



@UNICEF Armenia/2023/Martirosyan – An ethnic Armenian girl playing in the Child Corner established in Goris by UNICEF.

Reporting Period: 2 – 9 October 2023

Armenia


External Humanitarian Situation Report No. 2

unicef 
for every child

Situation in Numbers

 **30,000**
refugee children

 **100,632**
refugees (as reported by
Government of Armenia)

 US\$ 12,6 million are needed
to address the needs of
refugee children and their
families in Armenia for the
first six months of the
response

Highlights

- As of 9 October, 100,632 refugees, including an estimated 30,000 children had arrived in Armenia. It is assumed that virtually all children from the affected area have now arrived in Armenia.
- Registration of refugees continues; to date, nearly all refugees (99.2%) have been registered by the State Migration Service.
- UNICEF has been amongst the first international organizations to respond to the refugee crisis from the onset and is already delivering results for children in key areas, including lifesaving interventions and supplies for child protection, MHPSS, health, nutrition, education, emergency cash assistance and social protection.
- UNICEF delivered critical medicines and medical supplies to the Ministry of Health (MoH) for distribution to prioritized health facilities, while continuing with procurement of additional supplies, including first aid kits and life-saving equipment.
- UNICEF established the first two Children's Corners in the town of Goris, in partnership with Armenian Red Cross, visited by at least 100 children daily. UNICEF is working with partners to establish similar facilities in other regions and expand the network of child-friendly spaces.
- UNICEF and partners provided more than 1,000 children and caregivers with child protection case management support, and more than 3,000 with psychological first aid and MHPSS interventions.
- 76 social workers who are continuously supporting the rapid needs assessments in the Goris Humanitarian Center received training on child protection in emergencies and case management.
- UNICEF is partnering with the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports (MESCS) to identify needs of the education system for effective inclusion of refugee children into education and learning. To date, over 55% of school-aged children have already been registered and enrolled in schools.
- UNICEF activated partnerships to provide voucher support for children clothing, initially targeting at least 6,000 children, working closely with the MoLSA on starting with implementation of this activity.
- UNICEF requires US\$ 12,6 million to address the immediate needs of children and their families in Armenia for the first six months of the response (October 2023 – March 2024).

Funding Overview and Partnerships

The scale and complexity of the humanitarian situation of refugee children and their families in Armenia remains high, requiring continuous humanitarian assistance and protection to meet the most urgent needs of affected people. UNICEF has been amongst the first international organizations to respond to this crisis from its onset and is already delivering results for children in priority areas, including lifesaving interventions and supplies for child protection, mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), health, nutrition, education, emergency cash assistance and social protection.

UNICEF has been able to leverage and mobilize available programme funds and investments that had been made during the preparedness phase, as well as its partnership framework that is underpinning the Armenia-UNICEF Country Programme, benefiting also from an immediate allocation of US\$ 1.2 million global thematic humanitarian funds to advance its response.

The Government of Armenia continues taking immediate measures to respond to the urgent needs of the refugee population while it also officially approached the UN and other international organizations to provide support to complement and sustain Government's efforts within the framework of the inter-agency Refugee Response Plan (RRP). UNICEF's immediate requirement is US\$ 12.6 million to deliver a multi-sectorial response for affected children and their families for the period of six months (October 2023 – March 2024). This funding requirement is aligned with the recently launched RRP and [UNICEF Humanitarian Action for Children \(HAC\) appeal](#).

UNICEF is in intensive communication with all relevant donors in country and globally, including ECHO, Sweden, UK, USAID, Education Cannot Wait, KfW, Japan. Timely support from donor partners is required to ensure critical humanitarian and protection assistance for affected children and their families.

Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

Between 24 September and 04 October 2023, 100,600 ethnic Armenians including 30,000 children fled to the Republic of Armenia following the military escalation in their region of origin. Among the arrivals, 52 per cent are women and girls, 31 per cent are children, and 16 per cent are with disabilities¹. 20 children have been identified as unaccompanied and separated. While several cases resulted in family reunification, 13 were from residential care institutions and are temporarily placed in crisis centres while family-type placement is sought.

