



©UNICEF/Armenia2023/Martirosyan – Gor, 11, assembling his clarinet that he brought with him to Armenia as his family was fleeing

Reporting Period: 25 October – 1 November 2023

Armenia

Humanitarian Situation Report No. 5

Situation in Numbers*

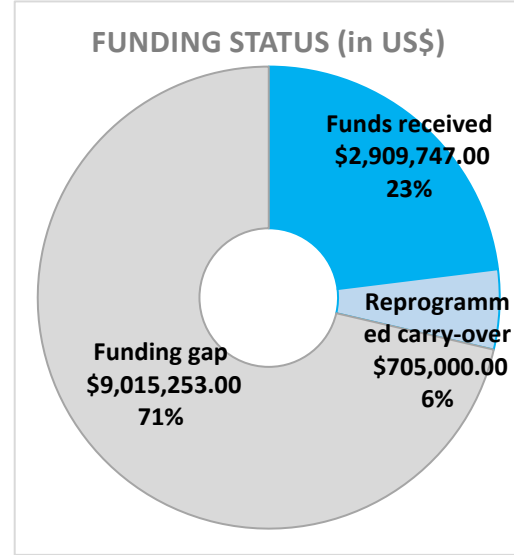
- 52,800** Children in need
(Armenia Refugee Response Plan, October 2023)
- 196,000** People in need
(Armenia Refugee Response Plan, October 2023)
- 35,000** Children to be reached by UNICEF
(UNICEF HAC, October 2023)
- 80,000** People to be Reached by UNICEF
(UNICEF HAC, October 2023)

*includes refugees and host population

UNICEF APPEAL

US\$12.6 million

Funding status, 1 November 2023



Highlights

- As of end of October, 101,848 refugees, including 30,000 children, have arrived in Armenia.
- UNICEF has deployed 20 mobile pediatric units to screen refugee children for health and nutrition status, mental health and psychosocial support needs and provide parents with age-specific counselling on health and nutrition-related childcare practices in an emergency context. In the first week of operation, over 1,000 children have been reached.
- UNICEF started distribution of 3,000 food boxes for young children in four marzes (regions).
- UNICEF and partners have provided over 2,000 children and caregivers with child protection case management support, and over 3,800 with psychological first aid interventions, of which over 1,200 were provided with community-based psychosocial support services. At least 1,550 children are benefitting from child-friendly spaces established with UNICEF’s support in recent years and sustained by local community efforts.
- UNICEF has supported training of over 200 police officers and 130 frontline social service workforce professionals on psychosocial support in emergencies, child sensitive communication and “do no harm” approaches.
- The Government is accelerating registration of school-age refugee children in schools. To date, over 78 percent (around 16,371) have been enrolled.
- UNICEF initiated a partnership to extend early learning spaces through establishment of 20 preschool classrooms in communities with the highest concentration of refugees. Meanwhile around 60 young children are already enrolled and attending early learning centers and kindergartens established with UNICEF’s support in recent years and sustained by local community efforts.
- UNICEF requires US\$ 12.6 million to support delivery of life-saving humanitarian assistance, including supplies, cash, essential services and technical assistance for affected refugee children, adolescents, and their families. To date approximately US\$ 3.6 million* of funding is available, leaving a funding gap of 71 percent. The majority of available funding comes from UNICEF global humanitarian response funds.

*this amount includes US\$ 1.2 million from the UNICEF Emergency Programme Fund (EPF), which is received in loan modality.

Funding Overview and Partnerships

The scale and complexity of the humanitarian situation of refugee children and their families in Armenia remains acute, requiring 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, building on investments made during the preparedness phase and on those made in its regular programme focused on strengthening national systems including their shock-responsiveness. UNICEF also effectively leveraged its partnership framework underpinning the Armenia-UNICEF Country Programme. Furthermore, UNICEF was able to mobilize available programme funds and an immediate allocation of US\$1.2 million Global Thematic Humanitarian funds. UNICEF launched its emergency response on the first day the refugee families started crossing the border to Armenia. The UNICEF team worked around the clock with the local communities, government counterparts, and other partners, providing lifesaving services and assistance. UNICEF is already delivering results for children in priority areas across the country, including lifesaving interventions and supplies for child protection, mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), health, nutrition, education, emergency cash assistance and social protection.

While the Government of Armenia is taking immediate measures to respond to the urgent needs of the refugee population, given the overwhelming, mid to longer-term needs, it has approached the international community, including the United Nations to provide complementary humanitarian assistance to support and sustain response efforts. A joint inter-agency Armenia Emergency Refugee Response Plan (RRP) was launched to support those efforts. Aligned with this, UNICEF launched [a Humanitarian Action for Children \(HAC\) Appeal for Armenia](#), with an immediate requirement of US\$12.6 million to deliver multi-sectorial emergency assistance for at least 35,000 children and their families for a period of six months (October 2023 – March 2024).

