

# ARMENIA

## INTER-AGENCY OPERATIONAL UPDATE



10 December 2020 - 1 February 2021

### KEY FIGURES

**USD 62,1 M**

Total Financial Requirements for the Inter-Agency Response Plan (from October 2021 – end of June 2021)

**90,640**

Refugee-like population from NK

**88%**

Women and children among spontaneous arrivals from NK

**18,074**

Individuals reached by the monthly food assistance (of which 9,674 from the refugee-like community)

**16,000**

Individuals hygiene kits distributed during the reporting period across all marzes.

**1,269**

Persons reached by MHPSS activities, including through individuals and group interventions

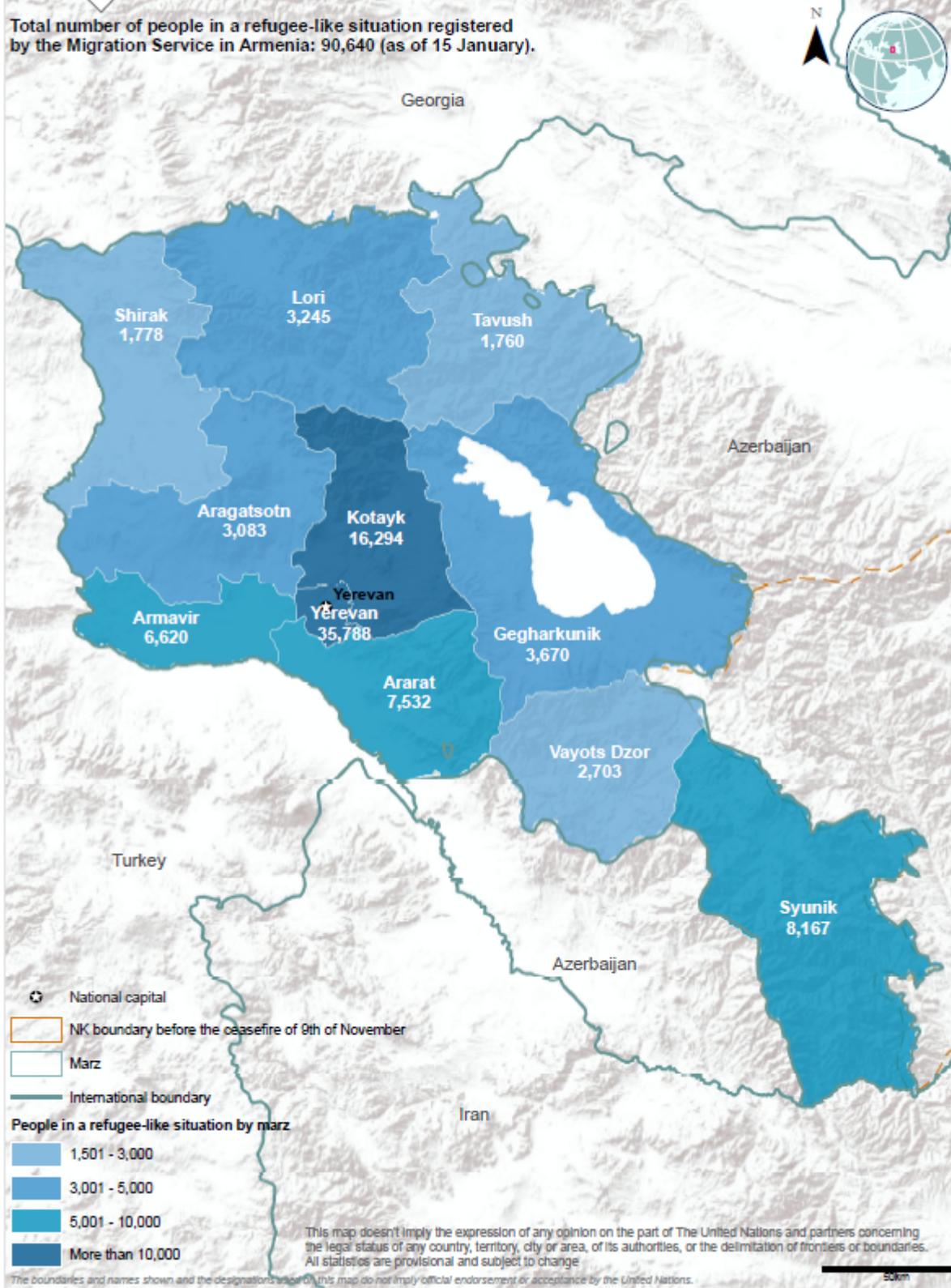
**135,347**

Persons reached by risk communication campaigns focusing on COVID-19 prevention and MHPSS

