



Guy, a master of woodworking, resides and works in Yerevan. Renowned for his skills and craftsmanship, he leads the "Renaissance" carpenter's workshop alongside his team of refugee carpenters. © UNHCR/ Karen Minasyan

This report provides an overview of developments from April to May 2024. As of May 2024, over 115,257 refugees fled to Armenia following the escalation of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in September 2023, recognized under Armenia's Temporary Protection regime outlined in the Law on Refugees and Asylum (2008). Temporary protection, initially granted for one year starting October 28, 2023, can be extended based on government decisions. Currently, 91,479 refugees have received documentation, and 1,855 have applied for naturalization.

The emergency phase of the Armenia Refugee Response concluded in March 2024. During this phase, partners collaborated across five sectors: Protection (including Child Protection and Gender-Based Violence), Education, Health, Basic Needs (Shelter/Non-Food Items and Food Security), and Resilience. This collective effort provided crucial humanitarian assistance to refugees.

As the response transitions into the mid-to-long term, discussions are underway with the government to outline a blueprint for supporting government systems and addressing residual humanitarian needs. Inter-agency partners continue to support government-led efforts, focusing on sustainable solutions and integrated support across sectors.

Sector highlights



PROTECTION SECTOR

PROTECTION WORKING GROUP | MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND UNHCR

Achievements and Impact

- In April-May 2024, UNHCR conducted community-level protection monitoring. 48 focus group discussions (FGDs) in eight regions: Lori, Aragatsotn, Ararat, Armavir, Gegharkunik, Shirak, Yerevan, and Syunik provinces. In total 289 women and 219 men, including people with diverse specific needs, participated in the discussions. The objective of the FGDs was to consult refugees on their priority needs, challenges, understand possible barriers to inclusion in order to inform tailored assistance programs and protection measures. The main findings from the FGDs include needs for some non-food item support, particularly household appliances, and challenges in finding employment and mid to long-term housing.
- Additionally, UNHCR together with its partner Mission Armenia NGO undertook household-level protection monitoring in 10 provinces and Yerevan. In total, 844 individuals, including 233 men and 611 women were reached. Protection monitoring aims to identify protection risk encountered by refugees and the findings help partners to shape their response in addressing issues and gaps. 64 vulnerable refugees were referred for specialized services. It is observed that concerns about accessing and enrolling in social protection programs have decreased since January 2024.
- UNDP supported the Republic of Armenia's National Assembly in conducting Standing Committee Mobile Sessions in various communities of Syunik province (Kapan, Meghri, Goris, Sisian), engaging 89 refugees, to learn about challenges faced by refugees.
- UNHCR, Mission Armenia, Women Resource Center, Armenian Red Cross Society together with social workers of the Unified Social Services and municipalities provided individual case management through legal assistance, protection counseling, individual protection assistance and psycho-social support.
- Refugee-led organizations such as Little Stars Educational Charitable NGO, Ukrainian Forum Social Charitable NGO, Centre for Coordination of Syrian Armenians' Issues NGO are engaged in organising community and social activities for refugees in their communities.
- UNHCR conducted two trainings session on asylum procedures for Migration and Citizenship Services to strengthen their capacity to create an integration friendly environment.
- 495 refugees were reached through legal awareness sessions conducted by UNHCR and its partner Mission Armenia in May 2024.
- More than 1,200 people, including 400 children at World Vision Armenia daycare centers, received structured psycho-social support.
- 1,800 refugees received counseling and referrals from World Vision social workers regarding state assistance programs, registration issues, refugee status, and more.
- The GBV Sub-Sector worked on the development of GBV Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) at national level, with the support of MSLA. The SOPs are developed within the GBV SOP Task Force led by UNFPA established under the GBV sub-sector; UNFPA will hold additional consultations with external experts among (sub) sectors and agencies.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Insufficient programming and budgetary support hinder outreach to underserved communities and specific needs.
- Refugees face barriers to accessing entitlements and services due to documentation issues and varying availability.
- Employment remains a significant concern among refugees due to skills gaps and limited access to resources for starting businesses.



