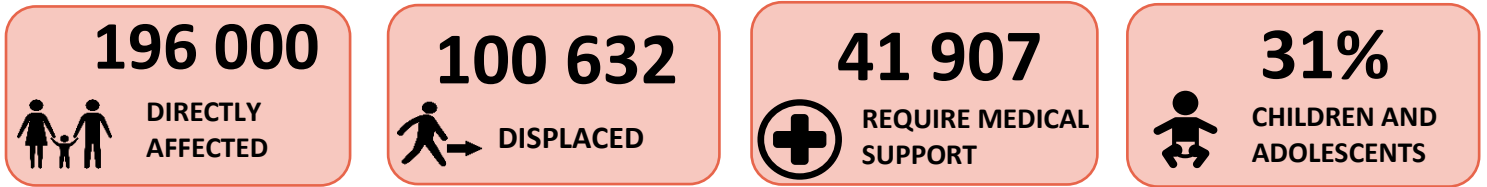


# Armenia refugee response

Situation report No. 2, 12 October 2023



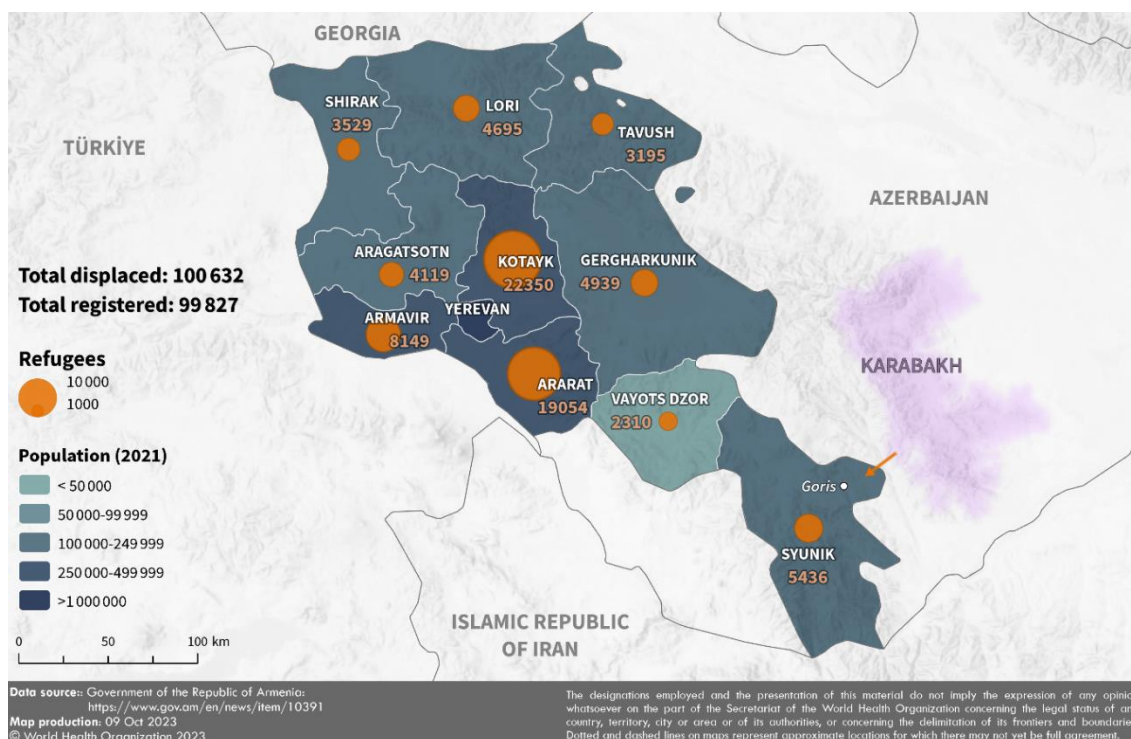
## Situation update

As of 12 October 2023, 100 632 people have crossed into Armenia. The [total affected population](#) including refugees and the local population hosting refugees is 196 000. Since 1 October 2023, the number crossing into Armenia has decreased and most of the registration points have been closed, as refugees can now complete their registration online. By 6 October, [over 99.2%](#) of the refugees have been registered in Armenia.

It is [reported](#) that 49% of the refugees are males and 51% are females.

