



Noy, 9, who left his home and school due to the hostilities, has successfully resumed school in Armenia, is overcoming anxiety, and is gradually adapting to his new environment.

Reporting Period: December 15-31, 2023

Armenia

Humanitarian Situation

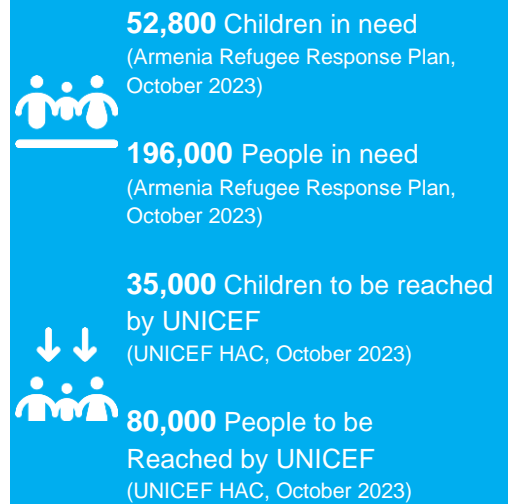
Report No. 10



Highlights

- As of 31 December, 101,848 refugees, including an estimated 30,000 children, had arrived in Armenia following the escalation of hostilities in September 2023. They join another 38,000 refugees, of whom approximately 10,000 children, who fled to Armenia during the 2020 military hostilities or were escorted through the Lachin corridor between December 2022 and June 2023.
- UNICEF has deployed 20 mobile paediatric units that have so far provided health and nutrition services to 4,632 children and reached approximately 4,200 caregivers with age-specific counselling on health and nutrition-related childcare practices.
- To date 17,643 children and caregivers have accessed safe spaces, child protection support and protection hubs. 14,875 children, adolescents and caregivers have received mental health and psychosocial support. 2,411 children have also received individual case management. Among them, around 100 refugee children with disabilities have undergone needs assessments, with 69 receiving tailored assistance and specialized services and 30 provided with assistive devices.
- 5,061 children have received learning materials and education supplies and 7,058 children have received educational services, including remedial classes, psycho-social support, recreational activities, and early childhood education in preschools supported by UNICEF as part of system strengthening efforts before the emergency.
- Nearly all refugee children have received cash assistance from Government cash support and over 50% of the unaccompanied and separated children who were placed in residential care prior to their arrival to Armenia have now been placed in family-type care. These results are due to the efforts of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs with UNICEF advocacy and support on strengthening the shock-responsiveness of the social protection system, as well as strengthening the foster care system and community-based child protection services.
- UNICEF requires US\$ 12.6 million to support the delivery of life-saving humanitarian assistance, including supplies, cash, essential services and technical assistance to refugee children, adolescents, and families. To date, US\$ 6.3 million* is available, leaving a funding gap of 50 percent.

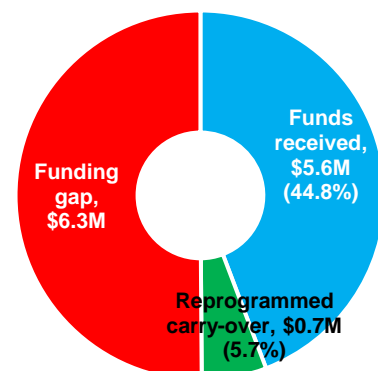
Situation in Numbers*



*includes refugees and host population

UNICEF Funding Appeal
US\$ 12.6 million

Funding Status, 12 January



*this amount includes US\$ 1.2 million from the UNICEF Emergency Programme Fund 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. UNICEF launched its emergency response on the first day refugee families started crossing the border to Armenia. The UNICEF team worked around the clock with local communities, government counterparts, and other partners, providing lifesaving services and assistance. UNICEF is 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, cash assistance and social protection.

While the Government of Armenia has taken the lead in responding 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 (UN) 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. In addition, UNICEF is grateful to have received generous contributions, including US\$1.9million through two Global Thematic Humanitarian Funds allocations,² as well as funding from the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), the Government of France, and UNICEF National Committees (Luxemburg, Switzerland, Argentina). To date US\$6.3 million is available, including funds availed through the EPF loan. This leaves a significant 50 percent funding gap three months into the response. UNICEF urgently requires additional allocations of timely, flexible funding to ensure critical assistance for affected children and their families, also considering that their conditions are further exacerbated during winter.

Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

As of end of December 2023, 101,848 refugees, including an estimated 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 disabilities.³ During this period a total of 30 children have been identified as unaccompanied and separated (UASC). Over 50% of UASC who were previously placed in residential care have been placed in family-type care. On 26 October, a government decree⁴ granted temporary protection to persons forcibly displaced. As per this decree and UNHCR definition, there are another 38,000 refugees of whom almost 10,000 are children (estimated) in Armenia. These persons either fled during the 2020 military hostilities or were escorted through the Lachin corridor between December 2022 and June 2023.

Nearly 70 percent of the refugee population are in Yerevan and surrounding regions (Kotayk, Ararat and Armavir). Nevertheless, mobility across and outside the country continues. The Government had provided temporary accommodation to those in need, however after cash assistance for rent and communal expenses was provided by the Government, the vast majority moved or are moving to rented accommodation. Several cash assistance programmes have been launched to date by the Government, of which one-time universal cash assistance of approximately US\$ 250 per person was reported as delivered to 112,000 refugees, including those who arrived between December 2022 and June 2023. Additional cash assistance schemes include the housing and communal payments support of US\$100 and US\$25 per person per month respectively, both designed for an initial period of six months. 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 as well as an assistance programme to reimburse tuition fees for those attending higher education institutions in Armenia. Upon approval of the amendments to the Law on State Benefits, refugees have the opportunity to apply for pensions and benefits.

Over 80 percent of the school-age refugee children are enrolled in school. The Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports (MESCS) is committed to ensuring full enrolment. No data is publicly available on school attendance nor on access to early childhood education. There are concerns about barriers of access to pre-school especially linked to pre-existing infrastructural gaps. The risk of school dropout especially among adolescents is another concern due to several factors, including the difference in mandatory years of schooling. 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 high and requires solid investment through a variety of approaches and channels. There are also concerns around the fact that the cadre of psychologists and other relevant professionals is overstretched by the ongoing response and may be in need of support.

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

² UNICEF received \$1.1 million from UNICEF Global Thematic Humanitarian Funds in October and an additional \$800,000 in December.

³ Armenia Emergency Refugee Response plan, 7 October, 2023, available at [UN and partners appeal for US\\$97 million to respond to urgent needs of refugees and their hosts in Armenia | UNHCR](#)

⁴ Government of Armenia, Decree 1864-N, October 26, 2023, available at: <https://www.arlis.am/documentView.aspx?docid=184503>

Humanitarian Leadership, Coordination and Strategy

The Government of Armenia has taken the lead in providing humanitarian assistance to the affected population and remains in charge of the overall coordination of the response and technical coordination with relevant Government agencies in key sectors. A joint rapid needs assessment by the UN and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MLSA) was conducted in October. The UN agencies under the leadership of UNHCR and the UN Resident Coordinator's office (UNRCO) launched the Armenia Emergency Refugee Response Plan (RRP), based on the pre-existing joint interagency contingency plan, covering the period October 2023 to March 2024. UNICEF launched its corresponding humanitarian action for children (HAC) appeal for the response to the needs of refugee children and their families for the same period.

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 of Government and UN agencies. UNICEF co-leads the Education Working Group (WG) with MESCS, the sub-working group on Child Protection, including MHPSS, with MLSA, and the Cash WG with MLSA. UNICEF actively participates in the Protection WG and Health and Nutrition WG, which are also dealing with MHPSS, and Shelter and NFIs WG, which 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. Two RRP donor coordination meetings were held so far.

Summary Analysis of UNICEF Programme Response

UNICEF had invested in emergency preparedness and pre-positioned supplies⁵ 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. Following the rapid needs assessment conducted by the UN and MLSA, the in-depth multi-sectoral needs assessment is ongoing as a joint effort between the Government and the UN. It is led by MLSA and UNICEF based on the tools and capacities built as part of the long-standing partnership between the two organizations in strengthening the shock-responsiveness of the social protection system.

Health and Nutrition: UNICEF reached 4,500 young refugee children with food packages. Each package contains 14 food items assembled for one child for one month. In coordination with the Ministry of Health (MoH) and regional health authorities UNICEF deployed 20 mobile paediatric units in five regions. So far, 4,632 children have been reached by teams that include two paediatricians, one nurse and one psychologist. As a result of the consolidated partnership with the MoH and regional health authorities, these teams have been connected from the beginning to the national health system, which has allowed smooth referrals. Over 500 child patients have been referred to secondary or tertiary health services as per needs, including psycho-social support. The teams also reached about 4,200 caregivers with age-specific counselling on health and nutrition-related childcare practices. UNICEF supported the development of Standard Operating Procedures for mobile teams and frontline health specialists to provide quality primary health care services, including outreach and counselling. 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.

