHO engaged with the refugee population at the Healthy Lifestyle campaign implemented by MoH in Aragatson marz and distributed RCCE-IM materials. A social media campaign with 17 social media posts on Mental Health was launched.

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

- Cash sector convened the working group meeting co-chaired by UNICEF and UNHCR and MLSA, with participation of 40 members. The meeting highlighted the changes and updates to ongoing Government-led cash assistance programmes, including expansion of eligibility and adjustment of procedures for the 100,000 AMD one-off support and rollout of rent and utilities programme. Major outcomes included clarifications on the draft Agreement to be signed with MLSA and draft tripartite Contract, including commitment letter/data sharing, to be signed with the Unified Social Service and partner bank for providing cash and voucher support. To participate in the sector working group meeting please write to ahovakimyan@unicef.org
- The Sector has simplified and revised the package of templates for providing cash and voucher assistance, including through Government-led programmes. The revised package includes a generic Agreement between the Ministry and partners, and a more detailed Contract between the implementing partner,
- Unified Social Service and the bank of choice, as well as the data sharing protocol.
- Acted NGO has distributed a one-time voucher support to 1,256 refugees in Syunik region, and People in Need NGO has distributed vouchers to 5,080 refugees in Vayots Dzor region.

CROSS-CUTTING THEMES

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

- During the reporting period, an SOP on the unified UN Armenia PSEA phone number is being developed.
- UN women is working with Sector to mainstream Gender into the Response.
- Training and capacity building sessions for RRP partners on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse are being planned by WFP and UNHCR.

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.

