

# Armenia

22 January – 5 February 2024

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

The forcible displacement has negatively 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 is heightening in priority.

## KEY INDICATORS

**115,183\***

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

**44%\***

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

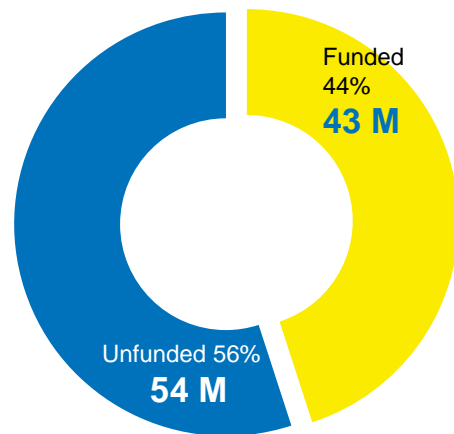
**61**

RRP appealing **partners**

## FUNDING (AS OF 5 FEBRUARY)

**USD 97 M**

requested for the Armenia situation



## Update On Achievements

### Operational Context

Since the onset of the refugee response, community solidarity has remained unwavering. Current efforts focus on addressing immediate humanitarian needs of refugees and supporting communities hosting them. Cash-based interventions and resilience support continue. This is expected to reduce access barriers and empower individuals. Additionally, there is a growing recognition of the importance of addressing psychological well-being, with mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) identified as a top priority. Collaboration with local partners enhances program effectiveness by tapping into local expertise and promoting sustainability.



*[UNICEF, through UNFPA's funding, and in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the Armenian Progressive Youth NGO, provides AMD 25,000 worth pharmacy vouchers to pregnant and nursing refugee women. February 2024. Yerevan, Armenia. ©UNICEF*



UNHCR, through the funding support of ECHO, provides legal counselling to refugees, conducted by the lawyers of partner NGO Mission Armenia. February 2024. Gyumri, Shirak province. ©UNHCR

## Achievements



### PROTECTION

#### Achievements and Impact

- With UNHCR's support, the Migration and Citizenship Service has issued some **59,000 refugee cards**.
- During the reporting period, community-level outreach was conducted in Vayots Dzor region, specifically in the communities of Jermuk, Vayk, and Yeghegnadzor. The primary objectives of the outreach were to identify and mitigate emerging protection risks and to facilitate inclusion of refugees from Karabakh in social protection schemes. Approximately **45 refugees** participated in focus group discussions. According to their feedback, they currently have access to essential services, such as health care, adequate housing, and food assistance. However, several concerns were raised such as limited employment prospects and income generating programs, replacement of lost documents, high utility costs, and tailored services for persons with specific needs.
- Mission Armenia NGO, supported by UNHCR, conducted **three legal awareness sessions in Shirak and Gegharkunik regions**, in collaboration with local municipalities and the United Social Service (USS). These sessions were attended by

a total of 84 refugees, with 52 percent of them being women, in Gyumri, Artik and Vardenis. Participants queries largely focused on critical topics such as legal status, registration, documentation, social entitlements, and available services and assistance. During these sessions, individual cases were referred to USS and legal partners for legal representation and assistance with social entitlements.

- UNHCR hotline received a total of **157 calls** from refugees. The inquiries primarily centered around essential household items such as warm clothing, bedding items, blankets, beds, heaters, mattresses, washing machines, refrigerators, food and hygiene items. Since 1 October 2023, the UNHCR hotline has received **4,156 calls from refugees from Karabakh region**.

#### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Protection partners to expand legal awareness sessions on temporary protection, refugee status and social entitlements.
- Cash support targeting the most vulnerable individuals to address their specific needs, particularly people with severe medical conditions and those with disabilities to facilitate their access to specialized medical services and assistive devices.



#### SUB-SECTOR CHILD PROTECTION

#### Achievements and Impact

- During the reporting period, **766 more children and caregivers** (48 percent female, 52 percent male) have accessed safe spaces, child protection support and protection hubs.
- **6,852 more children**, adolescents, and caregivers (67 percent female, 33 percent male) have received mental health and psychosocial support and 308 children (46 percent girls, 54 percent boys) have received individual case management in and outside the child-friendly spaces (CFSs). UNICEF has continued to organize and provide training and capacity development for social workforce and other professionals, expanding the overstretched capacity of the system.
- **495 professionals** received individual and supervision sessions, participated in self-support groups, professional support groups, and received training on child trauma and grief and loss.



## SUB-SECTOR GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (GBV)

### Achievements and Impact

- During the reporting period, UNFPA developed a technical note regarding GBV mobile teams. The GBV sub-working group held its second meeting for 2024, with active participation by its members. During the meeting, the technical note was introduced to the attendees. Additionally, mainstreaming persons with disability into emergency response was discussed, along with updates on the activities conducted by participant organizations.