### HIGHLIGHTS

- The UN system in Armenia continues to operate with a coordination structure put in place under the lead of the Resident Coordinator's Office and UNHCR to coordinate humanitarian efforts and maximize the efficiency of the response in Armenia to the crisis in NK.
- To date, 13 UN agencies, 22 international NGOs, 13 national NGOs, 2 intergovernmental organizations, 5 Government entities, and 1 international organizations are part of the coordination structure and engage across 5 operational working groups (Shelter & NFI, Protection, Food Security & Nutrition, Health, Early Recovery) and 3 sub-working groups (Child Protection, Education, Cash). Two Working Groups (WG) are co-led by NGO partners.
- Under the leadership of UNHCR and the Resident Coordinator Office in Armenia, the Inter-Agency Response Plan 2020-2021 to address the broader humanitarian consequences of the NK crisis has been finalized and launched on 22<sup>nd</sup> of January with Government and the local donor community. This country-specific plan covers a period of nine months (from October 2020 until end of June 2021), and will serve as a coordination, advocacy and resource mobilization tool. It brings together 36 operational partners involved in the response plan with over 180 projects in total and total financial requirements amounting USD 62,7M for the whole period.
- Priority needs remain unchanged compared to the previous reporting period, especially in light of the winter, and continue to include cash for winterization, as well as increasing needs-based, predictable and long-term support to those families, who will be unable to return both in the short- and long-term. At the same time, cash for food and non-food items should be embedded in future Government interventions together with support to host families.
- Monitoring of returns and assessments of return intentions have shown that most of the refugee-like population will remain in Armenia for the winter months with 63% not willing to go back home or declaring that they do not know.
  - The daily monitoring of returns from Yerevan (Kilikia bus station) to Nagorno-Karabakh continues. To date, it is estimated that some 24,000 individuals having returned as of 20<sup>th</sup> January 2021. However, the nature and sustainability of these returns are yet to be determined, as many of the interviewees at the point of departure have declared it was not their first trip to NK.
  - Security, access to livelihoods, repairs to housing, and restoration of infrastructure were cited as main conditions that need to be in place for returns.

Information Management Working Group (IMWG) product supported by UNRCO and UNHCR



# OPERATIONAL CONTEXT

---

On 27 September 2020, heavy clashes broke out along the line of contact (LoC) and quickly expanded to other areas in and around Nagorno Karabakh (NK), until a nine-point ceasefire agreement was signed between Armenia, Azerbaijan and the Federation of Russia during the night of 9-10 November. The six weeks of conflict resulted in significant civilian casualties and the destruction of many houses and public infrastructure in the NK conflict zone, including schools, roads and communication networks. As a result, at the peak of the crisis, it is estimated that the majority of the population living in NK had fled to Armenia.

According to the Armenian Migration Service, some 90,640 persons<sup>1</sup> are in a refugee-like situation in Armenia, spread across the ten regions of the country,<sup>2</sup> and Yerevan. The vast majority (around 88 percent) are women and children.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, various reports indicate that some 20,000 individuals have returned to NK since mid-November, but the nature and sustainability of these returns are yet to be determined. While the ceasefire agreement is currently holding, concerns have emerged due to reports of punctual incidents, which could affect the willingness of the population from NK to return. Due to the current winter weather, severely damaged infrastructure and concerns over security in NK, the majority of the refugee-like population in Armenia will likely opt to remain in Armenia for the coming months. This is corroborated by preliminary intention surveys showing that 70 per cent of arrivals to Armenia from NK have no intention to return for now or remain unsure if they will return.

The conflict aggravated an already fragile socioeconomic situation in Armenia, also compounded by the impact of COVID-19. This has left the refugee-like population with very few prospects for employment and livelihood opportunities and has further stretched the limited resources in the cities and localities where they have settled.

The Government of Armenia (GoA), at both national and local levels, has responded to the needs of new arrivals, providing critical support since the onset of the emergency. Host communities warmly welcomed the refugee-like population from NK, sharing their accommodation, food and available resources. The Government provided some communal shelters for the new arrivals and has recently been rolling out several cash assistance programmes for the affected population. According to various needs assessments and the protection monitoring, the refugee-like population reports feeling safe and secure in the host community and is not experiencing challenges related to social cohesion. However, they indicate the longer-term concern of becoming an economic burden on their hosts, due to the unknown duration of their stay in Armenia, which they perceive may result in a decreasing willingness of receiving communities to host them, if adequate support is not provided.

The impact of the conflict on host communities and refugee-like populations, includes physical, social, mental and financial aspects, and is adding pressure on institutions and their capacities to quantify, coordinate, finance and address essential needs. Host community households that had previously been socioeconomically stable may face significant challenges in covering the cost of rent and utilities and providing food as a result of hosting refugee-like families from NK.

Key findings from the different need assessments and from the protection monitoring exercise, held respectively in October, and continuously since November 2020, indicated that the most immediate needs of the refugee-like population are related to shelter and housing solutions, cash assistance, access to employment, food assistance, clothing and housing items, especially with the harsh winter months having already started. These findings also show urgent needs in the area of mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS); 86% of the spontaneous arrivals so far have declared that they are facing some form of stress, mainly linked to the conflict, but also the loss of hope for the future, loss of property and livelihood.