To expedite scale up of priority actions and sustain critical actions while resource mobilisation efforts are ongoing, UNICEF Armenia received an Emergency Programme Fund (EPF)¹ loan of US\$ 1.2 million. To date about US\$ 3.6 million of funding is available for the response, most of which from UNICEF's global humanitarian response funds, including funds available through the EPF loan. This leaves a significant, 71 percent funding gap over one month into the response. UNICEF urgently requires timely, flexible funding support to ensure critical assistance for affected children and their families.

Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

As of end of October, 101,848 refugees, including 30,000 children, fled to Armenia, as registered by the State Migration Service. It is assumed that virtually all children from the affected area have now arrived. Among the arrivals, 52 percent are women and girls, 31 percent are children, and 16 percent are people with disabilities². 20 children have been identified as unaccompanied and separated. While several cases resulted in family reunification, more than half came from residential care institutions and are temporarily placed in crisis centres while family-type placement is sought.

As of 26 October, the Government passed a decree on granting temporary protection to persons forcibly displaced, approving the description of the identity document of a refugee granted temporary protection and the procedure of issuing it³.

Nearly 70 percent of the refugee population are located in marzes (regions) near Yerevan (Kotayk, Ararat and Armavir) and Yerevan city. Nevertheless, mobility across the country is still high. 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 centres. It is anticipated that this will only be a temporary solution until refugees find longer-term housing in local communities using received assistance. Three cash assistance programmes have been launched to date by the Government, of which the one-time universal cash assistance of approximately US\$ 250 per person was reported as delivered to nearly all refugees, while the housing and utility payments support at US\$100 and US\$25 per person per month, respectively and designed for an initial period of six months were, reported as delivered to over 70 percent of eligible refugees for October. Another cash assistance programme for refugees to cover their basic needs with monthly support equal to approximately US\$125 per person has been announced for the months of November and December.

Over 78 percent (around 16,371) school-age children have been enrolled in schools. The Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports (MESCS) is committed to ensure full enrolment as soon possible, noting that the still ongoing movement of people across the country remains a key bottleneck to achieving this goal. Over 1,400 vacant teacher positions were announced, targeting teachers from the newly arrived refugee population. Within the first week 126 applications were received and 52 of those were recruited and assigned to schools across Armenia. The expectation is that these teachers will also play a role in assisting refugee children in their integration in new schools and strengthening overall social inclusion. Over 42,000 refugees have registered with local primary healthcare units.

UNICEF's ongoing engagement with partners and their social workers and psychologists continues to reveal that the need for mental health and psychosocial support is particularly high and requires solid investment through a variety of approaches and channels.

Summary Analysis of UNICEF Programme Response

UNICEF had invested in preparedness to respond to a humanitarian crisis. UNICEF had pre-positioned supplies⁴ to reach 5,000 children and established contingency agreements with partners that have been activated to provide

¹ EPF is UNICEF's internal funding mechanism, allocated to countries as a loan to expedite timely emergency response.

² [RRP Armenia, 2023](#)

³ [Official news update, Government of RA website: Decree text in Armenian](#)

⁴ Such as tents, blankets, hygiene kits, first aid kits, diapers and recreational, ECD and ECE kits.

psychological first aid (PFA), MHPSS, child protection case management, clothing vouchers, mobile paediatric units and temporary learning spaces. UNICEF also invested in establishing a 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 of the crisis. Furthermore, UNICEF's earlier investments in establishing child friendly spaces, learning spaces and youth centres and to ensure they are sustained through local authorities' resources has paid off. These structures are gradually expanding their scope of services to include refugee children and adolescents. At the same time, UNICEF's efforts within the Armenia-UNICEF Country Programme to strengthen national systems, including their shock-responsiveness is also yielding results.

Health and Nutrition: In coordination with the Ministry of Health (MoH) and regional health authorities UNICEF has deployed 20 mobile paediatric units in five marzes. In the first week of operation, over 1,000 children have been reached. Each team includes two paediatricians, one nurse and one psychologist, who conduct identification and screening of children for mental health and other health and nutrition issues. The mobile teams also refer children to psycho-social support and healthcare services and provide parents with age-specific counselling on health and nutrition-related childcare practices. UNICEF has supported the development of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for mobile teams and frontline health specialists to provide quality primary health care services, including outreach. UNICEF started distribution of 3,000 food boxes for young children in four marzes. Procurement of therapeutic biscuits is ongoing. UNICEF is 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 has delivered critical medicines and medical supplies to the MoH for distribution to health facilities, while the procurement of additional supplies, including first aid kits and life-saving equipment, is ongoing.

