

Armenia

8-21 January 2024

The Government of the Republic of Armenia reported that between September and October 2023 **101,848 refugees** arrived in the country, including 30,000 children.

Forcible displacement has negatively impacted refugees' lives and livelihoods, leaving critical humanitarian needs. **95,000 host population** members are also included in the Refugee Response Plan (RRP).

The Armenia RRP covers a period of **six months** from October 2023 to March 2024 to deliver urgent life-saving protection and assistance and support resilience interventions benefiting refugee and hosting populations.

KEY INDICATORS

101,848*

Newly arrived **refugees** since October 2023, according to Government registration

40%*

Percent funded against the RRP appeal

60

RRP appealing **partners**

FUNDING (AS OF 8 JANUARY)

USD 97 M

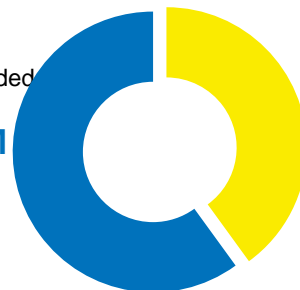
requested for the Armenia situation

Funded

40%

39 M

Unfunded
60%
59 M



Update On Achievements

Operational Context

The Government of Armenia continues to lead the humanitarian response, with the support of UNHCR and the UN RCO. The high level of engagement with humanitarian actors has facilitated joined-up planning and delivery of protection and assistance programmes. The state assistance programmes continue to be critical to the well-being of refugees, including cash support for rent and utilities and inclusion in state pension and maternity benefits schemes. The Government continues addressing refugee documentation needs through the Migration and Citizenship Service of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, with support from UNHCR. As of 18 January, **37,341** people had applied for refugee cards.



Lena Avanesyan, 86, is a refugee from Hadrut, Nagorno Karabakh, currently residing at the Masis N4 kindergarden that serves as a refugee shelter. She got vaccinated against flu for the first time in the frames of the intensified vaccination campaign. Photo credit: WHO. .



Community-based protection staff conducting a site visit. Photo credit: UNHCR.

Achievements



PROTECTION

Achievements and Impact

- The Migration and Citizenship Service and UNHCR jointly developed a brochure on **frequently asked questions on the temporary protection** of refugees from Karabakh in Armenia. Mission Armenia NGO, in collaboration with the municipalities and the United Social Service (USS), delivered **legal awareness sessions** in Dilijan and Ijevan communities, engaging a total of 51 refugees. Legal awareness sessions will continue to be expanded.
- During the information sessions, the lawyers and social workers addressed the questions of refugees concerning their legal status, registration, documentation, social entitlements, and available assistance programmes. The sessions also allow for the identification of specific cases requiring individual interventions, with appropriate referrals promptly made.
- UNHCR conducted six focus group discussions (FGDs) in Tavush (Dilijan), Lori (Tashir, Vanadzor, and Stepanavan), Ararat (Masis and Artashat), speaking with a total of 70 individuals (40 women, 30 men). Key findings include positive feedback on

assistance provided by United Social Service (USS) social workers in finding accommodation, applying for social assistance, accessing job opportunities, and conducting household visits for the elderly and persons with disabilities or severe medical conditions.

- UNHCR supported the Government of Armenia with 100,000 refugee cards and is supporting the printing of information leaflets.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Protection partners need to continue expanding information sessions and legal awareness on Temporary Protection / refugee status and related rights and entitlements.
- Programmes targeting the elderly and persons with disabilities remain critical and require further interventions by protection and assistance actors.



SUB-SECTOR CHILD PROTECTION

Achievements and Impact

- The network of child friendly spaces (CFS) continued to expand its scope of services to increasingly include refugee children and adolescents. To date, **17,643 children and caregivers** (56 percent female, 44 percent male) **accessed safe spaces**, child protection support and protection hubs. **14,875 children, adolescents and caregivers** (57 percent female, 43 percent male) received **mental health and psychosocial support** (MHPSS) and 2,411 children (52 percent girls, 48 percent boys) received individual case management in and outside the CFSs.
- UNICEF continues to organize and provide training and capacity development for social workforce and other professionals, expanding the overstretched capacity of the system. The capacities of frontline social service workforce professionals were enhanced on psychological first aid (PFA,) psychosocial support in emergencies, child sensitive communication and “do no harm” approaches. Frontline specialists have been capacitated on effective means of providing specialised services to refugee children with disabilities and their families.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- The scope of the protection needs of refugee children and their families in Armenia remains the same, with more restrictions related to accessibility of services due to the extreme weather and road conditions, especially for those residing in remote rural settlements.
- UNICEF’s ongoing engagement with partners and their social workers and psychologists reiterates the high demand for mental health and psychosocial support,

requiring more investment through a variety of approaches and channels. There are also concerns around the fact that the cadre of psychologists and other relevant professionals is overstretched by the ongoing response and may be in need of support.

- The high mobility of refugee population, which affects the outcomes of child protection case management interventions.



SUB-SECTOR EDUCATION

Achievements and Impact

- Child protection partners continue expanding their support to ensure that refugee children are enrolled and attending schools and preschools. Currently, around **13,819 children are benefiting from after-school recreation programs, homework support, and school-based psychosocial services.**
- UNICEF continues supporting 60 kindergartens and alternative early learning centers that host 100 young refugee children. 50 staff of kindergartens were capacitated to lead parental education sessions. UNICEF emergency supplies- 9 Recreation kits for 450 children and 16 School in a Carton for 640 children, were provided to nine host schools to improve the learning environment.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- There is an increased need for school-based psychosocial services, including the establishment of referral pathways for addressing critical cases. The Republican Pedagogical Psychological Center in partnership with UNICEF and UNESCO initiated the mapping of MHPSS services in schools. The findings will be used for the development of a concept note on MHPSS in schools, including guidelines and materials for school psychologists, teachers, and administration.
- 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.