---

<sup>1</sup> As of 28<sup>th</sup> January 2021

<sup>2</sup> Aragatsotn, Ararat, Armavir, Gegharkunik, Kotayk, Lori, Shirak, Syunik, Tavush, and Vayots Dzor.

<sup>3</sup> REACH Rapid Needs Assessment of Displaced Population from NK, 10-20 October 2020.

# UPDATE ON ACHIEVEMENTS

---



## Current Situation

The situation remains fluid and requires continuous monitoring at all levels. While hosting communities are still mobilized in receiving persons from NK, sharing accommodation and offering support, reports were received in December 2020 on relocations in certain communities following requests to vacate private shelters such as hotels and hostels.

## Identified Priority Needs

Preliminary results of the protection monitoring, have identified the following main needs among the spontaneous arrivals in order of priority:

- Shelter;
- Cash;
- Employment;
- Food;
- Clothing;
- Access to healthcare;
- Household items;
- Hygiene items;
- Education.

## Achievements and Impact

- The protection monitoring exercise has been ongoing since November 2020 with a total of 248 refugee-like households / 984 individuals being interviewed (face-to-face or by telephone). The protection monitoring questionnaire included individual as well as household level questions. In total, 984 individuals were monitored. 45% of those covered by the protection monitoring interviews are adults between 18 and 59, 44% are children and 11% are over 60 years of age. The gender composition is 62% female and 38% male. This exercise aims at providing indications on return intentions, living conditions, access to services, financial challenges, and social cohesion and security;
- Daily monitoring of returns from Yerevan to Stepanakert is ongoing since 14 November 2020. As of 20<sup>th</sup> January 2021, an estimate 24,000 individuals have returned to NK since mid-November, but the nature and sustainability of these returns are yet to be determined. The monitoring is focused on the organization of departures, observation of the profile of returnees and their possible specific needs, use of COVID-19 preventive measures, collection of individual information through random interviews at the departure place. Lately the pace of return has significantly decreased and most interviewees explained it was not their first trip to NK.
- For those who have already returned, remote interviews continue in order to provide information on the challenges they face as well as their living conditions. Structured phone interviews were conducted with returnees in the Nagorno-Karabakh to assess the situation and to reveal major protection related issues 137 phone calls were conducted as of 19 December 2020 from which 121 returnees agreed to participate in the interviews.
- Multi-Sector Needs Assessment was finalized and the final report to be released in the coming weeks.
- Efforts were undertaken to strengthen coordination of assistance and overall response at the local level through advocating for designation of social workers responsible for specific collective shelters and offering support to the social workers engaged.
- Psychosocial support offered through a hotline to more than 10,000 persons (the number may include nationals as well) as well as in different communities through group activities followed by individual sessions based on the identified needs.
- Legal counseling and referrals were offered via phone and in person in Yerevan, Gyumri and Vanadzor including on documentaiton, access to assistance programmes and collective property interests.
- Activities aimed at capacity building and psychological well-being of women, such as handicraft work and activities promoting social interaction were supported.

## Remaining Gaps

- The continuing lack of access to State registration processes and limitations in access to regular detailed data, particularly on vulnerabilities of the population, complicates the timely identification of the categories most in need among the spontaneous arrivals and delays assistance. While additional data on the most vulnerable is being collected through the ongoing protection monitoring activities, this is a time and resource consuming exercise, and does not provide a comprehensive picture, delaying our humanitarian response.
- The return monitoring has revealed deficiencies in the way returns are organized, in particular lack of boarding priority and special conditions for persons with specific needs, absence of safety and security measures (presence of the police and ambulance), and a general lack of COVID-19 preventive measures, which are not promoted and followed.
- The sustainability of private assistance currently being provided by host communities is a challenge in the medium to longer term and a more systematized approach is required to sustain interest and ability to host displaced persons.
- Coordination of assistance at regional/local level is also a continuing challenge and ensuring regular contacts with the local authorities remains a priority.
- Growing concerns are being reported among the displaced population, in particular those who arrived from regions recently handed over to Azerbaijan, about their status and rights in Armenia.

## Recommended Action

- ⇒ Continue protection and return monitoring activities;
- ⇒ Strengthen communication with communities and raise awareness on access to basic rights, available services and assistance programs;
- ⇒ Identify problems with access to the state assistance programs and applications processing as well as access to other rights and services; provide individual legal assistance and support and undertake advocacy to address the systemic issues;
- ⇒ Engage and support the Government on the development of a mid and long-term response strategy with primary focus on persons with specific needs and promotion of sustainable development solutions.



## Child Protection Sub-Working Group

---

### Current Situation

The child protection response continues as planned, including mostly case management support, MHPSS and capacity building of local social service professionals, paraprofessionals and volunteers to ensure scaled up and continuous support at community level. In parallel to direct provision of services, there is more focus on strengthening the existing community-based services through establishment of child friendly spaces and provision of support to professionals.