Registration of the refugee population in Armenia is ongoing, conducted by the State Migration Service (SMS). To date, nearly all (99.2%) refugees have been registered and targeted to receive immediate cash assistance, which will also include housing rental subsidies, as announced by the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM). Refugees are mostly located in marzes (regions) near Yerevan (Kotayk, Ararat and Armavir) and Yerevan city. The total number of refugees in these areas accounts for nearly 70% of all refugees in the country. The Government has provided temporary accommodation to those in need. To date nearly 58,000 people have been accommodated in temporary shelters, including hotels, hostels and adapted collective centers. It is anticipated that this will only be a temporary solution until refugees settle in local communities, following the receipt of cash assistance for rental and utilities (designed for the initial period of 6 months). The Government is also accelerating the registration of school-age refugee children. To date, over 55% of school-aged children have been enrolled in schools. The Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports (MESCS) is committed to ensure 100% enrolment soonest possible, identifying still ongoing movement of people across the country as key bottleneck to achieve this goal at the moment. Given the pre-existing shortage of preschool infrastructure, it has been observed that access to early childhood education will be a challenge that needs to be addressed as well as potential capacity constraints in primary and secondary education. Service provision to children in multiple sectors may be constrained at some point, given the large number of refugees compared to the population of Armenia (43 refugee children per 1,000 national child population).

An initial needs assessment has been done via platforms for self-reporting as well as by field-based social workers from the Unified Social Service (USS). The hotline service established by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) continues to receive calls on various issues. Two cash assistance mechanisms have been announced by the OPM – a one-time universal cash assistance to all refugees and monthly cash support (per person) for housing and communal expenses for the next six months, targeting specifically the refugee families who do not own any property in Armenia.

Summary Analysis of UNICEF Programme Response

As part of its mandate, UNICEF had invested in preparedness to respond to a humanitarian crisis. UNICEF had pre-positioned supplies² to reach 5,000 children and established contingency agreements with implementing partners that have been activated to provide psychological first aid (PFA) and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS), child protection case management, vouchers for clothing, mobile paediatric units and temporary learning spaces.

¹ [RRP Armenia, 2023](#)

² Such as tents, blankets, hygiene kits, first aid kits, diapers and recreational, ECD and ECE kits.

UNICEF had also invested in establishing field presence in Goris, Syunik region, the main registration and transit point for arriving populations. UNICEF was able to leverage these investments to quickly mobilize emergency capacity within the first hours. A cargo of additional supplies from UNICEF Supply Division arrived and is in process of distribution.

Health and Nutrition: UNICEF delivered critical medicines and medical supplies to the Ministry of Health (MoH) for distribution to health facilities in areas with high concentration of refugee population, while the procurement of additional supplies, including first aid kits and life-saving equipment, is ongoing. UNICEF is also partnering with the MoH in monitoring the immunization status of refugee children and their rapid inclusion into the national Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) programme. UNICEF is coordinating with the MoH and regional health authorities and is about to deploy 30 mobile paediatric units with capacity to reach 15,000 children and caregivers in response to immediate needs of refugees and host communities. UNICEF has directly observed cases of refugee children showing signs of malnourishment. There are also reports of cases of low birth weight among refugee children from the area affected by the military hostilities. Taking this into account, the mobile paediatric units are also equipped to monitor and address these cases with specialized equipment. UNICEF is finalizing the procurement of 3,000 food boxes for young children and 1,500 therapeutic biscuits ready for immediate distribution amongst children most in need.

Child Protection: UNICEF established the first two Children's Corners in the town of Goris, in partnership with Armenian Red Cross. Both facilities are operational, continuously receiving children from the refugee and local community. Currently, at least 100 children visit the Corners daily, benefiting from MHPSS, child protection case management and recreational activities, while their parents and caregivers are engaged in registration processes or other arrangements for the family to settle in. Local health authorities reported that the Corner has proven to be helpful in reducing epidemiological risk among children and in providing a safe, child-friendly environment that is helping to reduce the psychological stress and traumatization of children and their caregivers. UNICEF is working with partners to establish similar facilities in other regions of Armenia and expand the network of child-friendly spaces, focusing on communities with high concentration of refugees. UNICEF is engaging the local authorities to establish partnerships and agreements on the establishment of child-friendly spaces. Materials for these spaces are ready for distribution.

