

31,830 refugees reached with cash assistance since November 2023.

Over USD 4 million distributed in cash assistance as of 31 May 2024.

3,930 of those assisted were older people and persons with disabilities.

10 regions and Yerevan covered across the country.

Post-Distribution Monitoring shows that cash assistance provided **83%** of all respondents with the ability to cover half or more of their basic needs.

The cash assistance improved living conditions (**54%**) and reduced feelings of stress (**46%**).



Meri, 33, is a teacher of Armenian language and literature in the local village school in southern Armenia. With her husband and three children, she was thankful to the vital cash assistance received from UNHCR and the state, which allowed the family to survive during a very cold winter. June 2024, Gorayk village, Armenia. © UNHCR/Areg Balayan

Context

As of May 2024, over 115,257 refugees fled to Armenia following the escalation of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in September 2023, and have been recognized as refugees and granted temporary protection status under Law on Refugees and Asylum (2008) of the Republic of Armenia.

Why cash?

Cash-based assistance has been recognized by the Government of Armenia and UNHCR as the most dignified and flexible modality for providing immediate and medium-term support, thus upholding safety, catering for the individual needs of refugees, and providing freedom of choice to affected families. Cash and voucher assistance (CVA) contributes to achieving multi-sectoral and sector objectives, including in food, protection, health, non-food items, shelter, and livelihood support.

Working with the Government

The Government of Armenia led the elaboration and rollout of cash-based measures as early as in October 2023, inviting the Cash Working Group, a platform part of the Refugee Coordination Forum in Armenia, to support and join Government programmes or complement those with voucher support. The cash assistance programmes included: One-time universal cash assistance of approximately USD 250 per person, which was reported as delivered to 113,024 refugees, including those who had arrived between December 2022 and June 2023. Rent and utility cash support of USD 100 and USD 25 per person per month respectively, designed for an initial period of six months, then subsequently extended until end of 2024, and transformed into support for living costs and basic needs (also including refugees from 2020). Multipurpose cash assistance programme to cover refugees' basic needs with monthly support of USD 125 per person for the months of November and December.

UNHCR, is among the first organisations that has joined the Government-led cash programmes. Since November 2023, UNHCR through its partner Armenian Red Cross Society has been effectively and successfully implementing cash assistance programme for refugees in very close coordination and collaboration with Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the Cash working group, thus maximizing the level of support, and minimizing duplications.

UNHCR will continue to work in collaboration with partners to strengthen the capacity of the government and support the development of a national social registry, national support programmes and delivery mechanisms.

What we have achieved so far

Since November 2023, UNHCR has distributed over USD 4* million in cash to 31,830 refugees, of which 17,571 are unique beneficiaries.

**Final assistance figure is provisional and subject to end of year reconciliation reports.*

Outcomes for the refugees

To assess the effectiveness and quality of its cash assistance, UNHCR commissioned a Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) exercise in April 2024 to gain insight into the experience of recipients as well as the utilization of the cash assistance.

Key findings:

- 96% of households felt satisfied regarding the cash assistance.
- The cash assistance provided 83 % of all respondents with the ability to cover half or more of their priority needs.
- The majority of all respondents reported that the cash assistance reduced the financial burden on their households (92%), reduced their feeling of stress (86%), reduced risky behavior (85%) and improved their living conditions (91%).
- Overall, the top five expenditures reported by respondents were food (72%), rent (71%), utilities and bills (68%), health costs (35%), clothes and shoes (21%).

Working with partners

UNHCR's cash programmes are currently implemented through its partners, the Armenian Red Cross Society and Mission Armenia. To enhance communication with refugees, detailed counselling lines and Q&A have been developed to guide UNHCR hotline operators. Additionally, UNHCR actively participates and closely coordinates cash assistance with the Cash Working Group, a platform that is part of the Refugee Coordination Forum.

Priorities ahead

With shrinking humanitarian funding and growing needs, UNHCR Armenia will continue implementing the Policy on Cash-Based Interventions (CBI) with an emphasis on increasingly using cash as the primary response modality, as it is the modality of choice of people and cost-efficiency. In line with the Global Refugee Compact, UNHCR Armenia will leverage cash as a vehicle to foster inclusion, connecting people to financial services, empowerment, economic opportunities, and social protection. Monitoring and evaluation, coupled with innovative approaches, will remain important along with a strong focus on the quality of cash assistance and continued strengthening of partnerships.

UNHCR is grateful for the generous contributions from our government donors.

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