

Armenia

20 February – 5 March 2024

Since October 2023, the Government of the Republic of Armenia has registered **115,183 refugees** from the Karabakh region, among whom around 30,000 are children.

The forcible displacement has impacted refugees' lives and livelihoods, resulting in critical **humanitarian** needs. Needs are both immediate and long-term.

Refugee resilience has been a consideration from the outset of the emergency response. Refugee inclusion in national **development** plans and social cohesion are

KEY INDICATORS

115,183*

Reported newly arrived **refugees** as of 7 February 2024, according to the Migration and Citizenship Service, Ministry of Internal Affairs

48%*

Percent funded against the Refugee Response Plan (RRP) joint appeal

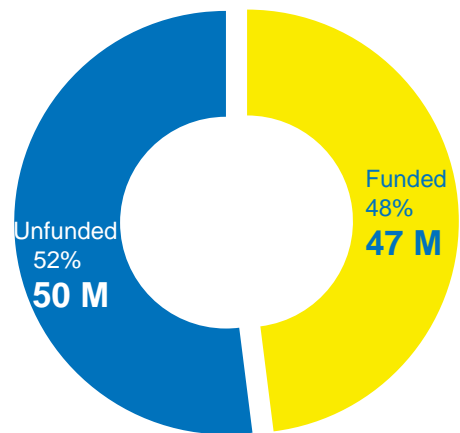
60

RRP appealing **partners**

FUNDING (AS OF 12 MARCH)

USD 97 M

requested for the Armenia situation



Update On Achievements

Operational Context

Children affected by crises frequently lack access to play-based early childhood education (ECE), leading to significant and enduring consequences. It is notable, therefore, that "Education Cannot Wait" (ECW), a global fund with a focus on education in emergencies and protracted crises, has committed a USD 1 million emergency response grant. The grant will be delivered by UNICEF in coordination with Armenia's Ministry of Education, Science, Culture, and Sports, and will expand access to early learning for refugee and host community. This adds to the early learning commitments from UNICEF at the onset of the crisis, through a partnership to establish 20 early learning classrooms in communities with high numbers of displaced populations from Karabakh.



*Little Victoria visited the children's corner set up by UNICEF in Goris, where refugee children can play and get psychosocial and pediatric support.
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Karine and her relatives are among many refugees staying with family and friends in Armenia. Twelve members of the extended family are staying in the two-bedroom home of Karine's brother-in-law in Vardenis, a rural town.
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Achievements



PROTECTION

Achievements and Impact

- During the reporting period, UNHCR conducted community protection monitoring missions to Hrazdan, Charetsavan and Abovyan in Kotayk province, Tatev and Goris in Syunik province as well as Artik, Gyumri and Akhuryan in Shirak province. The monitoring missions aimed to understand the main protection risks and challenges faced by refugees from Karabakh.
- UNHCR, through its partner NGO Mission Armenia, continued to conduct legal awareness raising sessions on the temporary protection status and the associated protection measures. In January and February 2024, 2,555 refugees were reached through these sessions conducted in 15 municipalities in 8 provinces and Yerevan.
- On 22 February, UNHCR conducted a Protection Induction and Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) training for Syunik-based staff members from the Unified Social Service (USS), municipalities, local and international NGOs. In total, 25 participants from Goris, Kapan, Sisian, and Tatev took part in the training.
- UNHCR used its community outreach activities as an opportunity to sensitize refugees on PSEA and the UN Zero Tolerance policy in that regard.

- The monthly Refugee Response Coordination Working Group Meeting for Syunik province was held on the 23rd of February with participants ranging from UN agencies, government and NGOs. Issues discussed include strengthening protection / legal support, access to health for persons with specific needs, referral mechanisms, livelihood opportunities and housing.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Key issues raised during the engagement with refugees are lack of access to employment opportunities and livelihoods, as well as uncertainty about ability to pay rent after March.



