

PROGRAMME TITLE: Situation update on Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict

PROGRAMME LOCATION (if applicable): Armenia

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1. SITUATION OVERVIEW

- Afternoon September 19, 2023 Azerbaijani Armed Forces launched a wide-scale military offensive against Nagorno-Karabakh (NK) targeting civilian communities and peaceful population. An agreement was reached on cessation of hostilities. On September 24, a mass exodus of Armenians from NK started to Armenia. As of October 09, **100,632** refugees, including an estimated **30,000** children, fled to Armenia.
- The Armenian Government provided accommodations at state care centers and community-owned buildings, hotels, guesthouses, some adapted buildings, etc. A part of the refugees rented accommodation in different urban and rural areas of Armenia. Around 75% of the forcibly displaced population are located in different provinces of Armenia, with bigger concentration in Ararat (18,212) and Kotayk Provinces (21,593). The Armenian Government has provided accommodation for more than 58 thousand displaced people.
- Prime Minister of Armenia N. Pashinyan stated that the Armenian government will provide a one-time payment of 100,000 AMD (\$250) to each forcibly displaced person from NK (regardless of age), 40,000 AMD (\$100) cover accommodation costs and an additional 10,000 drams (\$25) for utilities expenses. The program commenced on October 1, 2023 and will continue for at least six months.
- On October 17th [Armenia Refugee Response Plan \(RRP\) - October 2023-March 2024](#) was launched jointly by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia and UNHCR. The Armenia Refugee Response Plan (RRP) brings together 60 partners, including 43 national NGOs, and covers relief efforts for a six-month period, until the end of March 2024. The Refugee Response Plan will support and complement the government response, with an emphasis on emergency protection and assistance, while at the same time focusing on inclusion, resilience, and solutions from the start, targeting both refugees and the host communities. The joint plan aims to support some 196,000 people including 101,000 refugees and 95,000 members of local host communities. The

plan also takes into account the upcoming, harsh winter months, when critical support will be required. It covers multiple sectors, notably protection - with a focus on gender-based violence, child protection and education, as well as food security and nutrition, health, resilience, shelter and non-food items and with a longer-term focus on inclusion and the strengthening of national public services. Armenian Caritas (AC) also joined the Armenia Refugee Response Plan.

Security/political situation

- The Armenian Government has appealed to the international community for support and increased humanitarian aid.¹ More than 100 tons of humanitarian aid was sent to Armenia by different countries, while different countries pledged around 35 million humanitarian funds for covering the needs of the displaced population.
- Catherine Colonna, French Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs visited Armenia on October 3 to meet with the country's leadership and the Armenian refugees who fled Nagorno-Karabakh.
- EU Parliament adopted a Joint Motion for A Resolution on the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh after Azerbaijan's attack and the continuing threats against Armenia.²
- Speaking at the conclusion of the Sunday Angelus, Pope Francis renewed his concern about the grave humanitarian crisis in Nagorno-Karabakh affecting displaced people. The Pope also added a special appeal for the protection of the monasteries and places of worship in the region.

2. CARITAS RESPONSE

- [Armenian Caritas](#) continues providing humanitarian support to the population forcibly displaced from NK. In 3 communities of Ararat Province (Masis, Sis, Noramarg) 500 set of bedding was distributed.



Figure 1 Distribution of NFI by AC staff in Ararat Province, Armenia

¹ <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/azerbaijan-armenia-nagorno-karabakh-ethnic-cleansing-65000-forcefully-displaced/>

² https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/RC-9-2023-0393_EN.html

- Armenian Caritas continues supporting the displaced households with shelter (100 persons) at Toros summer camp in Shirak Province, as well as, provided food and hygiene kits (100), warm blankets and bed linen (more than 500).



