Armenia

March 2018

7,913 persons of concern benefitted from UNHCR assistance in 2017, including:

- Cash-based interventions – 1,782
- Income generation and vocational training – 439
- Social and cultural integration projects – 666
- Social, procedural and legal counselling - 390

89% Of persons adjudicated in the Government’s asylum procedure were granted refugee status in 2017 (refugee recognition rate)

KEY POPULATION FIGURES

14,573 persons in refugee-like situations, including
- 14,000 persons displaced from the Syrian Arab Republic
- 573 persons displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh
- 71 asylum seekers
- 773 stateless persons
- 3,399 refugees

FUNDING

USD 1.5 M requested for Armenia

UNHCR PRESENCE

Staff:
- 2 International Staff
- 11 National Staff
- 5 affiliated workforce, including national UN volunteers

Presence:
- 1 Country Office in Yerevan.
Background and strategic directions

- UNHCR established its presence in Armenia in December 1992 to contribute to the humanitarian response related to the mass influx of 360,000 refugees of Armenian background displaced from Azerbaijan in the context of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Armenia is a State party to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, its 1967 Protocol, as well as, to the 1954 and 1961 Statelessness Conventions. Armenia is a full member of UNHCR EXCOM since 2015.

- At present the office is focusing in particular on promoting and facilitating durable solutions, primarily by way of local integration for the about 15,000 persons displaced due to the conflict in Syria and who continue to stay and seek protection in Armenia. Arrivals are ongoing (86 persons in 2017). Armenia also hosts refugees and asylum-seekers from Iraq, Ukraine and Iran and smaller numbers of refugees from some African countries. Moreover, about 600 of the persons displaced in consequence of the escalation of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in April 2016 remain in Armenia and have been now integrated into the general assistance and integration activities.

- Building on progress made in previous years in regard to legislative reform, the establishment of an effective and efficient asylum procedure and the enhancement of the humanitarian response capacity UNHCR Armenia in line with UNHCR’s global and regional strategy is set to:
  - further develop the Armenian asylum system with a view to enhance the quality of decision making and adjust capacities to needs;
  - gradually shift the focus of assistance efforts from a humanitarian response towards the promotion and facilitation of durable solutions, primarily by way of local integration;
  - bring into operation Armenia’s statelessness determination procedures following adoption of amendments to the national legislation, developed in close cooperation with UNHCR and expected to be issued in 2018.

Working with partners

- UNHCR Armenia’s governmental counterparts are the State Migration Service, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of Diaspora. Most of UNHCR’s activities in Armenia are conducted in close cooperation with partners; UNHCR main project partners are Mission Armenia, Armenian Red Cross Society, KASA Swiss Humanitarian Foundation, Children’s Support Center, Academy of Justice, Public Defender’s Office and the Human Rights Defender of the Republic of Armenia. With the latter UNHCR has strengthened cooperation aimed at reinforcing the legal and institutional framework for the protection of Persons of Concern, including prevention and reduction of statelessness. Moreover, UNHCR closely cooperates with a broad range of operational partners, including German International Development agency (GIZ), Armenian Caritas, OXFAM/Oxygen, Ani & Narod Memorial Foundation, “Aleppo” Compatriotic Charitable NGO, ABA ROLI, Save the Children and World Vision, many of which have been supported by UNHCR in project design and fundraising efforts. The Office is an active member of the UNCT and has joint activities with IOM, UNICEF, WFP and UNDP and, together with IOM, has successfully promoted the inclusion of displacement specific outcomes into the 2016-2020 UNDAF. UNHCR Armenia is actively promoting the mainstreaming of displaced populations into the nationalization of the SDGs and into the Armenia Development Vision 2030 presently prepared by the Prime minister’s office.
Main activities

Protection, including asylum capacity building, access to territory, quality asylum procedures and improved reception conditions

- Building on successful advocacy for legislative reform processes, including on a new Law on Refugees and Asylum and inclusion of an asylum provision in the Constitution, promotion and support in full implementation of improved legislation.
- Further capacitation of the State Migration Service through training and technical assistance, while promoting stronger (financial) engagement of authorities in addressing displacement challenges.
- Strategic judicial engagement, through systematic training of judges and lawyers, provision of legal aid and counselling services, and strategic litigation.
- Systematic border monitoring, visits to detention facilities and trainings for border guards and other NSS staff.
- Public information and activities raising awareness of and understanding for the plight of displaced populations aiming at enhancing the protection environment and promoting integration.
- Mainstreaming of PoCs in public services and employment schemes; strengthening referral mechanisms, and enhancing partnerships.

Basic needs and essential services, including for PoCs with specific needs

- Maintenance and expansion of a comprehensive humanitarian response network and referral mechanisms.
- Provision of cash-based interventions to most vulnerable PoCs, including rental subsidies and multi-purpose grants (e.g. winterization support, one time cash assistance for new arrivals, school attendance support, “cash for work”).
- Provision of complementary health services to extremely vulnerable PoC; personalized care to elderly and bed-ridden refugees.
- Temporary social housing opportunities for PoC, made available by Government and NGO partners to be renovated/furnished by UNHCR.
- Activities offering psycho-social support and serving the prevention of and response to SGBV.

Promotion of durable solutions by way of integration and strengthening of self-reliance

- Provision of Armenian and Russian language courses, measures facilitating cultural and social adaptation, “how to do business in Armenia” courses, as well as, vocational training paired with coaching programmes and market access support for displaced start-up businessmen and entrepreneurs.
- Income generation projects through small grants and provision of microcredits and “cash for work” interventions.
- “Adopt-a-Family”, “Join-the-Community” and “2 for a Job” projects, community mobilization, specific youth integration measures.

Prevention and reduction of statelessness

- Promotion of amendments to citizenship legislation and bringing into operation statelessness determination procedures.

UNHCR is grateful for the generous contributions of donors who have supported the UNHCR operation in Armenia.

CONTACTS
UNHCR Armenia, 14 Petros Adamyan Street, Yerevan, 0010, the Republic Armenia
Tel: +374 10 584 892; Fax: +374 10 567 817; e-mail: armye@unhcr.org; Facebook: UNHCR Armenia