



©UNICEF Armenia/2023/Beryozkin - Daniel, who fled to Armenia at the end of September, has made incredible progress with the help of UNICEF-supported rehabilitation therapists

Reporting Period: 1-14 December 2023

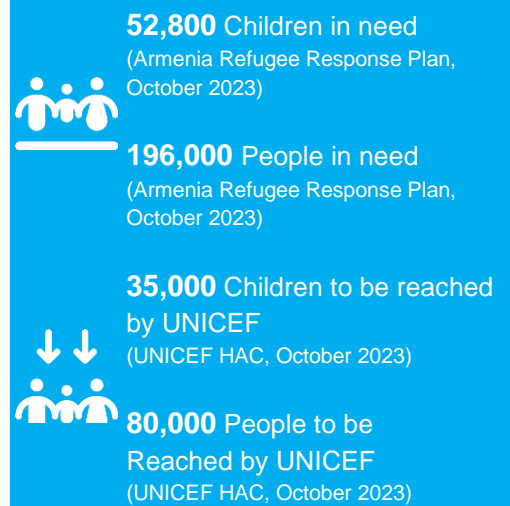
# Armenia Humanitarian Situation Report No. 9



## Highlights

- As of mid-November, 101,848 refugees, including 30,000 children, have arrived in Armenia. Over 80 percent of school-age children are registered in schools.
- UNICEF deployed 20 mobile pediatric units that have reached 4,602 children so far. Over 500 child patients have been referred to secondary or tertiary health services as per needs, including mental health and psycho-social support.
- With the support of UNICEF and partners, 4,128 children and caregivers have accessed safe spaces. Additionally, 7,025 children, adolescents and caregivers have received mental health and psychosocial support and 1,951 children have received individual case management. Among them, around 100 refugee children with disabilities underwent UNICEF-supported needs assessments. Of these, 65 received tailored assistance and specialized services and 30 were provided with assistive devices as per needs.
- UNICEF distributed 3,657 school bags with stationaries and school supplies for school age children. A joint 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.
- Over 95% of refugee children have received cash assistance from the Government cash support within the first 5 weeks of emergency. Over 50% of the unaccompanied and separated children who fled to Armenia and were previously placed in residential care have been placed in family-type care within the first weeks of emergency. These results are due to the efforts of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs with continuous 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 the refugee children, adolescents, and families. To date, approximately US\$ 4.6 million\* is available, leaving a funding gap of 64 percent. The majority of available funding comes from UNICEF global humanitarian response funds.

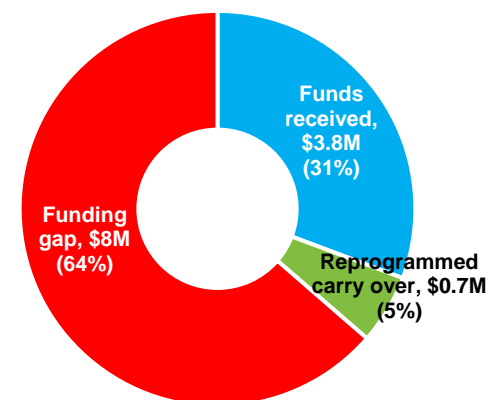
## Situation in Numbers\*



\*includes refugees and host population

UNICEF Funding Appeal  
**US\$ 12.6 million**

Funding Status, 14 December 2023



\*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\$1.1 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 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 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 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)<sup>1</sup> loan of US\$ 1.2 million. Recently UNICEF also received US\$700,000 from the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF). To date almost US\$ 4.6 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 64 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 November, 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 disabilities<sup>2</sup>. During this period a total of 30 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. On 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 it<sup>3</sup>.

Nearly 70 percent of the refugee population are located in marzes (regions) near Yerevan (Kotayk, Ararat and Armavir) and in Yerevan itself. Nevertheless, mobility across and outside the country is still high. The National Security Service of Armenia reported that 10,929 refugees left the country, of these 4,303 already returned to Armenia. The Government had provided temporary accommodation to those in need, while after the cash assistance for rent and communal expenses was provided by the Government, the vast majority moved or is moving to rented accommodation. Several 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 communal 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 95 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. An assistance programme for reimbursing tuition fees for those included in higher educational institutions in Armenia was also launched. Upon approval of the amendments to the Law on State Benefits, refugees now have the opportunity to apply for pensions and benefits through an online platform.

Over 80 percent of the school-age refugee children have been enrolled in schools. The Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports (MESCS) is committed to ensure full enrolment as soon possible. 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 the 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 particularly high and requires solid investment through a variety of approaches and channels. Concerns are also emerging on the fact that the cadre of psychologists and other relevant professionals is overstretched by the ongoing response.

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

<sup>2</sup> [RRP Armenia, 2023](#)

<sup>3</sup> [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 supplies<sup>4</sup> 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, the in-depth multi-sectoral needs assessment will be conducted as a joint effort with the Government and 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, 4,602 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 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.