Two partnerships have been activated for the provision of MHPSS and PFA services, and child protection case management, reaching already more than 1,000 children and caregivers with case management support, and more than 3,000 children and caregivers with psychological first aid and MHPSS interventions. UNICEF continues to organize and provide training and capacity development for social workers, in charge of local needs assessment at registration places, aiming at strengthening and expanding the overstretched capacity of the system. To date, 76 social workers who are continuously supporting the rapid needs assessments in the Goris Humanitarian Center received training on child protection in emergencies and case management. UNICEF and its partners supported the recruitment and training for volunteers to support the case managers from the Unified Social Services. UNICEF and its partners are also working on identification of children with disabilities among refugees, conducting at the same time comprehensive assessment to identify children's needs and support with individualized services as well as living space adjustments. UNICEF is closely coordinating with the MoLSA and Organizations of People with Disabilities (OPD) to support needs assessment and provision of specialized services and assistive technology for children with disabilities.

Education: UNICEF is in contact with the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports (MESCS) to identify needs of the education system for effective inclusion of refugee children into education and learning, as well as to support expansion of the capacity of schools and preschools to host new students. At present the MESCS is accelerating the process of registration of school-aged children ensuring also continued education and learning. UNICEF is also discussing with the MESCS and relevant local authorities the establishment of temporary learning spaces and early childhood education (ECE) spaces in the marzes with highest concentration of refugees, as per the observed needs and request from the Government. UNICEF has prepositioned School-in-a-box to cater for the needs of at least 1,400 children and Early Childhood Development (ECD) kits sufficient to cover the needs of 1,800 young children. Both types of kits are already being distributed for the refugee children most in need of assistance, while working with partners to identify additional locations where those kits will be most needed. In addition, UNICEF and its partners are distributing a first batch of 1,000 schoolbags with stationary for children.

Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH): UNICEF and the Armenian Red Cross Society installed 15 mobile bio-toilets in proximity of registration centres in Goris and Vayk communities, to address the immediate needs for sanitation in those areas and in response to a public health hazard alarm raised by the MoH. UNICEF delivered family hygiene kits to the 100 families who had initially registered at the recently established Unified Social Services (USS) coordination center in Parakar, in proximity to Yerevan.

Cash Assistance and Social Protection: UNICEF continues with the provision of technical assistance and expertise to MoLSA to develop an in-depth emergency needs assessment tool, which will be used for a more detailed assessment of needs of refugee children and their families. UNICEF is procuring 160 tablets for social workers from Unified Social Services as well as local communities that will support the process of in-depth needs assessment, case registration and management. MoLSA is currently reviewing the previously defined mechanisms for distribution of various cash-based interventions by members of the Cash Working group co-led by UNICEF and UNHCR. Two cash programmes have been announced by the Government: 1) one-time cash assistance to all refugees, including registration that will be mandatory for all people that will be eligible to receive this kind of assistance. The distribution of this cash support is ongoing; 2) cash support for rent and utilities for 6 months. As a result of close MoLSA / UNICEF coordination and collaboration an MoU and other templates on supporting Government-led cash support programmes and data sharing have been reviewed by MoLSA and UNICEF to be adopted by the Cash Working Group members. In the coming weeks, it is expected that a new platform for registration of refugee children is launched and UNICEF is actively working with MoLSA to support this effort. UNICEF activated a partnership to provide voucher support for clothing for children and is in discussions with MoLSA on implementation– initially targeting at least 6,000 children (0-3 years of age and children with disabilities). In the meantime, UNICEF has been providing ad hoc in-kind support to complement the efforts of local authorities, including blankets and mattresses for children and families in the locally established temporary accommodation and humanitarian crisis centres.

Humanitarian Leadership, Coordination and Strategy

The Government of Armenia is taking the lead in providing humanitarian response to the affected population, and will remain in charge of the overall coordination of the response as well as technical coordination with the relevant Government institutions related to key sectors of intervention. As a result of this dialogue, a joint rapid needs assessment of the UN and MoLSA started on 8 October and the findings are expected soon. The UN agencies under the leadership of UNHCR and the Resident Coordinator's office have developed and launched the Armenia Emergency Refugee Response Plan (RRP), based on the existing joint interagency contingency plan, covering the period October 2023 to March 2024. UNICEF has also launched its corresponding humanitarian action for children (HAC) appeal, requiring US\$ 12,630,000 for the response to the needs of refugee children and their families for the period of six months

The evolving inter-agency coordination structure in Armenia draws upon the respective mandates, capacity and comparative advantages of UN agencies and NGOs in providing support to the Government led response. At present, UNICEF is leading the work of the sub-working group (WG) on Child protection, including MHPSS, which is part of the Protection WG and the working group on Education. UNICEF is also co-leading (with UNHCR) the Cash WG and is actively participating in the Health and Nutrition WG, which is also dealing with MHPSS, and Shelter and NFIs WG, which at present also includes coordination of WASH activities. UNICEF is working closely with the Government and the UNCT partners on further development of humanitarian response coordination architecture in Armenia, advocating for strengthened sectorial coordination as well as robust overall inter-sectorial coordination of the response.