## EDUCATION

### Achievements and Impact

- **5,155 children** have received learning materials, including school bags with stationery and education emergency supplies.
- **8,072 refugee and host community children** have accessed educational services, including early childhood education in preschools supported by UNICEF as part of system strengthening efforts, as well as remedial classes, psycho-social support, and recreational activities in learning spaces in 11 host schools whose capacity is being expanded with UNICEF support.
- **105 volunteers** from these schools received training on Psychological First Aid and **75 caregivers** were sensitized on Psychological First Aid and provided with tips on how to manage symptoms of anxiety, stress, and depression.
- UNICEF in collaboration with UNESCO is partnering with the State Pedagogical-Psychological Support Center to map MHPSS service delivery in schools and assess capacity gaps to inform MHPSS interventions.
- Capacity building for **320 educators of 60 kindergartens** and alternative preschools in five regions is in progress. Training sessions cover GBV, PSEA, fraud, Inclusive Pedagogy, Basic PFA and Psychosocial Support, Methodological Guidance on Early Childhood Development (ECD) kits and thematic materials, and Disaster Risk Reduction and emergency preparedness. The first round of training focused on Positive Parenting was conducted for 45 parents from 17 UNICEF-supported early childhood education centers.

### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- There are concerns related to the monitoring of the attendance of a certain group of refugee children whose families are in temporary shelters and may move at any time, especially after 31 March.
- The ability of preschool facilities to accommodate refugee children may be stretched beyond their capacity. In coordination with Ministry of Education, Science, Culture, and Sports (MESCS) and local authorities, a mapping exercise of preschool facilities in areas with high concentration of refugees was recently finalized. The findings from this exercise will inform decisions on priority communities where facilities and services need to be expanded to accommodate additional young children.
- While referral systems exist within schools and preschools to connect children with external mental health support, there is a need to strengthen these mechanisms to ensure they effectively address the needs of refugee children.



### HEALTH

#### Achievements and Impact

- Under the WHO/IOM lead, partners within the health sector continued provision of essential health interventions along the strategic priorities identified in the RRP: mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), rehabilitation of burn patients, primary and specialized healthcare provision, and emergency medical care.
- During the reporting period, WHO has trained **30 health care specialists** (rehabilitation physicians, burn surgeons, rehabilitation nurses, physical therapists (kinesitherapies), and occupational therapists) from the specialized rehabilitation centers and tertiary hospitals in Armenia. The 4-day training was organized in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, and Samaritan's Purse Emergency Medical Team (EMT) to continue enhancing knowledge, skills and understanding of burn care and rehabilitation interventions in Armenia. The training also provided an opportunity to previously trained local trainers to strengthen their capacity to transfer the acquired knowledge and skills to their peers. Active practical sessions, including with participation of injured patients were conducted.
- IOM continued the provision of primary healthcare services via three deployable mobile clinics. During the reporting period **3,542 refugees** have been reached with primary healthcare consultations in Ararat, Armavir, Gergharkunik, Kotayk and Lori.
- UNFPA conducted an accredited simulation training on emergency obstetrics for obstetrician-gynecologists and midwives from six regions: Vardenis, Sisian, Goris, Ararat, Novemberyan, and Kapan.

- During the reporting period, Armenian Psychiatric Association provided medical equipment/supplies to the health facilities that provide sexual and reproductive health service.
- Armenian Red Cross Society continued with provision of the hotline for the entire country and trainings Basic First Aid training for the refugees and host communities, covering 38 elderly refugees in Yerevan, Kotayk, Lori, Shirak, Vayots Dzor, also 89 adult community members were provided **362 MHPSS consultations**.
- Médecins du Monde continued to operate centers in Goris, Yerevan, Masis and Ashtarak, with specialist teams consisting of two social workers for case management, one psycho-clinical psychologist, community mobilizer and a doctor to deal with medical issues.
- Santé Arménie and HENAR continued MHPSS work in Syunik, Vayots Dzor and Ararat marzes, including through provision of services at the French-Armenian outpatient rehabilitation facility established in Goris and in direct collaboration with other departments in the hospital, where a psychologist visits patients on a daily basis. Two other psychologists employed by Santé Arménie visit patients individually in Goris and Jermuk, also working with groups of adolescents in a school in the town of Sisian. A part-time psychiatrist is employed as per need to observe individual patients.
- Santé Arménie jointly with HENAR deployed mobile primary healthcare units in the Syunik and Kapan marzes. Physicians employed by Santé Arménie and equipped with medical equipment (mobile ECG, ultrasound machines, and blood analyzers) travel daily to villages around Goris and Kapan.

#### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- **30 percent of the refugee population** (about 30,000 individuals) have still not been registered in the national e-Health system (ARMED), therefore not having access to the healthcare provided by the Government of Armenia.
- Health sector remains insufficiently funded, considering the need of expansion in coverage of geographic areas and individuals in need, also with the expectation of many of the activities need to continue.
- Longer-term refugee populations' health needs will continue needing to be addressed, including burn management and rehabilitation, MHPSS, vaccination. Due to the refugees being spread across all marzes of Armenia, there is a challenge in terms of access and coverage.
- The need for continuation of MHPSS interventions is becoming more urgent as the refugees have met their basic priority needs such as shelter, food, etc. MHPSS including psychological first aid for non-specialized health personnel is expected to be increasingly needed in the upcoming months.
- Rehabilitation needs of the burn patients are most likely to persist, since some of these will face permanent disabilities.