CHILD PROTECTION SUB SECTOR

CHILD PROTECTION SUB WORKING GROUP | MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND UNICEF

Achievements and Impact

- Case management support for vulnerable children, including effective referrals and follow up, continued to be provided through intensified multi-sectorial coordination linking NGO partners with mandated state, regional and municipal authorities. Expansion of the network of child friendly spaces (CFS) also continued, with three more scheduled to restart operation in early July 2024 in Goris municipality Syunik region.
- 1,500 children and caregivers (58 percent female, 42 percent male) accessed safe spaces, child protection support and protection hubs.
- UNICEF has continued to organize and provide training and capacity development support for social workforce and other professionals, thereby expanding the overstretched capacity of the system. Social services workforce professionals, also including crisis centers' staff and youth workers, continued to receive individual and supervision sessions, participate in self-support groups, professional support groups, and receive training on child trauma, grief and loss, youth work, disability inclusion, protection of children's rights and service provision during emergencies.
- MLSA and UNICEF facilitated a session of a diverse and extended group of actors in the field of foster care (with a special focus on emergency foster care) to clarify the roles and responsibilities of those actors after restructuring of the structure of regional authorities.
- A White Paper on Foster Care developed by UNICEF has been translated and disseminated among the representatives of relevant national, regional, and municipal authorities involved in decision-making related to alternative placements of children without parental care during emergencies. Main findings of the White Paper were shared with the participants to inform the discussion on regional trends.

Identified Residual Humanitarian Needs and Gaps

- The depth and nature of mental health and psych-social support (MHPSS) issues of refugee and host community adolescents is being reviewed regularly to tailor responses to the needs. Worth mentioning, that while general residual PSS issues and needs are still in place, the partners mention a growing need for more specialized types of services (e.g., PTSD treatment etc.), specifically, a need for individual psychotherapeutic support with both children and parents.

EDUCATION SECTOR

EDUCATION WORKING GROUP | MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE, CULTURE AND SPORTS OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA AND UNICEF

Achievements and Impact

- By the end of May 2024, 17,000 refugee children were enrolled in schools in Armenia. However, the availability of preschool services remained limited. To address this gap, UNICEF is working closely with the host communities to increase access to preschools by expanding learning spaces in state kindergartens.
- Through a partnership with the Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR), UNICEF initiated renovation projects in targeted kindergartens in Ararat and Kotayk regions.
- UNICEF in partnership with Teach for Armenia will launch a school readiness summer programme for refugee and host community 6-year-old children without any preschool experience to ensure their smooth transition to primary school.
- Ninety-nine teachers from 20 state kindergartens that accommodated refugee children participated in Step-by-Step BF training to promote inclusive education practices. The training covered various topics, including inclusive pedagogy, psychological first aid, psychosocial support, disaster risk reduction (DRR), and emergency preparedness.
- Early childhood professionals received assistance in adjusting their approaches when dealing with distressed children and caregivers. Furthermore, 450 young children (comprising 248 boys and 202 girls) benefited from the distribution of 10 Early Childhood Development (ECD) kits.

HEALTH SECTOR

HEALTH WORKING GROUP | MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND WHO/ IOM

Achievements and Impact

- WHO continues to strengthen national capacity for burn rehabilitation within the emergency response and transition framework, supporting Armenia's Ministry of Health in developing clinical practice guidelines and patient management procedures. A multidisciplinary national working group, involving experts from public healthcare facilities and professional associations such as the National Center for Burns and Dermatology and Saint Gregory the Illuminator Medical Center, is coordinated by the National Institute of Health with strong support from WHO Armenia.
- Psychological resilience of healthcare specialists was enhanced through stress management and self-care training for 210 nurses from three regions.
- WHO supported the Association for Health and Care of the Elderly in conducting interactive sessions for 120 individuals aged over 60 from Tegh, Karashen, and Kornidzor villages. The sessions, held from 20-22May, focused on healthy aging, and promoting active communication with host community peers.
- WHO produced a video for refugee pregnant women and host communities to enhance access to healthcare services. A mini-social media campaign for the same purpose will be launched in mid-June.
- In April and May 2024, IOM and its partners continued supporting refugees and vulnerable local community members with health assistance.