### Identified Priority Needs

With hard socio-economic conditions for most refugee-like families in Armenia, the stress factors increase and MHPSS remains one of the most pressing needs both for parents and children. Enhancing local capacity for child protection in emergencies has been identified as a priority need even in communities, where social services are capable and operational. Most of the social service professionals at community level do not have experience and skills for working with families and protecting children in emergencies, so capacity building interventions are largely needed.

### Achievements and Impact

Organizations working in the area of child protection have continued to implement variety of interventions to reduce/prevent exposition to protection risks for children and increase the resilience of families and children in coping with the consequences of the conflict. Since the beginning of the response, the following results have been achieved:

- Residential care services, including MHPSS, provided to 28 children from NK boarding schools left without parental care;
- 145 displaced families enrolled into family strengthening programmes and shelter provided to nine displaced families;

- Eight unaccompanied and separated children identified and provided with emergency foster care and support; in six cases, children were successfully reunited with their parent or close family member;
- Child Protection Hotline and Helpline for social service workforce professionals, providing 24/7 response, advice and guidance on child protection cases;
- Capacity building of 940 social service workforce professionals (social workers, teachers, school psychologists, youth workers) on psychological first aid and MHPSS;
- 355 children, 520 adolescents and 394 parents have benefited from MHPSS, including through individual and group interventions, art and music;
- 1,257 people received support, including referrals and provision of care packages;
- 25 refugee-like adolescents trained as peer support volunteers for continuous provision of MHPSS;
- 100 at-home art kits distributed to the most vulnerable adolescents;
- 562 Children benefited of resilience programmes organized in Kotayk, Ararat and Vayots Dzor regions (to be expanded to other regions), as well as training of volunteers in Syunik and Gegharkunik regions;
- Mobile MPHSS teams were deployed in the communities adjacent to Goris and supported 180 children;
- 20,000 children, adolescents, parents and professionals reached through family strengthening interventions, case management support and MHPSS (including awareness raising on MHPSS, psychological first aid, provision of direct PSS through individual and group interventions, art, music leisure and recreation activities, referrals) and capacity-building for professionals, paraprofessionals and volunteers.

### Remaining Gaps

- The main challenge remains the coordination of different aspects of the response (CP, food, NFI, shelter, etc.) at the community and regional level. While some regions (e.g. Shirak) have demonstrated a good record of coordination, facilitated by regional authorities and followed up by local authorities, which enabled partners working in those regions to closely coordinate different types of support and reach the most vulnerable, the situation is not equally managed across regions, resulting in potential duplications or lack of support.
- Another challenge is the need to provide at least general level MHPSS to the population returning to NK.

### Recommended Action

- ⇒ Establishment of closer link with the responsible government agencies by inviting focal point from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs to participate in the work of the CPSWG.
- ⇒ Simplification of the information management and visualization tools to enable more smooth cooperation and coordination between different response partners.



## Education Sub-Working Group

### Current Situation

Schools resumed face-to-face classes on 11 January 2021 adhering to the COVID-19 prevention measures. According to the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport (MoESCS) around 7,500 displaced children are registered in EMIS and are attending school in Armenia. They are mainly from Shushi, Hadrut, Lachin and Qarvachar and, most probably, they will not return to NK. Access to early childhood education services continue to be restricted not only for displaced but also for young children in Armenia. To address the issue the MoESCS has sent an official request to the Ministry of Health asking to permit the opening of public kindergartens and preschool institutions, as Covid19 restrictions have been lifted out and requirement for public gathering have been softened, while private KG, while very much needed are opened. Admission to KGs is also stopped since COVID-19 outbreak. Education sub-working group continues to work closely with the MoESCS.

### Identified Priority Needs

With the refugee-like population is still moving within Armenia, there is a need to put in place a sound monitoring system for tracking children participation in schooling.

Displaced young people are not informed about the state policy on enrolment/continuation of tertiary education in Armenian institutions.

### **Achievements and Impact**

- 8,090 displaced children received basic learning supplies, including ICT;
- Around 950 children attending fully operational child friendly spaces benefit from recreational, first aid psychological and PSS activities;
- 11 early learning corners provide services for 440 3-6-year-old children;
- Save the Children and ARCS provide ongoing training for education service providers on education in emergency, protection in emergency, child safeguarding, positive parenting, GBV and PSS;
- UNICEF in partnership with ARCS launched Explosive Ordnance Risk education (EORE) project aimed to reach 2,400 people (including 1000 children);
- 420 displaced children participated in art-therapy sessions and social integration activities.

### **Remaining Gaps**

- Reopening of Kindergarten and full operation continue to be a major gap
- Tracking out of school children and responding to identified need to ensure their education continuity.

### **Recommended Action**

- ⇒ Follow up with MoESCS and local self-governance officials on safe operation of KGs
- ⇒ Set up a mechanism for monitoring of education participation of displaced children.



## **Shelter and NFI Working Group**

---

### **Current Situation**

Many partners positioned themselves in view of supporting the shelter-related interventions. In addition to UNDP, ICRC also started shelter related activities in terms of repairs and utility coverage. UNHCR, IOM and Action Against Hunger are about to start the shelter repair interventions. Both for basic needs and shelter, organizations are focusing on cash-based interventions, and thanks to the on-going discussion with the GoA solutions are expected towards the end of January / beginning of February.