Child Protection: The network of child friendly spaces (CFS) continues to expand its scope of services to increasingly include refugee children and adolescents. To date, 17,643 children and caregivers (56 percent female, 44 percent male) accessed safe spaces, child protection support and protection hubs. 14,875 children, adolescents and caregivers (57 percent female, 43 percent male) received mental health and psychosocial support and 2,411 children (52 percent girls, 48 percent boys) received individual case management in and outside the CFSs. 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 312 frontline social service workforce professionals were enhanced on PFA, psychosocial support in emergencies, child sensitive communication and "do no harm" approaches. To date 30 unaccompanied/separated children (UASC) have been identified. Over 50% of the UASC who fled to Armenia and were previously placed in residential care have been placed in family-type care within the first weeks of emergency as a result of MLSA efforts with continuous UNICEF support on strengthening the foster care system and community-based child protection services. Other children were placed in the state-run child and family support/crisis centers. 23 children, including 14 girls and 9 boys were supported with alternative care, family tracing and/or reunification interventions. UNICEF in coordination with the MLSA and Organizations of People with Disabilities (OPD) is also working on identifying refugee children with disabilities to enable the provision of individualized services, assistive technology, and living space adjustments. Through UNICEF partners, so far 150 refugee children with disability and 35 parents have received consultations. Out of them the needs of 100 refugee children were comprehensively assessed. 69 children with disabilities (35 percent girls, 65 percent boys) are already benefitting from needs-based support and specialised services. Around 30 specialists have been capacitated on effective means of providing specialised services to refugee children with disabilities and their families and 38 parents are continuously receiving psycho-social support services and vocational training through individual and group sessions.

⁵ Such as tents, blankets, hygiene kits, first aid kits, diapers and recreational, ECD and ECE kits.

Education: To date, 5,061 children have received learning materials, including school bags with stationery and education emergency supplies. 7,058 children have accessed educational services, including early childhood education in preschools supported by UNICEF as part of system strengthening efforts, as well as remedial classes, psycho-social support and recreational activities in learning spaces in 11 host schools whose capacity is being expanded with UNICEF support. UNICEF in collaboration with UNESCO initiated a partnership with the State Pedagogical-Psychological Support Center to enhance MHPSS in schools focusing on social-emotional learning, individual psychological consultations, support group meetings, stress coping, and adaptation sessions. In coordination with MESCS and local authorities, a mapping exercise of preschool facilities in areas of high concentration of refugees is ongoing, to identify priority communities where facilities and services need to be expanded to accommodate additional young children. UNICEF initiated a partnership to expand the capacity of early learning services by establishing 20 fully equipped preschool classrooms, which will serve 600 young children. Capacity building for 320 educators of 60 kindergartens and alternative preschools in five regions will start this month. It will cover topics on Inclusive Pedagogy, Basic PFA and Psychosocial Support, Methodological Guidance on Early Childhood Development (ECD) kits and thematic materials, Positive Parenting and Disaster Risk Reduction and emergency preparedness.

Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH): UNICEF delivered family hygiene kits to 410 refugee families and diapers for 1,670 babies. At the onset of the emergency, UNICEF together with an NGO partner installed 10 mobile bio-toilets in proximity of registration centres in Goris and Vayk communities, to address the immediate sanitation needs 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 blankets and bedding items for children and families, folding beds and large and small carrier bags for mothers. UNICEF is about to provide voucher support for clothing for children and multipurpose pharmacy cards for pregnant and lactating women with plans to initially target at least 14,000 children (0-9 years old, including children with disabilities) and 2,500 pregnant and lactating women. Verification of the beneficiary lists received from MLSA is ongoing. Nearly all refugee children (31,553) who fled to Armenia in September and those who were escorted through the Lachin corridor between December 2022 and June 2023 received cash-support from the Government, as a result of efforts of MLSA with continuous UNICEF's advocacy and support over the last few years on strengthening the shock-responsiveness of the social protection system, including through inter-agency cash coordination efforts. Within this consolidated partnership, UNICEF continues to support MLSA for the in-depth emergency needs assessment of refugee children and families to inform mid and long-term planning for their social needs. The needs assessment tool has been digitized and 27 social workers were trained on the tool, as well as on ethical considerations, Gender-based violence (GBV) risk prevention and mitigation, Prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA), protection mainstreaming and other aspects. To date, the needs of 450 refugee families have been assessed, while more than 10 urgent cases were referred to MLSA/ Unified Social Service (USS). UNICEF, in coordination with MLSA, simplified and revised the package of templates for providing cash and voucher assistance, 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, USS and the bank of choice and the data sharing protocol, agreed by UNICEF and UNHCR with relevant authorities. Coordination efforts around voucher support have been intensified due to challenges of duplication and social cohesion.

