

09 October 2023

UNFPA Appeal for Armenia Refugee Response

Situation Overview

Over 100,000 people have fled the region of Karabakh and entered Armenia as refugees since hostilities escalated on 19-20 September 2023. All but a few of the region's inhabitants have left, many with only a few bags of personal belongings. The government of Armenia has mounted a swift emergency response and relocated the refugees across the country. However, there are significant needs for the refugee population as well as for the host community, especially the most vulnerable (including pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers, people with disabilities, women and girls at risk of gender based violence, youth and older persons) who urgently need support for their physical and mental wellbeing.



Among the refugees there are an estimated **2070 pregnant women**, and an estimated **1380** will give birth in the coming 6 months. There have been reports of fever and malnutrition in children, deaths, strokes, and severe psychological stress and anxiety among the refugees, as well as a general lack of medical and hygiene supplies. There have also been reports of births and miscarriages on the road to Armenia.

Women and girls make up at least 51% of the refugees. They need access to essential reproductive and maternal health, are particularly vulnerable to GBV in this crisis, and are lacking basic access to menstrual health items and protection services.

UNFPA has worked in Armenia since 1999, with a focus on reproductive health and rights, population and development strategies, gender equality and youth. Since 2020, UNFPA has also provided humanitarian assistance to people in Armenia affected by the conflict.

Ongoing and proposed humanitarian responses

UNFPA's role in humanitarian emergencies is providing and coordinating assistance, together with partners, aimed at ensuring the availability of **sexual and reproductive health (SRH) supplies**, including medicines; access to quality services, including maternal and newborn health; and **protection from gender-based violence (GBV)** for women and girls and other vulnerable people. As part of preparedness activities, UNFPA had already undertaken a mapping of required SRH services, equipment and medicines and developed GBV referral pathways. UNFPA also prepositioned and distributed Inter-Agency Reproductive Health (IARH) Kits and Dignity Kits upon the refugees' arrival.

The following responses are planned or already underway:

- **Medical supplies:** Distribution of IARH kits (medicines, equipment, supplies) for health facilities to be fully operational to provide sexual and reproductive health services.

- **Capacity strengthening:** Trainings and refresher courses for health personnel (doctors, midwives, nurses) and others (e.g. rescuers) to provide quality life-saving reproductive health services (including on first aid, MISP, clinical guidelines, and psychological first aid)
- **Establishment of Women and Girls Safe Spaces (WGSS):** two WGSS are operating as of 6 October, and an additional three are planned, where quality, coordinated, survivor-centred and multi-sectoral services will be available, including information, GBV case management, psychosocial and legal support, and empowerment activities.
- **Distributing dignity kits:** UNFPA has distributed 13,000 dignity kits including sanitary pads, personal hygiene items and information materials in transit centres in the southeastern regions of Syunik and Vayots Dzor, as well as Kotayk and Ararat. More kits are being procured based on needs.
- **Information:** Dissemination of information on protection, GBV services and reproductive health knowledge and services among women and girls refugees as well as host communities, including young people.
- **Cash Assistance** - Providing cash voucher assistance (CVA) for women who need financial support (e.g. pregnant, breastfeeding and young women, as well as through GBV case management services), via joint UNFPA-UNICEF CVA scheme, in coordination with the Government.
- **Data and Information Management:** Support to authorities in strengthening data for strategy development and policy interventions.
- **Focus on older persons:** Extended assistance to vulnerable older refugees, in coordination with other UN Agencies.

UNFPA Armenia expects to reach at least 30,000 women, girls, young and older people and people with disabilities, both among the refugees and the host communities.

UNFPA Call to Partners:

There is a need to respond to the acute emergency caused by the sudden influx of refugees as well as longer-term needs as most refugees for now indicate that they would like to settle in Armenia. UNFPA requests **long-term flexible funding** to respond to the needs of women and girls affected by the crisis. Most urgently UNFPA needs funding to continue providing essential dignity, maternity and RH commodities, coordination of RH and GBV services, and deploying trained personnel to deliver life-saving SRH and GBV services. Working together with the Government of Armenia, and international and national civil society organizations, UNFPA requires funding to continue its emergency response to support refugees who have fled their homes while supporting the host communities.

UNFPA Funding Requirements

\$4.5 million to ensure uninterrupted, accessible and quality SRH (\$ 2.5 million) and GBV-related (\$ 2 million) services by strengthening existing national capacities and establishing dedicated ones to meet immediate needs of the refugees and host communities.

UNFPA Contacts for more information:

- Louise Dann, Regional Resource Mobilisation Advisor: dann@unfpa.org
- Mher Manukyan, Communications Analyst at UNFPA Armenia: manukyan@unfpa.org