### **Identified Priority Needs**

Throughout the winter period, the priority needs remain winter-related items, particularly heating for shelters and warm clothing for children and adults.

### **Achievements and Impact**

- The Shelter/NFI WG addressed the most urgent needs related to hygiene supplies: Over 16,000 individual kits and 805 family kits were distributed in various locations, including Yerevan. In addition, 500 packages of baby diapers were provided to spontaneous arrivals from NK in Goris, Sisian and Kapan.
- As part of the winterization response, 8,000 bedding kits, including bed linen, pillows and winter blankets, were distributed in various regions, including Yerevan. In total, 21,000 winter blankets and around 2,500 heaters were distributed across different marzes, and 2,250 children in Vardenis, Kotyak, Hrazdan and Goris benefited from warm clothing.
- In response to shelter needs, 2,300 foldable beds have been distributed to families mainly in Gegharkunik, Tavush, Syunik, Kotayk and other regions.
- UNDP, as per the request by the Government, covered the payment of utilities costs for 64 facilities.

## Remaining Gaps

- The main challenge remains the availability of regularly updated detailed data on the displaced population, including those who returned to NK, which is a concern for the response and planning purposes.
- Cash-based interventions have been identified as the most appropriate type of assistance in the Armenian context and preferred option by the concerned population. Despite a recent openness with regard to cash assistance, in the absence of the Government's authorization to proceed with humanitarian cash transfers, this modality is still pending implementation.
- Local authorities are lacking capacity to undertake quick distribution of relief items.

## Recommended Action

- ⇒ Continue advocacy for more favorable conditions for cash-based interventions in order to transfer in-kind provision of NFIs into cash for NFIs in close coordination with the Government, including on adequate targeting.
- ⇒ Continue to work directly with the social workers/municipalities and building their capacity to identify the needs of families and support with a quick distribution of items.
- ⇒ Continue efforts to get regular updates with accurate disaggregated data from the Government to better inform the humanitarian response.



## Cash Sub-Working Group

---

### Current Situation

The GoA accelerated the development and implementation of various cash-based interventions, rolling out with a total of 15 cash support programmes. These programmes range from provision of one-time support with the amount of the minimum salary value (68,000 AMD), and include a top-up for utilities; one-time support to the refugee-like population from territories handed over to Azerbaijan, or whose properties have become uninhabitable; periodic support to the refugee-like population host families; support to other persons affected by the September conflict; reimbursement of tuition fees; one-time year support for preschool age children and two cash for work programmes (public works and for gaining work experience).

Moreover, NK authorities have secured the provision of free utilities and communication services for a period of one year for families residing in NK. Applications for the programmes are predominantly submitted online to the Social Security Service, while distribution is done via Haypost/Artsakhpost or banks. A complaints mechanism capturing feedback from beneficiaries has been developed, and integrated to the online applications, in view of addressing individual cases and complaints. Partners willing to provide support to collective shelters, can opt for direct reimbursement of utility payments to service providers, upon agreement with MoLSA and MoTAI (in coordination with Governor's Offices and communities). MoLSA is also conducting rapid needs assessment of affected families, which should inform further potential cash-based interventions.

### Identified Priority Needs

Priority needs include cash for winterization (utilities, warm clothes), as well as more needs based, predictable and long-term support to those families, who will be unable to return both in the short-term and long-term. At the same time, cash for food and NFIs should be embedded in future Government interventions in the design phase. Moreover, issues of cash for rent can be considered. Special needs of children, including children with disabilities, children under 5, female-headed households and others, as well as other vulnerable groups should be considered in the design of cash interventions.

### Achievements and Impact

- As a result of joint advocacy by the Cash Coordination Sub-Working Group (SWG), and following an extensive discussion with the MoLSA and the Deputy Prime Minister's Office, standard operating procedures on supporting Government-led cash-based interventions are being drafted. Sample Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), agreements and non-disclosure terms have been developed by the Government and were submitted to the Cash Coordination SWG members for their review and feedback. This will permit to harmonize and align support by development partners to Government-led programmes through the Treasury system, Haypost or banks.

- Based on a request from the Cash Coordination SWG, the Government has revised application forms for host families, including a clause for beneficiary acceptance for data sharing. This will enable the provision of the beneficiary lists to partners involved in the cash assistance response. Other issues, such as more disaggregated data, are also being considered.
- A harmonized post-distribution monitoring tool has been developed and rolled-out, enabling the reception of initial feedbacks by all partners involved in the cash assistance. The tool will be translated in Armenian and serve as a systematic instrument for PDM.