SUB-SECTOR CHILD PROTECTION

Achievements and Impact

- During the reporting period, 572 children (570 refugees and 2 host community children) accessed child friendly or other safe spaces. Of these, 205 children were provided with access in Yerevan, while the remaining 367 children accessed spaces in seven provinces of Armenia.
- During the same period, 168 refugee children were reached with individual case management. 11 children received services in Yerevan, while the remaining 157 children in six provinces of Armenia.
- 2,246 individuals (1,805 refugees and 441 host community members) were reached with mental health and psychosocial support in/outside child friendly or other safe spaces. Of these, 559 were children and 1,687 were adult beneficiaries. 1,551 benefited from these services in Yerevan, while 695 people received services in seven provinces of Armenia.
- 4 children were supported with alternative care, family tracing and/or reunification in Syunik.



SUB-SECTOR GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (GBV)

Achievements and Impact

- On 27 March, the Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Sub-Working Group, jointly led by UNHCR, UNFPA, and MLSA, convened its periodic meeting. 24 organizations specializing in GBV participated. The Sub-Working group intends to build the capacity of the participating organizations through the provision of technical support (trainings,

technical sessions, technical notes and guidelines). Organizations also presented their updates and the working group discussed the challenges they face in the field.

- UNHCR and UNFPA collaborated on the toolkit designed for working with adolescent girls, developed by UNFPA and tailored to the Armenian context. The toolkit aims to support relevant service providers in Armenia in establishing and managing activities for adolescent girls, focusing on structured group psychosocial activities. This initiative aims to support, protect, and empower adolescent girls in humanitarian settings.



EDUCATION

Achievements and Impact

- Education sector partners continue to support over 8,000 refugee and host community school and preschool age children by providing remedial education classes, recreational activities, and psycho-social support.
- 24 female teachers have received training in inclusive pedagogy and psychosocial first aid benefiting a total of 459 school age children (221 girls and 238 boys).
- A total of 5 kindergartens in Syunik region received didactic learning materials that will be used to support learning for 650 preschool age children in the region.
- UNICEF received USD 1 million in new grant funding from the Education Cannot Wait (ECW) dedicated exclusively to early childhood education. To expand access to early learning for refugee and host community children, UNICEF initiated identification of programme sites in close collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports, the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure and the Education Sector Group.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Over 80 percent of the school-age refugee children are now enrolled in school, however concerns remain related to monitoring of attendance and identification of children at risk of dropout with a specific focus on adolescent girls and boys. Access to preschool education remains an area of focus. Even before the refugee influx, preschool enrolment rates were low in Armenia (34% at national level and 27% in rural areas). With the additional strain of accommodating refugees seeking access to early childhood education services, the system faces heightened pressure.



Achievements and Impact

- Activities within the health sector in support of the Ministry of Health's efforts to respond to the needs of refugees and host communities have been carried out primarily along the key directions of the RRP: mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), primary healthcare, and sexual and reproductive health.
- WHO has continued deploying MHPSS mobile teams in Ararat and Armavir provinces enabling refugees and host communities to access specialized support. Additionally, MHPSS hotline continues to be functioning country-wide providing counselling and advice to people in need.
- WHO organized a training for 30 social workers from all provinces of Armenia and Yerevan. It aimed at enhancing communication skills on Risk Communication, Community Engagement, and Infodemic Management (RCCE-IM). During the event, organized via joint efforts of WHO Armenia and the Armenian Association of Social Workers, the participants were introduced to the principles of RCCE IM, as well as updated their knowledge on prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse.
- WHO organized a "Stress Management" training for 50 refugees and their family members who suffered burns from the fuel warehouse explosion. It deepened their knowledge and skills on stress resilience. The training was organized in collaboration between WHO and the Mental Health and Psychosocial Society of the Victims of the Fuel Depot Explosion. Apart from such courses, the activities planned within the framework of the program are to conduct group therapies and individual work, as well as to provide counseling by mental health professionals.
- Upon request of the Ministry of Health, WHO conducted pre-hospital life support trainings for healthcare workers with technical support from ICRC in Agheknadzor and Kapan.
- WHO organized field visits to Vayodzor and Syunik provinces to gain a deeper understanding of the remaining needs of refugees and to engage in discussions with rural healthcare workers. A behavioral and cultural insight survey has been proposed to the Ministry of Health to better understand the reasons behind approximately 30% of the refugees not being registered in the national eHealth system enabling access to the state-provided health services.
- IOM continued deploying mobile medical teams to provide primary health services with varying health specializations and referral mechanisms and MHPSS consultations in provinces hosting refugees: Armavir, Ararat, Aragatsotn, Gergarkunik, Kotayk, Lori and Vayots Dzor.
- UNFPA conducted accredited Minimum Initial Service Package for sexual and reproductive services (MISP) training for healthcare providers from Kotayk region reaching 31 healthcare workers.