- Specialized health services for persons with disabilities present a significant challenge since most of them are concentrated in Yerevan.
- Challenges are faced with regards to the systematic provision of health information from the field.



## FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

### Achievements and Impact

- Based on refugees reported continued food needs for winter/early spring period and in line with the Government priorities, targeting, and assistance requirements, in February 2024, WFP started the distribution of pre-packed food parcels to about **37,000 refugees (244 metric tons of food)**. Food distribution is currently in process, with the support of USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) and the UN's Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), covering refugees residing in Aragatsotn, Ararat, Armavir, Gegharkunik, Kotayk, Lori, Shirak, and Tavush provinces. WFP's food assistance will cover the February-March period in three tranches of food parcels to the same refugees, gradually transitioning to cash-based assistance using food cards for both refugees and vulnerable host communities.
- As of January 2024, WFP has provided food assistance to **58,811 refugees**. Assistance including 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 populations, WFP initiated the analysis of barriers and opportunities for socio-economic integration of refugees. Also, as part of WFP's regular food security assessment, in January 2024, WFP started its 6<sup>th</sup> Food Security and Vulnerability Assessment also covering refugees and host communities.





## SHELTER AND NFIS

### Achievements and Impact

- UNDP completed the renovation of one of the shelters for elderly persons in Yerevan. Approximately **50 vulnerable refugees** will be accommodated in this newly renovated premises with upgraded WASH facilities.
- UNDP continues the renovation of another shelter, which will have the capacity to host up to **75 refugees**. The works are expected to be completed by April 2024. Additionally, an assessment is underway for another building requiring deeper retrofit. It is expected to be completed by the summer of 2024. This building will have the capacity to accommodate an additional **150 refugees**. Discussions with MLSA and regional authorities are ongoing to identify other potential buildings.
- On 30 January, **28 refugees (17 households)** at risk of eviction were relocated from Aghavnadzor collective shelter to Maralik Social Housing complex, with support from UNHCR, ARCS, AAH and ACTED. Additionally, partners will be undertaking small renovation works for **17 apartments** to further enhance living conditions.
- Provision of winter-specific NFIs is now scaling down as most communities have already been covered. No major gaps have been highlighted by local authorities. Partners are shifting from in-kind distributions to a more targeted cash-based approach.



## RESILIENCE

### Achievements and Impact

- UNDP is progressing on activities the implementation of a livelihood support programme funded by SIDA. The project aims at providing paid on-the job training opportunities for **400 refugees**. UNDP provided **greenhouses to 10 refugee and vulnerable households** in Goris, Syunik region. These greenhouses will generate additional income for people most in need.

### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Lack of data on refugees and their continued mobility hamper the design of livelihood support programs. It is expected that as soon as the MSNA data is available as well as the IOM Labour Survey is completed, more activities aimed at supporting job creation and income generation will be implemented by partners.



## CASH WORKING GROUP

### Achievements and Impact

- All partners joining Government-led cash programmes (except for one pending) have finalized contractual arrangements with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MLSA) and the Unified Social Service (USS).
- Since January 2024, **2,530 refugees** were reached with Government-led multipurpose cash for basic needs programme and **13,500 refugees** with rent and utilities monthly assistance with support of partners.
- Upon verification of beneficiary lists received from MLSA, **4,163 children** aged 0-9 have received multipurpose vouchers from UNICEF (**3,202 households**). The distribution was accompanied with info-sessions in Yerevan and target regions (including on voucher use, data protection, GBV risk mitigation and prevention, complaint and feedback mechanisms), as well as provision of awareness raising materials on immunization, nutrition, parenting and others.
- **16,000 refugees** in Vayots Dzor, Syunik, Ararat, Kotayk and Yerevan received multipurpose vouchers (People in Need, Acted, Action against Hunger).

### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- The only cash programme continuing until the end of March 2024 would be the one for rent and utilities. Once the result of the multi-sector needs assessment are known, there might be room for some needs-based cash support in coordination with MLSA as part of case management.
- The voucher mapping and distribution reveals under-coverage in certain regions and differences in targeting approaches and transfer values. Further coordination and alignment to national social protection thresholds is needed. Additional needs that can be covered by voucher support include household appliances, winterization, furniture items, and medicine.
- There is a need for further awareness raising on both Government cash schemes and voucher support provided by partners with simple and easy-to-understand messaging.

## Cross-Cutting Task Forces

### GENDER TASK FORCE

- The Sectoral Gender tipsheets were shared with sector leads and focal points for comments and further inputs. Once finalized, these will be translated and distributed to inform programme planning and implementation. The Gender Taskforce met on **31 January** to discuss further actions related to the next Gender Alert ideas, future Gender in Humanitarian Action Capacity Strengthening opportunities for service providers especially at the regional level, and shared ideas for collaboration on International Women's Day activities and events.

### MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT (MHPSS) TASK FORCE

- Feedback has been received from the Government on the MHPSS Task Force Terms of Reference and will be incorporated. The emergency MHPSS services mapping is underway.

## 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:

- 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](#)