

UNFPA Refugee Response in Armenia

Situation Report #4



Reporting period: 1 - 30 November 2023; Released: 7 December 2023



2,000
additional dignity kits distributed



135
rescuers trained in Sexual and Reproductive Health and First Aid



14
Women and Girls Safe Spaces operating across Armenia

Highlights

- Over **2,000 dignity kits** were provided to local municipalities and faith-based organizations for further distribution. Since the start of the crisis in September, over **24,000 dignity kits** for refugee women and girls and other vulnerable refugees have been distributed in reception centres and through regional authorities in Aragatsotn, Ararat, Armavir, Gegharkunik, Kotayk, Lori, Shirak, Syunik and Vayots Dzor.
- **105 rescuers** from the Ministry of Internal Affairs' Rescue Service were trained in life-saving Minimum Initial Service Package (**MISP**) for Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH), and **30 rescuers** were trained in **First Aid** provision.
- **14 Women and Girls Safe Spaces** are operating across Armenia, including in **10 regions and Yerevan**, to provide first psychosocial support to women and girls at risk of gender-based violence (GBV). Since the start of the crisis in September, over **500 refugees** have received support in these spaces.



Ina, a 40-year old mother of ten children, and her extended family have found refuge in Armenia. Photo: UNFPA Armenia/Mher Manukyan



101,848
refugees fled to Armenia



9%
persons with disabilities



12%
older people



52%
women and girls



2,070
pregnant women



120
women gave birth

Situation Overview / Humanitarian Needs

- Over 100,000 people fled to Armenia following renewed hostilities in the Karabakh region in September 2023. As of 19 October 2023, the authorities had [registered 101,848 refugees](#).
- More than **half of them** are reported to be **women and girls**; an estimated **2,070 women** are **currently pregnant**, **120** have given birth since arriving in Armenia and an estimated **1,380** will give birth in the next 6 months. **29 per cent of refugees** are reported to be **under 18 years**, **9 per cent** to be **people with disabilities** and approximately **12 per cent** to be **older than 65 years**.
- An [Inter-Agency Rapid Needs Assessment](#) was conducted by the Government of Armenia and UN agencies, including UNFPA. During the assessment, some organizations observed that refugees are exposed to the risk of violence and abuse within host communities due to their vulnerability. This situation could lead to a rise in GBV cases, which are likely to be under-reported. Additionally, some NGOs mentioned that there is a lack of toilet facilities in collective shelters that are safe, private and accessible. In response to these initial findings, UNFPA is conducting a complementary **GBV needs assessment** to be completed by late December.
- Approximately **93 per cent of refugees** have received **financial support** from the **Government of Armenia** at the amount of 100,000 AMD (around US\$250) per person. They continue to receive **social support** for 6 months: 40,000 AMD (around \$100) and 10,000 AMD (around \$25) per month and per person to live in temporary housing and help pay for utilities, respectively.

UNFPA Humanitarian Response

- During the reporting period, some **2,000 dignity kits** were distributed to women and girls in reception centres and through regional authorities in the **Aragatsotn, Ararat, Armavir, Gegharkunik, Kotayk, Lori, Shirak, Syunik and Vayots Dzor** regions. Dignity kits also contained information materials on the [SafeYOU application](#) and existing government services for the refugee population.
- In the Gegharkunik region, **105 rescuers** were trained on the **MISP** to address the SRH needs of refugees and the host community and **30 rescuers** were trained on first aid provision.
- With UNFPA support, **18 rescuers** and **210 health-care providers** improved their knowledge and skills in the provision of **psychological first aid** and **stress self-management**.
- **14 Women and Girls Safe Spaces** are operating across Armenia, **10 regions and Yerevan** and will continue to provide first psychosocial support to women and girls at risk of GBV. They also ensure GBV case management and prevention by raising awareness among women and girls, as well as providing other support services.
- **200 refugees** received multiple services at the Women and Girls Safe Spaces in partnership with the Women's Support Centre and Domestic Violence Support Services from 14 communities across Armenia. Services provided included psychological support, distribution of dignity kits tailored for breastfeeding and pregnant women, older people, young girls and children, as well as legal assistance. This legal support covered guidance on applying for government cash assistance and accessing other support services.
- **16 participants** from UNFPA's implementing partners were trained **on standards and practices for operating Women and Girls Safe Spaces**. Additionally, UNFPA conducted safety audits for both existing and new spaces, ensuring that implementing partners met the necessary technical standards during their set-up and operation.
- UNFPA, along with partners including CSOs, INGOs and UN agencies, has significantly contributed to the Armenia Refugee Response Plan with a **joint strategy on GBV prevention and response**, focusing on the needs of women and girls from host communities, refugees and persons with disabilities, ensuring timely and effective survivor-centred services.