- The largest vulnerable groups are children (31%), older people (18%) and persons with disabilities (2.5%).
- UNFPA has [reported](#) that there are 2070 women currently pregnant and an estimated 1380 will give birth in the next six months. As of 12 October, 55 children were [born](#) amongst refugee families – 24 in Yerevan and 31 in the regions.
- As of 5 October, initial assessments [indicate](#) that 41 907 refugees are in need of medication and medical assistance.
- [According](#) to the Government of Armenia, as of 7 October, the state supported the accommodation of approximately 58 000 refugees.

Fig. 1: Map of the registered refugee population in Armenia as of 7 October 2023



## Health needs and priorities

Initial assessments indicate that 41 907 refugees are in need of medication and medical assistance. [According to UNHCR](#), Yerevan is the region requiring the most assistance, with 22 200 people in need of shelter, 25 600 people in need of food, 14 000 people in need of medication, and 22 500 people in need of clothing items.

According to the [latest data](#), the region hosting the largest number of refugees is Kotayk with 24 141 people, followed by Ararat.

The initial priorities for the health response are outlined in the [Public Health Situation Analysis \(PHSA\)](#).

According to the Humanitarian Centre of the Government of Armenia, as of 11 October, the Ministry of Health (MoH) has recorded the following information.

- The number of patients transferred to health facilities in Yerevan is 234. Most of these patients remain burn patients hospitalized following the fuel depot explosion on 25 September.
- Of these, 76 are severe cases and 11 are critical, with seven children in intensive care.
- The process of refugee registration in Armenia is still ongoing, with 21 743 registered at polyclinics and outpatient clinics.

[According](#) to the Deputy Minister of Health, of approximately 2200 refugee health-care workers, 320 have been registered, of whom 153 are senior and 167 are mid-level medical workers. Based on the health system workforce needs, there are currently 273 senior medical worker and 59 mid-level medical worker vacancies in Armenia.

Vaccine administration has begun across primary health-care centres where refugees have been registered. Eligibility for all routine services is granted upon registration. Refugees with documented vaccination records will be entered in the ArMed health information system. Those without documented evidence of vaccination history will be vaccinated according to the national catch-up immunization schedule used for children who have missed doses. The MoH has deployed mobile teams who are registering the refugee population in the Armenian e-health operator's system. It is currently reported that there are no COVID-19 vaccines available in the country, and there is an acute shortage of influenza vaccines. Although current measles, mumps and rubella vaccines (MMR) stock is adequate for the routine immunization program there is currently insufficient surplus MMR stock to meet the anticipated need for the refugee catch-up activity. A donation of 40,000 MMR doses is anticipated from Norway; there will be a further 50,000 doses needed.

## WHO actions to date

### Leadership

- On 2 October 2023, WHO designated the refugee situation a **Grade 2 emergency** and activated emergency procedures.
- The Incident Management System has been further strengthened within the WHO Country Office in Armenia through repurposing of staff and surge capacity.

### Partnerships/emergency medical teams (EMTs)

- On 12 October, the WHO Country Office in Armenia co-led the second Health Coordination meeting.
- An EMT Coordination Cell (EMTCC) was established by WHO under the leadership of the MoH of Armenia to support the ongoing medical support for burn survivors.
- The EU Civil Protection Mechanism has been activated to support the EMT response in Armenia.
- As of 12 October, a total of three EMTs have been deployed to Armenia, of which two are currently on the ground.
  - From 30 September to 7 October, a specialized care team of burn experts from Israel was deployed to in Armenia. The team completed 41 surgeries during four days at the Burn Hospital and the Armenian Republican Medical Centre.
  - The B-FAST team from Belgium was deployed from 4 to 9 October for a medical evacuation assessment mission.
  - As of 12 October, a total of 19 patients have been evacuated to Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Italy, Spain and the United States.
  - Samaritan’s Purse arrived on 6 October with a team of 11 burn management experts. The team is currently operating in the National Center for Burns and Dermatology and the Armenian Republican Medical Centre, building hospital staff capacity and providing rehabilitation services, surgery and wound dressing. As of 12 October, a total of 138 medical procedures have been carried out, including escharotomies, skin grafts, surgical debridements, and dressing changes.
  - The UK-Med EMT arrived on 12 October with a team of five burn and rehabilitation specialists and started working in the Mikaelyan Institute of Surgery, providing surgeries and wound dressing.



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*Medical evacuation of burn survivors in Yerevan, Armenia*

## **Health information**

- From 9 to 10 October, WHO participated in an interagency rapid health assessment. The assessment was carried out in the Aragatsotn, Gegharkunik, Kotayk, Lori, Shirak and Tavush provinces. The results are currently being analysed.
- WHO has been carrying out event-based surveillance monitoring from open sources.
- WHO carried out a three-day Epidemic Intelligence from Open Sources (EIOS) training with 26 staff from the MoH, Ministry of Economy and the Food Safety Inspection Body. The training gave the participants the tools to carry out EIOS and start implementing them.
- WHO [published](#) a PHSA highlighting the main health threats.