- As of April 2024, mobile clinics from IOM and the Ministry of Health's National Centre for Infectious Diseases provided multidisciplinary primary healthcare services to 2,196 individuals (49% women, 13% men, 18% girls, 20% boys), facilitating refugee registration into the Armenian e-Health platform, ArMed. Services included symptomatic treatment for 633 individuals, psychological counseling for 364, and referrals to specialized services for 558.
- Mobile clinics operated in Aragatsotn, Ararat, Armavir, Gegharkunik, Kotayk, Lori, Shirak, and Tavush regions, with a focus on rural areas.
- In May 2024, IOM and DEEM Communications LLC concluded a mixed-media campaign on health and wellness, reaching 289,600 refugees and locals with information on the healthcare system, flu prevention, MHPSS access, and other health-related topics.
- As of May 2024, UNFPA conducted four two-day simulation training sessions on Emergency Obstetric Care (EOC) in collaboration with the Association of Obstetrician-Gynecologists of Armenia. The training, which included 31 obstetrician-gynecologists and midwives from Ararat, Aragatsotn, Armavir, and Kotayk regions, was accredited by the Ministry of Health. Key objectives included: (i) Enhancing practical EOC skills, especially for emergencies, (ii) Ensuring high-quality sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services, (iii) Reducing maternal and neonatal mortality through improved clinical skills, (iv) Additional training sessions are scheduled for June-July 2024. UNFPA is also procuring IARH kits for regional health facilities to ensure continuous quality SRH services.

Identified Residual Humanitarian Needs and Gaps

- The long-term rehabilitation of burn patients from the fuel depot explosion will require ongoing attention and resources over the coming months and years.
- Ensuring access to healthcare in rural areas and to specialized care remains a critical priority for programming efforts.



SHELTER AND NFI SECTOR

SHELTER WORKING GROUP | MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS, MINISTRY OF TERRITORIAL ADMINISTRATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE AND UNHCR

Achievements and Impact

- The Shelter and NFI working group convened a meeting on 22 May 2024, attended by Government, UN, NGOs, and CBOs to coordinate ongoing and future shelter and NFIs assistance efforts. This is expected to improve planning, resource allocation, and the overall effectiveness of responses within the sector.
- Two shelters in Shirak region were rehabilitated by IOM in partnership with Sima-Shin LLC and local authorities. This effort aimed at improving living condition for refugees, including shelter capacity and safety.
- One community shelter in Masis community, with 18 apartments for refugees with separate kitchen and WASH facilities, was renovated by UNDP in partnership with UNHCR. One shelter in Haghtanak settlement of Tavush region, benefiting 50 refugees was also renovated by UNDP. Another shelter with apartment for 18 refugee family is currently being renovated by UNDP in partnership with Goris Municipality. UNDP is in discussion with the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MLSA) to rehabilitate two additional shelters for refugees. By the end of July, shelters will also be equipped with solar panels and solar water heaters to reduce utility costs.

- Eight units of private houses, benefiting 36 refugees, in Goris town were renovated by UNHCR and its partner Action Against Hunger (AAH). UNHCR targets to renovate 50 housing units in the Syunik region.
- Around 140 refugee families (comprising over 600 individuals) have been identified by UNDP for shelter support, including the provision of complete furniture sets, household appliances, and other essential items.
- 4,044 refugees received core relief items (clothes, bedding, kitchen sets, and hygiene products) from UNHCR and its partner, Mission Armenia. This initiative was carried out in close collaboration with local authorities, ensuring a smooth distribution process. An additional 5,100 refugees were supported by World Vision provided non-food items.
- Various meetings were held to enhance cooperation among key stakeholders in the Shelter and core relief items, including UNDP, UN-Habitat, and Armenian NGOs. These discussions aimed to streamline efforts, share best practices, and align strategies to better address the shelter and NFI needs of refugees.