### Remaining Gaps

- Challenges include the relatively limited scope of participation of group members in the design of these cash support programmes and determination of transfer values, including identification of beneficiaries. Despite positive results in the development of operational modalities and related procedures for cash-based interventions, the issue of beneficiary data sharing is still being discussed (especially with regard to which set of data will be provided, and when), and solutions being sought, including for the post-distribution monitoring.
- In addition, the Government has reached out to development partners to financially support Government-led cash-based interventions, with a particular focus on cash for work programmes and support to host families, as well as future recurrent payments, considering their scope and size and the funding gap needed for their full implementation.

### Recommended Action

- ⇒ Constant communication with MoLSA and DPM's office on next procedural steps in regard to the identified two transfer options (Treasury and Haypost), including key elements of post-distribution monitoring, beneficiary selection, transfer values etc.
- ⇒ Receive more clarity from MoLSA and DPM's office on the number of individuals/households affected by NK conflict and in need of cash support, including value and duration, as well as the role of development partners.



## Food Security and Nutrition Working Group

### Current Situation

According to information provided by the Government of Armenia, 62% of the 90,000 persons who arrived in Armenia from the Nagorno Karabakh conflict zone are in need of food assistance. According to a nationwide household food security assessment conducted by WFP in December 2020, since the start of the conflict period Armenian households have reported increases in crisis and emergency coping strategies, and 50% reported consuming less varieties of food since before the conflict. This is concerning when framed against the general trend of a decline in economic activity since March 2020 due to decreased movement related to Covid-19 movement restrictions. Support is required for these affected Armenian households to strengthen their resilience to further shocks.

### Identified Priority Needs

Around 60,000 people have either permanently relocated to Armenia or might consider this. Going forward these households will need support in establishing themselves and reinstating their self-reliance. Of those, 38.5% are adults of working age who typically live in small household units. Support should be given to working age adults to generate income for their households and to build up their resilience.

### Achievements and Impact

- A total of 18,074 individuals (of which 9,674 from the refugee-like population) were reached with food assistance in the month of December 2020 by six Food Security and Nutrition Working Group members; Armenian Progressive Youth (APY)/Action Against Hunger, Care, Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU), WFP, and UNICEF.
- Of the people who received food assistance in December 2020, the majority of coverage was in the central and southern regions of Armenia.

### Remaining Gaps

A total of 58,932 individuals from the refugee-like population are in need of food assistance each month. While 18,074 people were reached in the month of December, there is still a large gap between the number of people in need and the number of people reached in both the arrivals and the communities hosting them.

---

### **Recommended Action**

Members worked together to develop a plan to fill this gap



## **Health Working Group**

---

### **Current Situation**

Health Working Group partners continues to support the Ministry of Health to provide services to people living in refugees like situation through procurement and distribution of Equipment and drugs and other medical supplies. The number of people requiring mental health and psychosocial support remains high particularly among the refugee-like population.

### **Identified Priority Needs**

The identified priority needs include the continuation of essential services through primary and secondary health care; MHPSS at all levels and related interventions to allow for activities on service provision (support and referral to specialized services, including the referral of acute mental health cases to government structures) and ensure psychotropic drugs for severe cases; the provision of medical equipment and medicines for COVID-19 management and patients with chronic diseases from the refugee-like population; and the provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and hygiene items.

### **Achievements and Impact**

- During the reporting period, both the refugee-like population and host community benefited from the provision of essential health services from the Ministry of Health (MOH) with support from WHO and health partners.
- Under the initiatives of the Government of Armenia, primary health services are provided free of charge to all citizens of Armenian including the refugee-like population from NK. Under the government scheme, the refugee-like population can visit primary health facilities in the area of their temporary residence and be enrolled immediately without any special registration procedures.
- During the period, health partners continued to provide medical equipment, medicine and medical supplies, wheelchairs, walkers and canes for primary health care and tertiary healthcare services, including 500 trauma kits, 700 surgical kits, 20,000 pieces of glucometers and testing strips, 40,000 pieces of antigen rapid test, 11 patient monitors and spare parts for oxygen concentrators, as well as other items such as 2,000 face mask and hand sanitizers. These items were delivered to the MOH to be distributed through their supply chain mechanisms.
- Additionally, WHO and UNICEF recruited a Mental Health expert to lead the planning and implementation of MHPSS for those affected by the conflict.
- During the reporting period, prevention of risk communication was intensified with messages focusing on COVID-19 and MHPSS. Messages were delivered to targeted groups through social media platforms reaching over 135,347 persons.
- Mobile clinics and outreach services will be provided to increase access to primary and secondary health care through primary health consultations, referrals to higher level care, provision and distribution of personal protective equipment paired with health promotion activities, covering Non-Communicable Diseases (NCD), and COVID-19.

### **Remaining Gaps**

Access to the NK area remains a challenge. While some individuals have returned to their place of origin (although the sustainability of these returns is yet to be determined), there is a need for the extension of health services to these areas.

### **Recommended Action**

- ⇒ Strengthen the dissemination of relevant information regarding access to health services for the refugee-like population in Armenia, including public health measures to improve the prevention of COVID-19, and enhance MHPSS support.

