THEMATIC UPDATE 1. UNHCR WINTERISATON SUPPORT TO REFUGEE IN ARMENIA

How UNHCR is working to Help Refugee this winter

Refugee families in Sevan community received blankets and mattresses and other essentials as part of UNHCR's efforts to provide life-saving assistance before the onset of the harsh winter. November 2023. Gegharkunik province. ©UNHCR/Anahit Hayrapetyan

Context

Armenia has seen an influx of 101,848 refugees from Karabakh. UNHCR, along with its partners, continue working in support of the efforts of the Government, to deliver the response and address the growing humanitarian needs of refugees. UNHCR has partnership agreements with four national and one international NGOs that are involved in the delivery of humanitarian support to refugees. The partners include Armenia Red Cross Society (ARCS), the Chamber of Advocates, KASA Foundation, Mission Armenia (MA), and People in Need (PIN). The onset of the winter season poses additional challenges for the refugees, especially the ones residing in colder regions of Armenia, including Shirak, Lori, Syunik, and Gegharkunik.

UNHCR's Winterization plan

Focuses on two broad areas of intervention:

- Provision of winter specific Core Relief Items (CRIs) such as winter clothes and high thermal blankets.
- Shelter weatherproofing and repairs, improving conditions in refugee settlements in preparation for winter.

Priority: People in remote and rural areas

In terms of housing and geographic vulnerability, many refugees reside in substandard rural dwellings or damaged homes and need CRIs, including folding beds, blankets, and kitchen sets. Some of the dwellings, which have been occupied by refugees only recently, are predominantly in eastern and northern regions, where living costs are lower than in urban areas. While local authorities have sourced and provided basic repairs to the dwellings, partners will augment this support with winterization activities and repairs to the dwellings, to help ensure warm conditions over winter.

Response

In close collaboration with Government, partner organizations, civil society, and UN Agencies, UNHCR is undertaking the following activities:

1. Identifying the most vulnerable

We identify people who might be more vulnerable to the cold, including the older person and children, to ensure that they receive the care they need. The demographic distribution of the refugee population from Karabakh is the following:

52%
women

31%
children

18%
older persons

16%
people with a disability

A refugee woman receiving a blanket and other core relief items before the onset of the winter season. November 2023. Syunik region. ©UNHCR

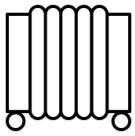
A refugee grandmother receiving UNHCR assistance, including warm blankets and a kitchen set. October 2023. Kotayk region. ©UNHCR

2. Distributing winter specific core relief items

To help keep refugees warm and dry, UNHCR continues the distribution heaters, winter jackets and other winter specific relief items.

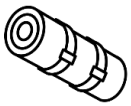
15,922 *blankets distributed.*
1,194 *in pipeline*

1,572 *jackets distributed.*
7,014 *in pipeline*



997 *heaters distributed.*
2,653 *in pipeline*

663 *gloves distributed.*
1,047 *in pipeline*



451 *sleeping bags distributed.*
953 *in pipeline*

87,557 *clothes & shoes in pipeline*

**The figures above show the number of winter specific CRIs distributed and in pipeline as of 12 December 2023*

UNHCR team loading trucks to be headed to communities in Armavir and Gegharkunik regions hosting refugees in need of assistance. November 2023. Syunik region. ©UNHCR

3. Providing cash assistance to help refugees through the winter

5,500 refugees from Karabakh will receive cash assistance in the amount of $123 per person from November onwards, so that they can buy much needed items to cover their basic needs. Cash is used as a flexible way to complement other types of assistance and cover the unaddressed needs of the most vulnerable.

4. By expanding community outreach and protection meetings

- Increase community awareness and engagement though protection sector's tailored messages.
- Ensure that the basic needs of refugees, especially the most vulnerable individuals are met by promptly identifying and referring them for necessary supplies including clothing, heaters, and blankets. This will help prevent resorting to harmful coping mechanisms.
- Ensure mobile outreach is aware of people with mobility issues and check in with them regularly.
- Scale up dissemination of information about available helplines as well as refugee hotlines. These call can be utilized to see how people are coping, provide information when and if necessary. UNHCR hotline is: **08000 0025.**

An employee of UNHCR partner KASA Swiss Humanitarian Foundation operating the hotline for forcibly displaced people and stateless persons. September 2023. Yerevan. ©UNHCR

UNHCR staff counselling refugees living in a temporary shelter in Vayk town. October 2023. Vayots Dzor. ©UNHCR

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UNHCR is grateful to our donors for their contribution to fulfil its operational plan.

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