Identified Residual Humanitarian Needs and Gaps

- Despite significant progress in renovating private houses and evaluating new shelters, there is still a shortage of adequately renovated and equipped shelters in Yerevan and other regions. The demand for durable housing solutions surpasses the current supply, necessitating additional resources.
- Comprehensive assessments have found gaps in the availability of essential non-food items, particularly in newly renovated or identified shelters. Continuous support is required to ensure all shelters are adequately stocked with necessary NFIs to enhance refugees' well-being.



RESILIENCE SECTOR

RESILIENCE WORKING GROUP | MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS, MINISTRY OF MINISTRY OF TERRITORIAL ADMINISTRATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE AND UNDP

Achievements and Impact

- 500 refugee households have been supported by UNDP through the provision of agricultural and processing tools, livestock (cows, pigs, and poultry), professional or paid on-the-job training, facilitated access to green energy through solar water heaters, and seed funding. Targeted support for youth and women was also included.
- To ensure resilience from the start, UNDP continued sustaining core government functions and services. A social innovation lab was organized in cooperation with MTAI, leading to the formulation and funding of municipal service delivery models such as a mobile farmer market, a mobile water supply repair workshop, transforming bus stops into public dialogue spaces, and improving extracurricular and cultural services.
- Community Disaster Risk Management Board (DRMB) was established in Masis, pooling expertise from community administration, the private sector, local NGOs, educational and health institutions, and refugees to integrate disaster risk management (DRM) recommendations into the community development plan.
- UNDP supported the Ministry of Justice in organizing the Armenia-Georgia Legal Forum, which united about 50 representatives from the legal and justice sectors of both countries to facilitate dialogue and collaboration on issues relevant to the refugee situation.
- People In Need (PIN) conducted a Multisectoral Needs Assessment during the reporting period, link is available [[here](#)].

- Five small businesses in the agricultural sector for refugee women were supported through the Armenian Fund for Sustainable Development (AF4SD). There are plans to fund 15 more by the fall of 2024.
- Around 217 individuals received employment assistance from Women's Rights House NGO. These include requalification courses, resume creation, job applications, and referrals. By the end of the reporting period, 21 individuals were employed. In addition, 30 women and girls accessed psychological counseling.
- 60 refugees attended vocational courses organised by the Armenia Round Table Foundation (ART) to enhance their employability and economic self-sufficiency. ART aims to include at least 120 more beneficiaries in the project. Moreover, ART organizes self-employment courses to help participants develop business plans and apply for small business grants of up to USD 3,000. ART also plans to support up to 50 small initiatives through this programme.
- Confederation of the Trade Unions of Armenia (CTUA) organized a three-day workshop for the Renaissance trade union of refugee workers, focusing on current unemployment programs, employment needs assessment, skill alignment with labor market demands, and effective resume writing. In addition, CTUA provides legal advice to refugees.
- IOM is ramping up livelihoods programming for refugees and local community members. This programming aims to directly support at least 350 people with livelihoods-related activities throughout 2024.
- In April and May, IOM conducted an economic opportunity mapping to identify potential business ideas in communities, considering both the demand for certain business directions and the skills/interests of refugees. Consultations with refugees, municipalities, international, and national organizations were conducted to inform beneficiary selection targeting. IOM and MLSA have worked to finalize the “Labour Force Assessment among Refugees,” set for release in June 2024.

