



Mariam, an empowered refugee baker living in Gyumri, is showcasing her delicious pakhlava freshly baked for her loyal customers, to be sold in the neighbourhood café. May 2024. Shirak region, Armenia. ©UNHCR/Inna Mkhitarian

115,257 refugees fled to Armenia following the escalation of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in September 2023.

96,089 refugee cards have been issued by the Migration and Citizenship Service as of 30 May.

2,095 naturalization applications have been submitted with the Migration and Citizenship Service as of 30 May 2024.

4,078 recognised refugees from countries including Iraq, Syria, Ukraine, Egypt, Myanmar, Congo, and Sudan as of 31 December 2023.

Operational Context

UNHCR provides assistance to refugees and implements protection interventions directly and through its partners, including Action Against Hunger, Mission Armenia, Armenian Red Cross Society, KASA Foundation, and Chamber of Advocates. Together with its Government counterparts, including Migration and Citizenship Service, Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Justice, and Ministry of Internal Affairs, UNHCR ensures international protection and delivery of multi-sectoral assistance to people affected by displacement.

UNHCR has started working with five refugee-led organizations for the implementation of community-based projects. UNHCR also supports and collaborates with Women's Support Center in empowering their social workers to effectively address gender-based and domestic violence among refugees, asylum-seekers, and stateless individuals in Armenia, focusing on prevention, risk reduction, and response. UNHCR works with the Football Federation of Armenia and Armenian National Paralympic Committee to promote sports, social cohesion and well-being of refugees and host communities.

Additionally, UNHCR continues working with operational partners including USAID, Teach for Armenia, TUMO and EVN Report, diaspora-based organizations such as AGBU, and the diplomatic community to strengthen refugee protection in the country. UNHCR appreciated the efforts of its partners towards creating a positive refugee environment and protection situation.

RECENT HIGHLIGHTS

- 20 individuals participated in a two-day meeting of the Statelessness Working Group to review the Draft Law on Stateless Persons. The meeting was co-organised by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, UNHCR, and Mission Armenia NGO. Participants included representatives from the Migration and Citizenship Service under the Ministry of Internal Affairs, United Social Service under the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, Civil Status Acts Registration Agency under the Ministry of Justice, National Security Service, National Assembly, Human Rights Defender's Office, and US Embassy. The draft law with inputs of the working group will be finalized by the Ministry of Internal Affairs.
- 412 individuals were covered by protection monitoring at household level in eight regions. The protection monitoring is conducted by UNHCR partner, Mission Armenia on a regular basis. 64 individuals identified in need of specific assistance were referred to Unified Social Service and UNHCR partners.
- In April-May 2024, UNHCR held 48 focus groups discussions (FGDs) in eight regions. The FGDs took place in Lori, Aragatsotn, Ararat, Armavir, Gegharkunik, Shirak, and Syunik regions and capital Yerevan. In total, 289 women and 219 men with diverse needs participated in the discussions. The objective of the FGDs is to consult refugees on their priority needs, challenges, collect their feedback on assistance programmes and share information on available services. Main findings from FGDs include needs for some non-food items and challenges related to employment and housing.
- 11 individuals from the Migration and Citizenship Service participated in the third capacity development session on refugee status determination organized by UNHCR.
- 21 individuals participated in a training on prevention and response to gender-based violence, co-organised by UNHCR and Women Support Center.
- 495 refugees were reached through legal awareness sessions on temporary protection status in May 2024. Since October 2023, UNHCR together with its partners Mission Armenia and Chamber of Advocates have been reaching out to communities to raise awareness on refugee status in Armenia.
- 58 individuals were supported by Chamber of Advocates with free legal aid in May. Since March 2024, 125 were supported with free legal aid and advice.
- 208 individuals were reached through UNHCR's helpline in May, and 7,276 since October 2023. Some of the main issues raised were in relation to cash assistance for rent and utility, food vouchers provided by World Food Programme, economic integration projects, and a wide range of needs, including food, household necessities, and clothes.
- 16 private houses rented by refugees in Goris were supported with minor repairs by UNHCR and its partner Action Against Hunger.
- 5,500 refugees received cash assistance in March and 27,900 individuals since November 2023. UNHCR's cash assistance compliments government's financial support program for rent and utility.
- 61,000 pieces of sport clothes from Nike for women, men, and children were received by UNHCR for donation to refugees and host communities. As of May, 1,363 individuals have received 1,561 items. The distribution is ongoing.
- 15 individuals have been shortlisted by the Football Federation of Armenia and UNHCR Armenia to participate in the UNITY Euro Cup 2024, hosted by UNHCR and the Union of European Football Associations.
- 10 types of handicraft products by four refugee artisans were selected for sale at duty-free shops of Zvartnots Airport, under UNHCR's collaboration with Dufry Armenia, which operates the duty-free shops. This is part of UNHCR's initiative with Dufry Armenia to provide market opportunities for refugee artisans.
- UNHCR conducted a series of Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) refresher sessions for the staff of its implementing partners as part of its commitment to zero tolerance policy against

SEA. The sessions allowed the partner staff to deepen their knowledge on the topic, address any misconceptions, and gain practical insights into applying PSEA principles in their daily work.

- 20 individuals participated in an event organised by Ukrainian Forum, UNHCR's partners on World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development.

- On 23 May, UNHCR presented refugee-made items, visibility products and hand-outs on Europe Day celebrated in the town of Goris. The celebration was an opportunity to present UNHCR's engagement throughout the Syunik region.

UNHCR support to Government led efforts in flood response

In response to the flood situation in Lori and Tavush regions in May 2024, the Ministry of Internal Affairs launched search and rescue operations, the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure began immediate repairs, while the territorial center of the Unified Social Service of Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs supported communities. Following the request of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the United Nations Country Team, led by UNDP and in coordination with national and international partners, conducted a Multi-Sector Initial Rapid Assessment (MIRA). UNHCR led the assessment for Protection and Shelter/NFI sector/cluster. In response to the findings of the assessment, UNHCR has already provided 287 items across the two affected regions, including folding beds, mattresses, pillows, and sleeping bags.



Meri, 33, is a teacher of Armenian language and literature in the local village school in southern Armenia. With her husband and three children, she was thankful for the vital cash assistance received from UNHCR and the state, which allowed the family to survive during a very cold winter.

June 2024, Gorayk village, Armenia. ©UNHCR/Areg Balayan



Lusine, 33, a widow and mother of five children, now lives in Khot village, Syunik province. Thanks to the financial assistance received from UNHCR and the state, she was able to buy ducks, chicken, and a bicycle for her elder son. The family of seven people strives to start a new and decent life in Armenia.

June 2024, Khot village, Armenia. © UNHCR/Areg Balayan

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