- Medecins du Monde (MdM) continued providing specialized psychiatric support to refugee patients in Aragatsotn, Ararat, Syunik, as well as Yerevan.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- MHPSS partners report that refugee needs and demands for MHPSS services are increasing.
- WHO reported that rehabilitation needs of burn victims and individuals with psychiatric conditions will remain, thus needing to ensure that residual needs are met with potentially non-response related programmatic funding.
- Médecins du Monde providing psychiatric care to refugees reported two critical MHPSS issues: (i) clinical psychologists are predominantly available within the private healthcare sector in Armenia, rather than the state-funded system, thus limiting accessibility of such critical service; (ii) psychiatric care in the country is utilizing old-generation neuroleptics with severe side effects that should not be used anymore.
- UMCOR Armenia Foundation has reported vulnerabilities for people with mental disabilities. Greater and longer-term attention should be needed in this area.
- IOM reported increasing requests for children and educators, in coordination with the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education, for tailored MHPSS activities.



FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

Achievements and Impact

- In February 2024, WFP started cash transfers through food cards to refugees and made its first emergency cash transfer to 1,019 refugees (175 households). It is planned to reach about 23,000 refugees through cash transfers by food cards during the February-April period.
- Based on refugees' continued food needs for winter / early spring period and in line with the Government priorities, targeting, and assistance requirements, as of March 2024 WFP distributed pre-packed food parcels to about 60,000 refugees (244 metric tons of food). Second and third tranches will be implemented in March 2024 to the same refugees, with the support of USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) and the UN's Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), covering the food needs of refugees residing in Aragatsotn, Ararat, Armavir, Gegharkunik, Kotayk, Lori, Shirak, and Tavush provinces.
- As of January 2024, WFP has provided food assistance to 58,811 refugees. Assistance included provision of hot meals and ready-to-eat lunch boxes to 8,351 refugees in registration and crisis centers and 12,615 family food parcels (200 metric tons) to 50,460 refugees across all 10 provinces of Armenia.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- To develop context-specific activities for livelihood support and integration needs for refugees and host communities, WFP initiated the analysis of barriers and opportunities for socio-economic integration of refugees. Also, in January 2024, WFP started its 6th Food Security and Vulnerability Assessment covering refugees and host communities.



SHELTER AND NFIs

Achievements and Impact

- Renovation works to increase accommodation capacity of social housing facilities are scaling up with partners (UNDP, IOM and Action against Hunger) working in several locations in Shirak, Tavush, Yerevan, and Ararat. Structures vary in scale and typology, having both collective and private housing units.
- Identification of households to be assisted with private house repairs is ongoing in the regions of Vayots Dzor and Syunik by UNHCR's partner, AAH.
- As planned, the last round of major distributions of winter related NFIs (mostly clothing and heaters) was completed in late February and early March.



RESILIENCE

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- FAO implemented Context Analyses of the Agricultural and Livelihood Needs of the Refugee Population Displaced from Nagorno Karabakh. Most refugee families (87%) expressed their intention to resume agricultural activities, with 49% reporting they plan to do so within the next six months. Families preparing to start or resume agricultural activities intend to engage in livestock production (89%) and horticulture and crop cultivation (68%). More than half intend to engage in both livestock production and crop cultivation (57%) and 32% solely in animal breeding. For those stating they intend to resume or start agricultural activities, the challenges are access to finance to procure inputs (92%), access to land (60%), and uncertainty regarding the duration of their stay in their current location (9%).
- The analysis reveals that the support most needed for the resumption of agricultural activities, by preference, is provision of poultry (80%), pigs (70%), fodder (60%), cattle (46%), followed by vegetable seeds (46%), cattle barn/poultry barn (44%), and access to land (41%). The analysis identified challenges for displaced families integrating into

the local environment, emphasizing climate, geography, and financial resources, as well as limited natural resources (free arable lands, grasslands, and pastures).



