



©UNICEF/Armenia2023/Mahari – Melanya lost her first husband to the military escalation in 2020 and her second husband to the explosion at a fuel storage this September before fleeing to Armenia with her children.

Reporting Period: 2 – 9 November 2023

Highlights

- As of end of October, 101,848 refugees, including 30,000 children, have arrived in Armenia. Over 80 percent of school-age children are registered in schools.
- To date UNICEF distributed 2,500 food packages to refugee children, 410 family hygiene kits to refugee families, 1,670 diapers for babies and children, 1,029 blankets and bedding items for children and families, 1,052 large and small carrier bags for young mothers and 1,194 school bags with stationaries and school supplies for school age children.
- UNICEF has deployed 20 mobile pediatric units that have reached over 1,500 children so far, screening their health and nutrition status, mental health and psychosocial support needs as well as providing their parents/caregivers with age-specific counselling on health and nutrition-related childcare practices.
- UNICEF and partners provided 2,990 children and caregivers with case management and follow up support, and over 3,800 children and caregivers with Psychological First Aid, of which 1,843 were provided with community-based psychosocial support services. At least 1,550 children are already benefitting from Child Friendly Spaces (CFS) spaces established with UNICEF's support in recent years and sustained by community efforts. 3 additional CFS started operating aiming to reach 1,000 refugee and host community children and adolescents.
- 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.

Armenia

Humanitarian Situation Report No. 6

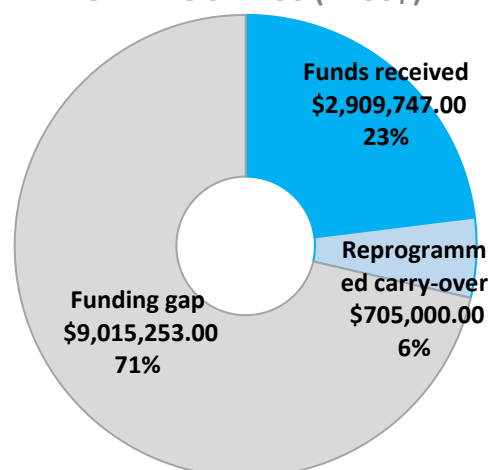


Situation in Numbers*

- 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

FUNDING STATUS (in US\$)



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 funds, including funds available through the EPF loan. This leaves a significant, 71 percent funding gap one and a half 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. During this period a total of 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 90 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 was launched for the months of November and December.

Over 80 percent (around 16,852) 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 140 applications were received and 91 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.

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](#)

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 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: UNICEF reached 2,500 refugee children with food packages. Each package contains 14 food items assembled for one child for one month. 2,000 additional food packages were dispatched to three more regions. In coordination with the Ministry of Health and regional health authorities UNICEF deployed 20 mobile paediatric units in five regions. So far, over 1,500 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 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 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 is partnering with the MoH in monitoring the immunization status of refugee children and their rapid inclusion into the national Expanded Programme on Immunization programme. UNICEF delivered critical medicines and medical supplies to the MoH for distribution to health facilities, while the procurement of additional supplies is ongoing.

Child Protection: UNICEF and partners supported the expansion of services of three additional Child Friendly Spaces (CFS) to reach an estimated 1,000 refugee and host community children and adolescents. At least 1,550 children are already benefitting from child-friendly spaces established in five regions with UNICEF's support in recent years and sustained by community efforts. These CFS are gradually expanding their scope of services to increasingly include refugee children and adolescents newly arrived in the country. To date, 2,990 children and caregivers have been reached with case management and follow up support by social workers including through a call center with support of UNICEF. Out of 3,800 children and caregivers provided with Psychological First Aid (PFA) so far, 1,843 children and caregivers received follow up community-based psychosocial support services. UNICEF continues to organize and provide training and capacity development for social workforce and other professionals, expanding the overstretched capacity of the system. The capacities of more than 200 frontline social service workforce professionals and 200 newly appointed national police officers were enhanced on PFA, psychosocial support in emergencies, child sensitive communication and "do no harm" approaches. UNICEF in coordination with the MLSA 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 distributed school bags with stationary and other school supplies to 1,194 children and another batch is being distributed. In discussion with the MESCS and local authorities, UNICEF initiated a partnership to expand the overall capacity of early learning services. 20 preschool classrooms will be established and fully equipped in communities with high 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 five regions. It will cover topics on Inclusive Pedagogy, Basic PFA and Psychosocial Support, Methodological Guidance on Using of Early Childhood Development (ECD) kits and Thematic Materials, Positive Parenting and disaster risk reduction and emergency preparedness. Meanwhile around 60 young children are already attending UNICEF-supported early learning centres and kindergartens. For school-age children, the establishment/operation of 11 learning spaces is in process in collaboration with an NGO partner and will allow the expansion of capacity of schools to include around 800 refugee children. UNICEF prepositioned School-in-a-box kits to cater for the needs of at least 1,400 children and ECD kits sufficient for 1,800 young children, which will be distributed to additional locations where it is most needed.

Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH): UNICEF delivered family hygiene kits to 410 refugee families and diapers for 1,670 babies in five regions. At the onset of the emergency, UNICEF in collaboration with an NGO partner 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. It is estimated that they served over 10,000 people.

Cash Assistance and Social Protection: UNICEF provided ad hoc in-kind support to complement the efforts of local authorities, including 1,029 blankets and bedding items for children and families, 20 folding beds, 1,052 large and small carrier bags for mothers in three regions. 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 TOR and assessment tools are being finalized and will be used for a detailed assessment of needs of refugee children and families for mid and long-term planning. UNICEF in coordination with MLSA simplified and revised the package of templates for providing cash and voucher assistance,

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

including through Government-led programmes. The revised package includes a generic Agreement between the Ministry and partners, a more detailed Contract between the implementing partner, Unified Social Service (USS) and the Bank of choice as well as the data sharing protocol, agreed by UNICEF and UNHCR with relevant authorities. UNICEF 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 olds and children with disabilities).

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 crosscutting 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.

Given the limited humanitarian funding inflow to support Armenia, joint efforts of the Government and the UN are ongoing to mobilize donors and the international community at large. UNICEF and MESCS as co-chairs of the Education Working Group, held a donor coordination meeting on 3 November highlighting the needs of the education system for effective inclusion of refugee children into education and learning.

External Media

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

UNICEF published five testimonials from refugee adolescents and mothers about the hardships they lived through, the challenges they now face and the hopes they have for the future: [Voices of resilience: Refugee testimonials | UNICEF Armenia](#). The UNICEF Country Office also communicated about the [delivery of food packages](#) for refugee children and [distribution of supplies](#), such as blankets, family hygiene kits, early learning and recreational kits.

Next SitRep: Thursday, 17 November 2023

Who to contact for further information: [Christine Weigand](#),
Representative UNICEF Armenia
Email: cweigand@unicef.org

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