HEALTH

Achievements and Impact

- Within the framework of an intensified vaccination campaign, and through a collaborative effort of the World Health Organization, the Ministry of Health, the Armenian Public Health Association, and the Armenian Association of Healthcare and

Assistance to Older People, on 19 January a team of doctors visited Masis N.4 Kindergarten, which currently serves as a refugee shelter and hosts around 90 refugees from Nagorno-Karabakh, and the Masis elderly daycare center, which has around 30 beneficiaries. The local NCDC mobile vaccination team joined the visit and conducted on site flu vaccinations.

- The team of doctors provided medical consultations and flu vaccination services to residents and beneficiaries. Masis N4 Kindergarten was equipped with blood pressure, blood glucose level, and oxygen saturation measurement devices, as well as other first aid medical centres.



FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

Achievements and Impact

- 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.
- Based on reported needs, distributions of family food parcels in the first quarter of 2024 are being implemented, while gradually **transitioning to cash based transfers** through the use of food cards to refugees and vulnerable host communities. In line with the Government priorities, targeting and assistance requirements, more than 50,000 people are expected to receive assistance.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- The sector prioritizes the facilitation of **equal opportunities for both refugees and host communities** to foster social cohesion. WFP is already moving towards a nexus approach to address immediate needs while at the same time promoting mid- to long-term socio-economic integration and supporting income generation opportunities for refugees and vulnerable/host communities.
- 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. As part of WFP's regular food security assessment, WFP started its 6th Food Security and Vulnerability Assessment in January 2024 covering refugees and host communities.

**SHELTER AND NFIS****Achievements and Impact**

- **90,116 non-food items** distributed to **17,130 individuals (5,546 households)** across the country by UNHCR directly and through its partners Mission Armenia and People in Need.
- Cash assistance continues to assist beneficiaries under the government-led cash scheme. With UNHCR's support, **5,500 individuals received cash assistance to support the payment of rent and utilities** for the months of November and December 2023. The same 5,500 individuals are expected to receive cash assistance in January 2024.
- Winter specific non-food item (NFI) distributions are expected to be concluded by late January or mid-February; partners have ensured a significant coverage of the coldest regions/marzes.
- Four partners are supporting the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MLSA) in ensuring needed items (furniture and household appliances) to allow 27 individuals at risk of eviction to be relocated to Maralik social housing complex.
- A draft guidance note on the risk of eviction has been prepared by the Shelter/NFI Working Group; subsequently this note will be shared with other relevant sector working groups as to ensure a cross sector approach on the risk of evictions.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Further needs have been identified by MLSA to repurpose existing state-owned structures into social housing. While exact figures are yet to be clearly identified, it is considered that the existing social housing stock needs to be increased as to accommodate vulnerable population still leaving in collective accommodation.

**RESILIENCE****Achievements and Impact**

- Preparatory works were completed for commencing SIDA-funded initiative aimed at improving livelihoods of 400 refugees and locals from host communities through collaborative paid internship scheme.
- UNDP is commencing a new ADA financed initiative dedicated to economic empowerment of around 1300 vulnerable women, including refugees.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Ongoing UN – Government “Multi-sectoral in-depth needs assessment of families forcibly displaced from Nagorno Karabakh” and Labour Market Survey being conducted by MLSA together with ILO are expected to generate disaggregated data on the specific needs of various refugee groups. This currently missing data is very much needed for designing development interventions attuned to the specific needs of various refugees and locals from the host communities.



CASH WORKING GROUP

Achievements and Impact

- All partners joining Government-led cash programmes (except for 1 pending) have finalized contractual arrangements with MLSA and the Unified Social Service (USS). In January 2024, 2,251 refugees were reached with Government-led multipurpose cash for basic needs with support of partners. 1,814 children aged 0-9 were reached with multipurpose winterization vouchers in Yerevan (UNICEF support) and 340 refugees benefitted from clothing vouchers in Artik and Maralik communities (ACTED). 650 refugee families were reached with multipurpose vouchers in Syunik (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 revealed under-coverage of others. Further needs that can be covered by voucher support include household appliances, winterization, furniture items, and medicine.
- The Cash Working Group together with MLSA works on further coordination between partners and approximation of transfer values to match national social assistance thresholds.

Cross-Cutting Task Forces

GENDER TASK FORCE

- Convened in December 2023, the Gender Task Force (GTF) kicked off with a planning session to develop a workplan of activities and knowledge products. Sector Gender tipsheets have been produced as a guide for each sector to integrate gender considerations into the programme plan and implementation. A validation process is ongoing. The Rapid Gender Analysis (RGA) developed by CARE International and UN Women is being finalised. The findings and recommendations will help inform the program implementation for the partners on specific gender gaps.

MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT (MHPSS) TASK FORCE

- The MHPSS Task Force convened its first meeting with the objective of creating a workplan based on the areas of focus and proposed deliverables, as identified and prioritized by the Inter-Sector Working Group and shared with the Inter-Sector Coordination Group. Of the four work areas, the Task Force members agreed to 1) start with the mapping of MHPSS services, as related to the emergency response and incorporating state services already mapped through another initiative, with the aim to feed the results into a more comprehensive planned Government service mapping initiative 2) conduct an immediate scoping of available training materials on the [Inter-Agency Standing Committee \(IASC\) Guidelines on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings](#) and 3) reserve action on referral pathways until, and unless, a request is made by the related Government ministries.

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 Refugee Response Plan:

- Australia
- Austria
- Canada
- Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF)
- European Union
- Czech Republic
- 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](#)