**Child Protection:** The network of child friendly spaces (CFS) continues to expand its scope of services to increasingly include refugee children and adolescents newly arrived in the country. To date, 4,128 children and caregivers accessed safe spaces, support and protection hubs. 7,025 children, adolescents and caregivers received mental health and psychosocial support and 1,951 children 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 301 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 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 Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs' (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. 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. UNICEF and partners enabled access of refugee children with disabilities to special equipment and assistive devices to contribute to their home adaptation and smooth inclusion in host communities. To date around 150 refugee children with disability and 35 parents received consultations. Out of them the needs of 100 refugee children were comprehensively assessed. 65 children continuously received need-based support and specialised services. Another 30 children with disabilities were provided with assistive devices. Around 30 specialists have been capacitated on effective means of providing specialised services to refugee children with disabilities and their families. 15 parents continuously received psycho-social support services and vocational training.

**Education:** UNICEF distributed school bags with stationary and other school supplies to 3,657 children. In coordination with the MESCS and local authorities, a joint 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 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 80 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

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



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. UNICEF is in the final stages of preparation 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 (0-8 years old, including children with disabilities) and 2,500 pregnant and lactating women. 95% of refugee children who fled to Armenia in September received cash-support from the Government within the first 5 weeks of emergency, 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. Other cash support schemes are underway. Within this consolidated partnership, UNICEF continues to support MLSA in facilitating the process of an in-depth emergency needs assessment of refugee children and families to inform mid and long-term planning to meet their social needs. The Terms of Reference and assessment tools, as well as contracting arrangements for an implementing partner have been finalized, the tool is in final stages of digitalization, fieldwork will commence next week. 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, Unified Social Service and the Bank of choice and the data sharing protocol, agreed by UNICEF and UNHCR with relevant authorities.

**Accountability to affected populations:** UNICEF's approach to accountability to affected populations for this emergency response focuses on three areas: (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. To date over 34,000 people were reached through messaging on prevention and access to services and about 4,500 people shared their concerns and asked questions through established feedback mechanisms.

### 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 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 was conducted and the findings were disseminated. 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. Two RRP donor coordination meetings were held on 16 and 21 November.

### External Media

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

During this period, UNICEF disseminated information regarding the continuous assistance provided to the most vulnerable refugee children. This included efforts to conduct comprehensive needs assessments specifically tailored to address the requirements of refugee children with disabilities.

- [Դասիերը և Տարբեր, որ սեպտեմբերի վերջին ստիպված փախել են Հայաստան. ՅՈՒՆԻՍԵՖ-ի աջակցությամբ վերականգնողական թերապևտների օգնությամբ բավականին առաջընթաց են գրանցել:](#)

In addition, UNICEF developed a human-interest story to communicate the importance of social workers in responding to emergencies and supporting individuals to adapt to the new environment as well as to highlight UNICEF's continuous work with partners on equipping social workers with required skills. "[Guardians of hope: Social workers light path for refugee children and families](#)", the article also highlights UNICEF's preparedness efforts, which enabled a rapid response that has reached 6,200 refugee children, adolescents and caregivers with psychosocial support since the end of September.

Next SitRep: Friday, 12 January 2024

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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
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,630,000</b>

**Annex B:** Programme Results (October – 14 December 2023)

Sector	UNICEF Targets 2023/2024	Total Results		Change from last HPM Table	
		Total Results	Progress Against Targets (%)		
<b>Health</b>					
H3_# children and women receiving primary health care services through UNICEF supported mechanisms (number of unique beneficiaries)	15,000	4,602	31%	52	▲
<b>Nutrition</b>					
NUT1_# of children/caregivers receiving IYCF counselling sessions through UNICEF supported mechanisms.	8,000	2,901	36%	666	▲
<b>Child Protection</b>					
CP1_# children and caregivers accessing mental health and psychosocial support	25,000	7,025	28%	799	▲
CP4_# people with access to safe spaces, protection and support hubs	45,000	4,128	9%	995	▲
CP6_# women, girls and boys accessing GBV risk mitigation, prevention and/or response interventions	15,000	7,192	48%	2,923	▲
CP7_# people with safe and accessible channels to report sexual exploitation and abuse by aid workers	80,000	10,722	13%	6,453	▲
<b>Education</b>					
EDU1_# of children accessing formal or non-formal education, including early learning, through UNICEF-supported system-strengthening and programmes	25,000	2,429	10%	432	▲
EDU2_# of children receiving learning materials	8,000	3,657	46%	437	▲
<b>Social Protection</b>					
SP1_# households reached with UNICEF funded multi-purpose humanitarian cash transfers	5,000	0	0%	-	=
SP2_# households reached with cash transfers through an existing government system with UNICEF technical assistance	30,000	28,475	95%	-	=
<b>SBC</b>					
SBC1_# people reached through messaging on prevention and access to services (including social protection, health, nutrition, education, etc.)	80,000	34,151	43%	1,499	▲
SBC3_# of people sharing their concerns and asking questions through established feedback mechanisms	40,000	4,503	11%	1,736	▲