Accountability to affected populations (AAP): UNICEF's approach to AAP focuses on: (i) Complaints and Feedback Mechanisms (CFMs), (ii) Information sharing and (iii) Participation. Several CFMs have been established in collaboration with partners to regularly collect feedback and inform adjustments to the response. Particularly, feedback and complaint forms were developed leading to the InForm platform and are being used to collect feedback on supply distribution, cash assistance and service provision in all types of UNICEF-supported spaces along with suggestion boxes. To date over 63,300 people have been reached through messaging on prevention and access to services, their rights and entitlements and about 4,500 people have shared their concerns and asked questions through established mechanisms.

External Media

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

UNICEF and partners actively communicated about [the visit to Armenia of Regina De Dominicis](#), UNICEF Regional Director for Europe and Central Asia and Special Coordinator for the Refugee and Migrant Response in Europe. The news garnered coverage from approximately 80 local media outlets, providing details about the meetings with Government officials and other partners. UNICEF shared updates on social media about the training of teachers on psycho-social support in an effort to improve learning environment in schools. UNICEF also highlighted the end of season closing concert held by the Armenian State Symphony Orchestra in support of UNICEF. Links are below:

- [A group of 25 teachers from Sevan and Chambarak underwent training on psychosocial first aid, enhancing their ability to provide psycho-social support to children who have experienced challenging times.](#)
- [Join us for a concert by the Armenian State Symphony Orchestra featuring the renowned violinist Sergey Khachatryan at the Aram Khachatryan concert hall conducted by Sergey Smbatyan.](#) All proceeds will go to UNICEF in support of refugee children.

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Annex A: Programme Results (October – December 2023)

Sector	UNICEF Targets 2023	Total Results		Change from last HPM Table
		Total Results	Progress Against Targets (%)	
Health				
H3_# children and women receiving primary health care services through UNICEF supported mechanisms (number of unique beneficiaries)	15,000	4,632	30.9%	30 ▲
Nutrition				
NUT1_# of children/caregivers receiving IYCF counselling sessions through UNICEF supported mechanisms.	8,000	4,206	52.6%	1,305 ▲
Child Protection				
CP1_# children and caregivers accessing mental health and psychosocial support	25,000	14,875	59.5%	7,850 ▲
CP4_# people with access to safe spaces, protection and support hubs	45,000	17,643	39.2%	13,515 ▲
CP6_# women, girls and boys accessing GBV risk mitigation, prevention and/or response interventions ⁶	15,000	13,930	92.9%	6,738 ▲
CP7_# people with safe and accessible channels to report sexual exploitation and abuse by aid workers	80,000	13,930	17.4%	3,208 ▲
Education				
EDU1_# of children accessing formal or non-formal education, including early learning, through UNICEF-supported system-strengthening and programmes	25,000	7,058	28.2%	4,629 ▲
EDU2_# of children receiving learning materials	8,000	5,061	63.3%	1,404 ▲
Social Protection				
SP1_# households reached with UNICEF funded multi-purpose humanitarian cash transfers	5,000	0	0.0%	0 =
SP2_# households reached with cash transfers through an existing government system with UNICEF technical assistance	30,000	31,553 ⁷	105.2%	3,078 ▲
SBC				
SBC1_# people reached through messaging on prevention and access to services (including social protection, health, nutrition, education, etc.)	80,000	63,314	79.1%	29,163 ▲
SBC3_# of people sharing their concerns and asking questions through established feedback mechanisms	40,000	4,503	11.3%	0 =

Annex B: 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

⁶ The data of one of the implementing partners is not reflected in the total reach against CP6, CP7, SBC1 and SBC3 due to ongoing adjustments

⁷ The additional number of children reached includes refugee children who were escorted through the Lachin corridor between December 2022 and June 2023.