## ➤ Early Recovery Working Group

---

### **Current Situation**

The Early Recovery WG has so far focused its efforts on developing programmes and activities to support energy saving solutions (to generate savings that can be used for the payment of utility bills), temporary jobs scheme in selected communities, grant scheme for NGOs and individuals for community recovery and resilience, and support to COVID-19 awareness raising activities in host communities. Accommodation in private housing, hotels and public facilities has challenged the communities from various perspectives, including accommodation conditions, increased utility bills and sustainability of the accommodation arrangements. Unemployment and limited access to benefits (especially for informal workers), linked to COVID-19 and the conflict consequences, are the most pressing livelihood issues, while the capacity of the local economy to provide jobs for the refugee-like population is limited. In a number of communities, particularly the ones close to the Line of Contact, economic and agriculture activities, have been negatively impacted.

### **Identified Priority Needs**

Priority needs include covering the increased service needs, including management of COVID-19 related issues as well as addressing livelihood and employment opportunities. This reflects the immediate/short-term needs of the refugee-like population in Armenia, and not the wider host community and systemic needs, which the Early Recovery WG is also looking into. More comprehensive needs include livelihoods and enterprise recovery and development; community infrastructure rehabilitation and green recovery; governance and institutional systems strengthening; social cohesion and community resilience.

### **Achievements and Impact**

- Repair/renovation of a community-based hotel in Metsamor has been completed. Works included renovation of roof, hall, rooms and bathrooms, electricity network, sanitation and hot water supply, provision of beds and mattresses. It will provide accommodation to more than 150 refugee-like individuals.
- 3 photovoltaic (PV) systems with overall 200kWt capacity were installed in Goris, Tegh and Akunq communities. This will help host communities to generate direct savings to cover/subsidize utility bills.
- Small Grants were provided to 16 non-profit organizations (up to \$10,000) and four individuals (up to \$1,500) to support communities, and the projects are currently in progress on:
  - a) Promote social responsibility in the communities;
  - b) Forming rapid response including self-help groups in the communities, especially among refugee-like population;
  - c) Increase community sustainability in response to the pandemics and disasters, especially among refugee-like population;
  - d) Provide livelihood opportunities in communities for both local residents and refugee-like population;
  - e) Strengthening community social cohesion.
- Sewing operator's training courses for women from the refugee-like population from NK were organized. First course was held 2-31 December and out of 9 trainees, 7 already found an employment. The second training course started on 13 of January with 13 trainees and will last until 3 February.

### **Remaining Gaps**

The priority needs are also reflecting the gaps. As early recovery is a longer-term perspective, the current interventions are a start-up of longer-term initiatives, and the gaps will also evolve in that regard.

### **Recommended Action**

- ⇒ Strengthen initiatives aimed at local economic development and building local resilience. In the shorter run, the most pressing issues such as energy and anticipated increase of utility bills aim at being addressed.
- ⇒ Increase provision of access to measures for the socio-economic engagement and income-generating activities to ensure a dignified living for the refugee-like population.
- ⇒ Conduct early recovery needs assessment to provide a common analysis and better understanding of existing and emerging early recovery needs in Armenia and evidence for stronger early recovery interventions.

## WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

---

The UN team in Armenia has established a coordination structure, which, at the technical level, is centered around four main humanitarian Working Groups (WG) – Shelter and NFIs, Protection, Food Security and Nutrition, and Health – as well as a fifth Working Group on Early Recovery allowing mainstreaming of longer-term initiatives to strengthen communities in Armenia. Additional Sub-Working Groups have been established in the area of Child Protection, Education, and humanitarian cash transfer programming. These technical Working Groups form the backbone of the coordination of the humanitarian response and serve to mobilize and strengthen coordination and collaboration among the different UN agencies, international organizations, local and international NGOs with the ultimate goal to ensure provision of most efficient, swift and cost-effective humanitarian response to challenges generated by the conflict in NK. To date, 13 UN agencies, 22 international NGOs, 19 national NGOs, 2 intergovernmental organisations, 5 Government entities, and 1 international organizations are part of the coordination system.

Interagency coordination is ensured by the Coordination Steering Group (CSG), which is comprised of chairs of the activated WGs and co-lead by the UN Resident Coordinator's Office and UNHCR. The CSG is supported by an Information Management WG to ensure a harmonized approach among agencies and partners in collecting information on activities and to facilitate data and information gathering as well as dissemination. A Technical Reference Group on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support ensures a coordinated and effective approach on MHPSS activities across WGs.

At the Principals level, the coordination structure brings together the Resident Coordinator and Heads of UN Agencies to ensure overall alignment and clear guidance of the humanitarian response. The coordination model has been communicated to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as to all relevant stakeholders.

Given the fluidity of the crisis, the coordination modalities will be reviewed continuously and adjusted according to the evolving situation on the ground, in full respect of globally established mandated roles and responsibilities.