CASH WORKING GROUP

Achievements and Impact

- All partners joining Government-led cash programmes or providing voucher support have finalized contractual arrangements with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MLSA) and the Unified Social Service (USS).
- In the reporting period, an additional 1,414 refugee children aged 0-9 (total of 12,359) (UNICEF) and 152 pregnant and lactating women received multipurpose vouchers (total of 913) (UNICEF/UNFPA). The distribution was accompanied with information sessions in Yerevan and target regions (including on voucher use, data protection, GBV risk mitigation and prevention, complaint and feedback mechanisms), as well as the provision of awareness raising materials on immunization, breastfeeding, nutrition, parenting and others.
- During the reporting period, 1,628 refugees benefitted from multipurpose vouchers to cover various basic needs (Caritas, Partnership and Teaching NGO, ACTED).
- Some other voucher programmes are in preparatory stages and discussions with MLSA and local communities are ongoing (e.g. Action against Hunger, People in Need, Armenian Caritas).
- Post-distribution monitoring exercise has been completed by ICRC, while others are in design or implementation phases.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- The Deputy Prime Minister announced the development and rollout of an additional multipurpose cash support programme targeting children, persons with disabilities and older persons with monthly payments (tentatively scheduled for April-December 2024). However, at the time of reporting, the dedicated Government decree and regulation with more details have not been approved yet. Partners will be encouraged to join the new initiative following developed mechanisms and procedures by the Cash Working Group.
- The voucher mapping and distribution reveals under-coverage in certain provinces and differences in targeting approaches and transfer values. Further coordination and alignment to national social protection thresholds are needed. Additional needs that can be covered by voucher support include household appliances, winterization, furniture items, and medicine.

- There is a need for continuous awareness raising on both Government cash schemes and voucher support provided by partners with simple and easy-to-understand messaging, as well as equitable and transparent criteria to avoid issues of social cohesion and dissatisfaction.

Cross-Cutting Task Forces

GENDER TASK FORCE

- The Gender Task Force (GTF) monthly meeting took place on 28 February. It focused on presenting the initial findings from the Rapid Gender Analysis (RGA) to the members as part of the validation process. At the same time, the GTF is preparing a Gender Alert which aims to cover gender perspectives with disability inclusion in the refugee response.

MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT (MHPSS) TASK FORCE

- The MHPSS Task Force has compiled the emergency MHPSS service mapping, which will be shared with ISWG members for their review.
- Contents have been selected for an orientation training targeting programme managers in all sectors conducting MHPSS activities. Next steps include revising the Armenian language materials, identifying trainers, and securing resources for the training. The objective of the training is to create a common framework for talking about and understanding MHPSS programming that will enable inter-sector collaboration across the humanitarian-development spectrum.

Working in partnership

- The inter-agency coordination architecture facilitates partnership in the humanitarian response by creating the fora needed for communication, collaboration, and operational coordination. The Refugee Coordination Forum, chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister, is the highest level body, under which the Inter-Sector Coordination Group (ISCG), Inter-Sector Working Group (ISWG), and sectoral Working Groups and Sub-Working Groups sit. There are currently two task forces under the ISWG, the Gender Task Force and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) Task Force.

Financial Information

Agencies are very grateful for the financial support provided by donors who have contributed to their activities with unearmarked and broadly earmarked funds as well as for those who have contributed directly to the operation.

Donors who have contributed to the operation:

- Armenia
- Australia
- Austria
- Canada
- Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF)
- Czech Republic
- European Union
- Finland
- France
- Japan
- Norway
- Poland
- Portugal
- Spain
- Sweden
- Switzerland
- United States of America
- Private donors and foundations

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LINKS

[UNHCR Armenia – Operational Data Portal - Armenia](#)