Figure 2 Psycho-social support by AC staff in Toros summer camp, Shirak Region, Armenia

- Armenian Caritas submitted a Rapid Response Appeal (EA28/2023 ARMENIA)³ through Caritas Internationalis with the initial budget of 250.000EUR to raise funds for the essential needs (food and NFI) of 454 displaced households, as well as provision of post-traumatic psycho-social services to 250 displaced persons. The following Caritas Member Organizations have contributed to RRA - Caritas Austria (50.000€), Caritas Denmark (12.500€), Caritas Belgium (50.000€), Caritas Spain (172.290€), CAFOD (22.500€), Caritas Canada (24.375€), Caritas Korea (47.384€). Two-month long project is anticipated to start from November 01, 2023.
- The local AC staff in Syunik Province distributed 100 packages of food and non-food items to the forcibly displaced population in Goris and Tegh communities (Aravus, Kornidzor, Karashen villages).

³ <https://community.caritas.org/intranet/documents/#list/16360>



Figure 3 Food and NFI distribution in Goris and Tegah Communities, Syunik Province

3. HUMAN STORY

The hardest thing is to live with those memories. . .

The Petrosyans family lost their home for the several times during the last five years. The father of the family - Marat had to move with his parents to the village of Karintak in Artsakh as a result of the Azerbaijani pogroms back in the 1990s. "We had built our house in Karintak with our own hands. I worked and saved money, and then the state also supported me, our goal was to build a home for our two boys where we could live happily as a family," Marat said.

Then Azerbaijan attacked again in 2020. This time the family had to move from Karintak to Stepanakert with their two sons. They got a new house and a new life. Their third son, Aram, was born in Stepanakert. Marat worked while his wife, Aksanna, raised the three boys. During the latest attack in September 2023, the eldest 2 sons, Albert and Avet, were at school.

"Azerbaijani armed forces were shelling the school yard and that's why my son is terribly afraid of the noise to this day, and so are we," says his wife, Aksanna. The family spent days hiding in shelters, and when the Lachin corridor was open, the family left everything in Stepanakert and moved to Armenia.

"It is very difficult, we left everything there, everything we owned and earned throughout the years, but the most difficult thing was to leave the graves of my parents there... My mother is buried in Karintak and my father's grave is in Stepanakert. The only thing we brought with us is the icon and our family photo where we celebrate the birthday of our two sons," said Marat.

The family arrived in Yerevan on September 27, 2023. But to rent a house in Yerevan was quite expensive, so they decided to move to Gyumri, second largest city in Armenia. A family in Gyumri provided an apartment temporarily, without any rent. One evening some other good people also brought a fridge full of food. The family is currently thinking about finding a job although they know it would be quite difficult - new city, new surroundings and new people. The older two sons are already going to school, it will be easier for them to communicate with their peers.

"The most painful thing is to live with those memories," added Marat, showing the candles brought from St. Astvatsatsin Church in Stepanakert. The family will light candles here, hoping that one day they will have the opportunity to go back to their motherland.

The social workers of Armenian Caritas visited the family for a needs assessment. The family is in need of warm clothes, food and hygiene items, and later on also to be engaged longer-term support programs.

4. MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS

Reference links

Human Rights Council Joint Statement on the Situation in Nagorno-Karabakh	https://geneva.usmission.gov/2023/10/11/joint-statement-on-the-situation-in-nagorno-karabakh/
Pope's call on Humanitarian Crisis in Nagorno-Karabakh	https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2023-10/pope-calls-attention-to-humanitarian-crisis-in-nagorno-karabakh.html
Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's speech at the European Parliament	https://www.primeminister.am/en/statements-and-messages/item/2023/10/17/Nikol-Pashinyan-Speech/
UN humanitarian team assessment report	https://reliefweb.int/report/armenia/un-humanitarian-team-wraps-assessment-mission-armenia-azerbaijan
UNICEF Armenia Humanitarian Situation Report No. 2	https://reliefweb.int/report/armenia/unicef-armenia-humanitarian-situation-report-no-2-09-october-2023
CFR article	https://www.cfr.org/article/ethnic-cleansing-happening-nagorno-karabakh-how-can-world-respond
Caritas Response	
Humanitarian Support by Caritas at Toros Summer Camp, Shirak Province, Armenia	https://www.facebook.com/ArmenianCaritas/posts/709689197862017
Humanitarian Support by Caritas in Ararat Province, Armenia	https://www.facebook.com/ArmenianCaritas/posts/713609690803301
Humanitarian Support by Caritas in Syunik Province, Armenia	https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=718120933685510&set=pcb.718122100352060

5. KEY CONTACTS

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