- UNFPA convened a **sensitization discussion forum** engaging health-care providers on **GBV** and centred on the **clinical management of rape**. This forum promoted heightened awareness among participants, a commitment to advocacy initiatives to ensure the provision of high-quality services for survivors of sexual violence and a valuable exchange of knowledge among health-care providers.
- **17 health-care providers** from across Armenia participated in the **five-day MISP training of trainers**. This programme equips them to disseminate the knowledge and skills acquired and ensures the provision of quality, life-saving sexual and reproductive health services during emergency situations
- The **Ministry of Health accredited a three-day training package** for the upcoming round of MISP training for health-care providers.

Coordination

- The UN, led by UNHCR and the Office of the Resident Coordinator, is **supporting the Government** in the coordination of the emergency response.
- The **GBV Sub-Sector** continues to actively participate in the Inter-sectoral, Protection Coordination and Health Sector meetings. A **Capacity Enhancement Needs Assessment tool** has been created and disseminated among GBV Sub-Sector members, aiming at tailoring capacity-strengthening interventions to the needs of local partners and developing a GBV Sub-Sector capacity-building plan.
- As the lead of the GBV Sub-Sector, UNFPA organized a **technical training session for 20 service providers** from various organizations within the sub-sector. This session focused on the standards and practices for operating Women and Girls Safe Spaces, underscoring their pivotal role in GBV response and prevention in refugee contexts.
- UNFPA continues to **co-lead the SRH team** jointly with the Ministry of Health under the Health sector.
- UNFPA is also supporting UNHCR and WFP in mainstreaming activities related to the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (**PSEA**), building on its strong capacity and involvement within the UN country team in Armenia over the past years.
- **UNFPA** continues to act as **chair of the Network on Protection of Older People**, supporting and coordinating the mapping of humanitarian response activities for older people to understand funding gaps.
- UNFPA has **successfully advocated** for conducting a **GBV needs assessment** to ensure the mapping of needs, risks and concerns of women and girls at risk of GBV and GBV survivors, complementing the existing and ongoing assessments. UNFPA has received approval from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and has started data collection in line with key GBV guidelines and principles.

Future Plans

- The capacities of health facilities and medical providers to provide **quality SRH services will be strengthened through additional capacity-building**. Four three-day accredited training courses for regional health-care providers on the provision of MISP will be organized in December 2023 in the Ararat, Gegharkunik, Tavush and Vayots Dzor regions. Additionally, training for regional health-care providers on the provision of quality emergency obstetrical care with practical (simulation) sessions will be organized during December 2023.
- UNFPA will continue training health-care providers on **psychological first aid** and **stress self-management** in December 2023.
- **Information, education and communication materials** on safe motherhood, danger signs in pregnancy, family planning, prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted infections and HIV, as well as GBV and PSEA, will be disseminated among refugee women.
- UNFPA is planning to establish **three additional Safe Spaces for Women and Girls**, as well as a **virtual space** via the SafeYOU application.

- Based on the positive feedback and identified needs, UNFPA is planning to procure an additional **3,000 dignity kits** for women and girls, which will be distributed to the most vulnerable people in partnership with the Government and NGOs. These will also be used as an entry point to disseminate information about available protection and SRH services.
- UNFPA has reached an agreement with UNICEF on a **joint voucher programme** aimed at targeting pregnant and breastfeeding women to cover urgent needs in Armenia. The voucher programme will commence in December 2023.
- The **GBV Sub-Sector Strategy** and the Work Plan, including the capacity-building plan, are currently under revision by its members. The final documents are expected to be endorsed in December 2023. These documents will ensure timely operational mapping, tailored technical assistance and quality GBV service provision.

UNFPA Funding Requirements



\$4.5M required
(for six months)



21% funded as of
November 2023

- UNFPA's [Appeal for the Armenia Refugee Response](#) seeks \$4.5 million in funding to provide life-saving SRH and GBV interventions and supplies.
- Only 21 per cent of the Appeal is funded as of November 2023, including \$400,000 from the Central Emergency Response Fund for emergency life-saving interventions in addition to \$543,400 from the UNFPA Emergency Fund.

Media, Communication and Advocacy

- UNFPA launched a [portal for the refugee crisis in Armenia](#) with all UNFPA resources on this crisis, including previous situation reports.
- Dozens of pregnant refugees tell their [stories of giving birth amid turmoil after fleeing to Armenia](#).
- Generations of families who fled conflict in Karabakh face an [uncertain future](#).

UNFPA greatly appreciates the generous support of donors and the tireless efforts of partners in responding to the needs in Armenia.

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