Identified Residual Humanitarian Needs and Gaps

- UNDP's desk research on labor market demand in Kotayk, Ararat, Armavir, and Yerevan underscores the critical role of employment in integrating refugees into the society. There is a pressing need for additional training and skills development to align refugees' capabilities with the Armenian job market.
- Income generation and housing remain significant challenges, as highlighted by World Vision Armenia's rapid needs assessment of 1,300 refugee households. The assessment reveals urgent needs for cash assistance, food, employment opportunities, and essential non-food items (NFIs).
- Efforts are needed to strengthen the capacities of refugees at both municipal and national levels. This includes enhancing their meaningful participation, improving service quality and accessibility, fostering social cohesion, and ensuring access to justice and human rights. Special attention is required for the most vulnerable groups among refugees, including persons with disabilities and survivors of domestic violence, who require tailored support to address their specific needs.



CASH CROSS SECTORAL WORKING GROUP | MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS, UNICEF AND UNHCR

Achievements and Impact

- The Cash working group, co-led by MLSA, UNICEF, and UNHCR, convened on 11 April to introduce the revised “40+10” rent and utilities programme, transitioning it to support living costs and basic needs through 2024. Eligibility criteria were expanded to include more vulnerable groups, including those displaced since 2020.

- During the reporting period, ICRC, IFRC, and UNHCR continued their support for the Government-led program, processing over 11,000 payments to refugees monthly. Post-distribution monitoring by ICRC for the AMD 50,000 basic needs and “40+10” rent and utility programs revealed insightful findings:
 - The top four categories of assistance usage were food expenditures (26%), savings (14.1%), rent expenditures (13.9%), and payments for utilities and bills (12.9%).
 - Over 60% of respondents reported substantial improvement in their economic situation due to the program.
- As of May 2024, with support from UNICEF, 17,059 children (48% female, 52% male) aged 0-9 years old (in 11,184 households) received multipurpose vouchers for winter clothing. In addition, 2,397 pregnant and lactating women received pharmacy cards, with 1,637 mothers of children aged 0-16 months receiving additional top-ups (supported by UNICEF/UNFPA). 265 children with disabilities aged 0-18 also benefited from clothing vouchers and pharmacy cards. Beneficiaries received comprehensive information on voucher usage, data protection, GBV risk mitigation, complaint mechanisms, and awareness materials on immunization, nutrition, breastfeeding, parenting, and relevant topics for the age group.
- In April 2024, People in Need supported 786 households with vouchers for basic needs and 900 households with clothing vouchers in Aragatsotn, Lori, Syunik, and Tavush regions.
- Ongoing efforts include designing and implementing further post-distribution monitoring exercises for cash and voucher programmes supported by partners.

Identified Residual Humanitarian Needs and Gaps

- As per ICRC post-distribution monitoring (PDM) results of the rent and utility support programme, 38% of the respondents could cover all rent and utilities expenses through the assistance and 31% half of them. 10% of the respondents could not cover all their economic basic needs and 37% could cover more than half of their needs through the cash assistance received. These results show, that while Government assistance has been crucial in supporting refugee families, there are still uncovered needs, especially for the most vulnerable families or disadvantaged groups, which require more needs-based interventions.
- MLSA encouraged partners to join the prolonged and revised Government-led cash support scheme following developed mechanisms and procedures set by the Cash Working Group. Moreover, the Ministry continues being interested in voucher support programmes and encouraged the working group members to continue to work together, to share information and agree with MoLSA their programmes and eligibility criteria. However, there was a request to refocus in-kind support-related vouchers (e.g., hygiene items, clothing etc.) and consider vouchers for soft-skills development trainings and activation programmes.
- Further coordination and alignment to national social protection thresholds of voucher support, as well as development of a more sustainable system is needed.
- There is a need for continuous awareness raising on both Government cash schemes and voucher support provided by partners with simple and easy-to-understand messaging.