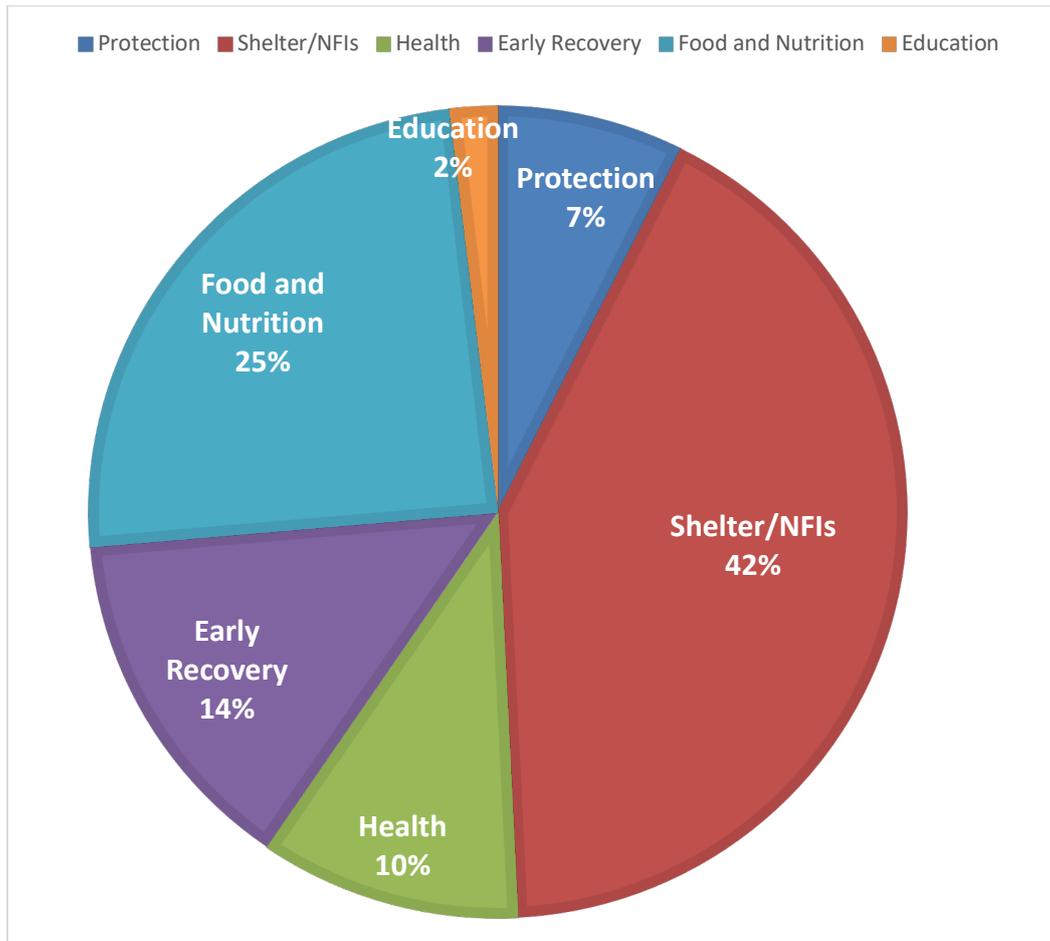
## FINANCIAL INFORMATION

---

Under the leadership of UNHCR and the Resident Coordinator Office in Armenia, the Inter-Agency Response Plan 2020-2021 to address the broader humanitarian consequences of the NK crisis has been finalized, and launched at Yerevan level on 22 January (after its endorsement by the GoA on 20 January). This country-specific plan covers a period of nine months (from October 2020 until end of June 2021), and will serve as a coordination, advocacy and resource mobilization tool. It brings together 36 operational partners involved in the response (over 180 projects in total), with total financial requirements amounting to USD **62,689,761** for the overall period. Coming just over three months after the onset of the emergency, the Response Plan includes not only humanitarian activities (under Protection, Health, Food Security and Nutrition, and Shelter/NFIs) but also early recovery, resilience, and durable solutions components. The Plan also factors Crisis Response Plans already in place, such as the SERP and the new UNSCDF that strategically governs development initiatives of the UN in Armenia from 2012 to 2025) and will include part of the host community, in addition with the displaced population from NK in Armenia.

The Coordination has activated a request for a Central Emergency Relief Fund (CERF) Rapid Response funding window. After extensive discussion with the CERF Secretariat, UNICEF, IOM, and UNHCR were awarded a total of **\$ USD 2M** in mid-January to cover life-saving needs in three sectors (Protection, including child protection and education, Health and Shelter/NFI). It is to be noted that the amount requested constitutes around 3.3% of the Total Financial Requirements identified for all sectors, which - as per the Inter-Agency Response Plan - currently stands at \$ USD 62.7M.

## Inter-Agency Response Plan Total Financial Requirements by sector



### Contacts:

Denise Sumpf, Head of RCO, [sumpf@un.org](mailto:sumpf@un.org), Tel: +374 60 530 000 ext.218, Cell + 374 4432 1140

Frederic Cussigh, UNHCR Senior Emergency Coordinator, [cussigh@unhcr.org](mailto:cussigh@unhcr.org), Tel: +374 55 416423