## **Health operations**

- WHO has deployed 28 surge staff to Armenia, including WHO Leadership deployments, to signal WHO's support to the response to the emergency. Additional deployments are planned.
- On 7 October, WHO trained 10 psychologists on psychological first aid to become a part of the Emergency Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) Team providing psychosocial interventions for burn patients.
- WHO is carrying out a mapping of MHPSS activities and engaging with partners.
- WHO continues to advocate for additional burn and rehabilitation teams to ensure coverage in various hospitals.
- A scale-up of the response to the ongoing measles outbreak in the country is under way. A nationwide catch-up immunization effort will be conducted from 17 October to 17 December to vaccinate children who have fallen behind schedule and to fill immunity gaps in the domestic population. This will include an intensive outreach component aimed at vaccinating refugees and ensuring that they are integrated into the health system, using 10 outreach teams building on the structure used during the COVID-19 response.
- WHO shared guidance with the MoH on vaccination for refugees in a humanitarian emergency context.

## **Risk communication, community engagement and infodemic management (RCCE-IM)**

- WHO has finalized the initial phase of the RCCE-IM plan and shared it with the MoH. The plan aims to support refugees in navigating Armenia's health system based on perceptions and needs through the engagement of community actors, and to sustain social cohesion.
- WHO has established a social listening mechanism to inform the response, with reports released twice a week.
- An immediate priority is to target information to address refugees' health concerns and needs, and to support them in navigating the health system.
- A mapping of civil society organizations (CSOs) approved by the Armenian health authorities and community actors continues, with an opportunity to engage with faith-based organizations and refugee health workers.
- WHO is supporting the MoH in developing an outreach vaccination campaign, targeting both the refugee population with unknown vaccine status and the local population for catch-up of missed doses.
- Messages for the vaccination campaign were tested before the launch of the campaign.

### **External communications**

- WHO [highlighted the evacuation of three patients via the B-FAST EMT](#), made possible through the coordination of the EMTCC and the governments of Armenia, Belgium and Romania.
- WHO highlighted the work of [Samaritan's Purse](#), and the [Israeli medical team](#).
- Armenian surgeon Dr Petrosyan spoke to WHO about working hand in hand with the world class experts [here](#), thanking the deployed teams for their support.
- For further updates on the response, refer to the WHO Armenia refugee response [webpage](#).
- Photos from the response are available [here](#).

### **Supplies and logistics**

- WHO had prepositioned trauma supplies for over 200 patients at the end of August 2023.
- A shipment of critical supplies from the [WHO Logistics Center in Dubai](#) has [arrived](#) in Armenia. The shipment includes emergency surgery kits for burn patients.
- On 6 and 7 October, WHO delivered 10 burn modules from TESK kits to support advanced care needs for 500 burn patients, in addition to 10 noncommunicable disease (NCD) modules comprising medicines and insulin that will cover three months of treatment for up to 50 000 people.
- Since mid-September, WHO has dispatched 1672 kilograms of supplies valued at over US\$ 71 300.



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*WHO-trained psychologists respond to the needs of burn patients*

### **Resource mobilization**

- The WHO Regional Office for Europe has established an Emergency Donor Appeal for Armenia for a total of US\$ 2.9 million for the next six months.
- WHO has contributed US\$ 97 million to the [Armenia Refugee Response Plan](#) to provide urgent humanitarian aid and protection to refugees and those generously hosting them in Armenia, in support of the government-led response.

- The health sector has expressed the need for over US\$ 10.5 million for the health sector interventions to be conducted under the overall coordination of the MoH.

## Next steps

- Provide continuous specialized care for burn survivors and assess their rehabilitation needs.
- Extend the existing MHPSS programme to affected refugee and host populations.
- Commence social listening and immediate risk communication to refugee and host populations, infodemic management, mapping of CSOs and initial engagement with communities.
- Enhance surveillance and response for disease outbreaks (such as measles in Armenia).
- Increase immunization activities for measles, poliomyelitis and COVID-19.
- Support the scale-up of primary health-care services and referrals to host provinces.
- Carry out a rapid risk assessment on preventing and responding to sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment.



At the request of the MoH, WHO delivered 1.7 tonnes of critical supplies to Armenia