CROSS-CUTTING TASK FORCES

GENDER TASK FORCE

- UN Women convened an expert consultation on 13-14 May in Yerevan focused on advancing gender equality, refugee integration, and social cohesion in Armenia during the transition process. The event brought up participation from over 50 representatives of women-led and women's rights organizations, engaging in strategic discussions on a gender-responsive Humanitarian-Development-Peace (H-D-P) Nexus.
- The first day featured interactive sessions exploring lessons learned from the refugee response, identifying specific needs, capacities, and essential resources to address residual humanitarian needs and facilitate the transition process. Discussions also centered on advancing the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda.
- On the second day, conclusions from the discussions were presented to representatives of the Armenian Government, the donor community, and UN agencies. A comprehensive report summarizing the outcomes will soon be finalized and disseminated.



UN Women convened an expert consultation on 13-14 May in Yerevan to advance gender equality, refugee integration, and social cohesion in Armenia during the transition process. © UN Women

PREVENTION OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE (PSEA)

- During the reporting period, the PSEA Coordination Group met twice to discuss the implementation of the UNCT PSEA Action Plan for 2024 and provide updates on the PSEA hotline included in the plan. Several key action points were agreed upon, such as mapping the implementing partners for each agency and identifying existing complaint mechanisms. UN agencies are actively engaged in raising awareness and conducting capacity-building activities related to PSEA.
- UNICEF supported outreach efforts in formal education settings, ensuring that approximately 1,455 individuals received crucial information on safeguarding against PSEA, as well as details about available social services, refugee rights, and entitlements.



MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT TASK FORCE

- On 17 May, WHO, UNICEF, and UNHCR advanced their efforts in developing capacity for Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) in emergencies, uniting all RRP actors involved in MHPSS response. The initiative fostered mutual learning and exchange. A training session was held with over 50 participants, primarily programme managers and coordinators focused on MHPSS, aiming to enhance the collective ability to provide timely and effective MHPSS services to both refugees and host communities. This approach ensures a continuum of care addressing immediate and long-term needs. The event featured local experts and prominent international speakers from UNICEF and WHO.
- WHO-supported MHPSS helpline received over 2,200 calls, providing urgent psychosocial support and referrals to those affected by conflict and displacement. WHO supported an MHPSS mobile team conducted over 16 field visits, delivering services to over 300 refugees and host community members.
- Over 115 burn patients and their families benefitted from 450+ individual MHPSS sessions, and more than 20 burn patients along with six family members participated in five group sessions.
- 4,500 adolescents and children across five regions received education on stress management, mental health awareness, and effective emotional communication with WHO support.
- UNICEF supported a specialized training module on MHPSS, developed for teachers and school psychologists, accompanied by essential tools and guidelines. A comprehensive 3-day training session was organized for 50 psychologists from regions including Syunik, Vayots Dzor, Gegharkunik, Tavush, and Ararat regions, focusing on "Psychological Support at School" module. Furthermore, a draft framework for MHPSS in schools and a detailed school psychologist's profile delineating responsibilities and referral pathways were created. By the end of May 2024, approximately 2,332 refugee children have received pedagogical-psychological support services within educational institutions.
- UNICEF, in collaboration with the Republican Pedagogical Psychological Center, is actively working to enhance the capacity of schools to provide psychosocial services through the Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) programme. Around 23 Teach for Armenia (TFA) emergency responders engaged in extracurricular activities, providing direct support to 1,500 refugees across 38 schools in 28 communities of Ararat, Kotayk, Armavir, Syunik, Shirak, Aragatsotn, Tavush, and Lori regions. The key focus was on delivering Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) activities in afterschool programmes and coordinating response services for refugee children. The responders also conducted individual Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) sessions for children referred by coordinators. Furthermore, 15 severely traumatized children were identified by the emergency responders and received referrals for professional MHPSS services provided by psychologists hired by TFA as part of the Response Actions.
- The need for MHPSS remains high and is expected to continue until the end of the year.

Working in partnership

The inter-agency coordination architecture facilitates partnership in the refugee response by creating the fora needed for communication, collaboration, and operational coordination. The Refugee Coordination Forum, co-chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister and UNHCR, 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.