External Media

Press release: [Refugee children arriving in Armenia showing signs of severe psychological distress - UNICEF](#)

UNICEF Representative has spoken to various international media outlets about the situation and response, including to UN News: [INTERVIEW: Shocked refugee children in Armenia miss the things they left behind - UNICEF | UN News](#)

UNICEF landing page: [Children and families take refuge in Armenia | UNICEF Armenia](#)

UNICEF website story: [Resilience amidst crisis: teachers provide care and support for children in need | UNICEF Armenia](#)

UNICEF is maintaining regular updates on the response, as well as sharing tips and advice for parents and young children on mental health and psychosocial wellbeing on Facebook, X, and Instagram, with select posts below:

- [UNICEF Armenia on X: "Over 100,000 people affected by the recent military hostilities have arrived in #Armenia. "It is heartbreaking to see so many #children and families having to flee their homes," said UNICEF Representative in #Armenia, Christine Weigand. https://t.co/swHksAovSy / X \(twitter.com\)](#)
- [UNICEF Armenia on X: "Thirty-five tonnes of critical supplies arrived in #Armenia today and will be delivered to the communities in the coming weeks. https://t.co/UCorIzroZE https://t.co/TWPXZrR3k0" / X \(twitter.com\)](#)
- [UNICEF Armenia on X: "As ethnic Armenian children & families fled to #Armenia, UNICEF & Armenian Association of Social Workers trained #frontline professionals Social workers & psychologists are helping integrate children in host communities, providing psychosocial support & responding to other needs https://t.co/jhFubyPsyP" / X \(twitter.com\)](#)
- [UNICEF Armenia on X: "UNICEF Representative in #Armenia spent time with Ani, Gor, Vika & their peers at the children's corner in Goris, set up by UNICEF in partnership with the @RedCrossArmenia. As children seek](#)

[refugee in #Armenia, they need a dedicated space to rest, play & be #children again. https://t.co/AXXYZpUveH](https://t.co/AXXYZpUveH) / X (twitter.com)

- [UNICEF Armenia on X: "As children's lives have been turned upside down as they had to flee their homes, restarting school again is crucial to give them a sense of normalcy. In Goris, Togh & Tatev communities, about 300 students are ready to go to school with a new backpack and materials from UNICEF. https://t.co/SXZvQhaof2"](https://t.co/SXZvQhaof2) / X (twitter.com)
- [UNICEF Armenia on X: "Refugee children arriving in #Armenia showing signs of severe psychological distress, according to reports from UNICEF-supported social workers providing specialised care to children and families who have fled their homes. https://t.co/Ghlltm8uSh #WorldMentalHealthDay https://t.co/ku2HfW3hEf"](https://t.co/Ghlltm8uSh) / X (twitter.com)
- [UNICEF Armenia on X: "On this page, we have compiled various resources developed to assist ethnic #Armenian refugee #children, adolescents, parents, caregivers, and professionals in navigating these challenging times. https://t.co/UCorlzroZE https://t.co/mv7EI3XGbf"](https://t.co/UCorlzroZE) / X (twitter.com)

Next SitRep: Thursday, 19 October 2023

Who to contact for further information: [Christine Weigand, Representative UNICEF Armenia](mailto:cweigand@unicef.org)
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Annex A: Initial six-month funding requirement (October 2023 to March 2024):

Sector	Requirements in US\$
Health and Nutrition	1,630,000
Water Sanitation and Hygiene	750,000
Child Protection	2,500,000
Education	3,000,000
Social Protection (Humanitarian Cash Transfers, Vouchers)	4,200,000
Adolescent Development and participation (ADAP)	300,000
Cross Cutting Areas (Gender, Disability and AAP)	250,000
Total	12,630,000