Child Protection: UNICEF is working with partners to establish child-friendly spaces (CFS) in different regions of Armenia. At least 1,550 children are benefitting from child-friendly spaces established with UNICEF's support in five marzes in recent years and sustained by community efforts. These CFS are gradually expanding their scope of services to include newly arrived refugee children and adolescents. Partnerships aimed at establishing at least eleven more CFSs in Syunik, Vayots Dzor, Gegharkunik and Kotayk marzes are under activation, with materials and supplies for these new CFSs ready for distribution. To date, 2,004 children and caregivers have been reached with case management support operationalized through UNICEF-supported social workers and a call center. 14 separated/unaccompanied children were identified and provided with alternative care in the State-run care centres and/or reunited. Two unaccompanied children were identified during the reporting period, and since then were successfully reunited with their families. Out of 3,800 children and caregivers provided with PFA, 1,282 children and caregivers received community-based psychosocial support interventions. To date, UNICEF has supported training of more than 200 police officers and 130 frontline social service workforce professionals on psychosocial support in emergencies, child sensitive communication and "do no harm" approaches. UNICEF also continues to organize and provide training and capacity development for social workers, expanding the overstretched capacity of the system. With UNICEF's support, meetings were held with the social workers from the refugee population, with an aim to empower and recruit them to be involved in the service provision to the affected population. UNICEF in close coordination with the MoLSA and Organizations of People with Disabilities (OPD) is also working on identification of children with disabilities among refugees, to conduct a comprehensive assessment for identification of children's needs and support with individualized services, assistive technology, as well as living space adjustments.

Education: UNICEF is in contact with 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. In discussion with the MESCS and relevant local authorities, UNICEF initiated a partnership with an NGO to expand the overall capacity of early learning services. 20 preschool classrooms will be established and fully equipped in communities with the highest concentration of refugees. The new spaces will be able to serve 600 young children. Large-scale capacity building is being initiated for 320 educators of 60 kindergartens and alternative preschools in Syunik, Gegharkunik, Shirak, Lori and Tavush. It will cover topics on Inclusive Pedagogy, Basic Psychological First Aid and Psychosocial Support, Methodological Guidance on Using of Early Childhood Development (ECD) kits and Thematic Materials, Positive Parenting and disaster risk reduction (DRR) and emergency preparedness. Meanwhile around 60 young children are already enrolled and attending UNICEF-supported early learning centres and kindergartens. For school-age children, the establishment/operation of 11 learning spaces is in process and will allow the expansion of capacity of schools in at risk areas to include around 800 refugee children. UNICEF has prepositioned School-in-a-box kits to cater for the needs of at least 1,400 children and ECD kits sufficient to cover the needs of 1,800 young children and procured 2,000 school bags with stationary. Both types of kits and school bags are already being distributed to refugee children most in need of assistance, while working with partners to identify additional locations where those kits will be most needed.

Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH): UNICEF and the Armenian Red Cross Society (ARCS) 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. These bio-toilets have now been removed given the completion of the acute phase of displacement. UNICEF delivered family hygiene kits to 300 refugee families and diapers for 1,130 babies and children.

Cash Assistance and Social Protection: Capitalizing on the longstanding partnership with MLSA to strengthen the shock-responsiveness of the social protection system, UNICEF continues to support this Ministry in facilitating the process of an in-depth emergency needs assessment. The assessment tools is being finalized and will be used for a more detailed assessment of needs of refugee children and their families for medium- and long-term planning. As a result of close MLSA/UNICEF coordination and collaboration, a Memorandum of Understanding and other templates on

supporting Government-led cash programmes, providing vouchers and data sharing have been reviewed and shared with Cash Working Group members for their use. UNICEF and UNHCR, as co-leads of the Cash Working Group, agreed with the Nork Social Services Technology and Awareness Center, Unified Social Service (USS) and MLSA to develop a protocol on data de-duplication that will guide partners contributing to the Government-led cash programmes. UNICEF has activated a partnership to provide voucher support for clothing for children and is in discussions with MLSA on its implementation with plans to initially target 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 756 blankets and bedding items for children and families.

Humanitarian Leadership, Coordination and Strategy

The Government of Armenia is taking the lead in providing humanitarian response to the affected population and remains 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. A joint rapid needs assessment of the UN and MLSA started on 8 October, and the findings are expected to be disseminated after review by MLSA. The UN agencies under the leadership of UNHCR and the United Nations Resident Coordinator's office (UNRCO) 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 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 next six months (October 2023 – March 2024).

On 17 October, the Government under the auspices of the Deputy Prime Minister and the UN, adopted a joint coordination structure that draws upon the respective mandates and capacity of Government agencies and UN agencies. UNICEF co-leads the work of the Education Working Group (WG) together with the MESCS, the sub-working group on Child Protection, including MHPSS together with the MLSA, and the cross-cutting Cash WG together with the MLSA. UNICEF is actively participating in the Protection WG and Health and Nutrition WG, which are also dealing with MHPSS, and Shelter and NFIs WG, which at present also includes coordination of WASH activities.

External Media

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

UNICEF continued to share children's stories through its digital channels: [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#). UNICEF also communicated its [newly launched partnership](#) with the Armenian State Symphony Orchestra in the framework of the inaugural concert within a series dedicated to supporting humanitarian efforts of UNICEF for refugee children.

[Next SitRep: Thursday, 9 November 2023](#)

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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 (WASH)	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