

**PROGRAMME TITLE:** Situation update on Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict

**PROGRAMME LOCATION:** Armenia

**DATES COVERED:** As of February 22, 2024

**SITREP NUMBER:** 06

**SUBMITTED BY:** Armenian Caritas (AC)

## 1. SITUATION OVERVIEW

- As of January 2024, **101,848** refugees had arrived in Armenia from Nagorno-Karabakh (aka Artsakh) following the escalation of hostilities in September 2023. In addition, **38,000** refugees fled to Armenia during the 2020 military hostilities or through Lachin corridor between December 2022 and June 2023. The Government of Armenia recognizes the displaced persons as refugees, eligible applying for a temporary protection.
- According to the needs assessments<sup>1</sup>, **housing** and **household items** remain most crucial need for the refugees, around 2% of refugees is still residing in accommodation provided through the government in vacant houses and collective centers and more than 72.1% living in rented hous
- es. Many of them are moving from region to region seeking suitable and sustainable housing options in areas providing socio-economic inclusion prospects.
- Refugees are at risk of **multidimensional poverty** due to the many needs they are facing, especially those at heightened risk, including single women, female-headed households, children (including unaccompanied and separated), persons with chronic health conditions and disabilities. **Economic integration though livelihood support, employment and business support** and access to tools to support them towards self-reliance, access to decent work and enhanced economic security is also required.
- As of January 5, 2024 **12.618** forcibly displaced people from Nagorno Karabakh have left Armenia for other countries.
- EU Commission is allocating an additional **€5.5** million in humanitarian aid to support the Armenians displaced from the Nagorno-Karabakh region. **€1.5** million of this funding is assigned for disaster

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<sup>1</sup> <https://armenia.peopleinneed.net/en/refugee-crisis-in-armenia-rapid-needs-assessment-report-2160pub>

preparedness to enhance the resilience of vulnerable communities to potential crises. The remaining €4 million of humanitarian funding is mainly focusing on providing the displaced Karabakh Armenians with regular cash transfers and vouchers. Through its humanitarian partners, the EU aims to support people in need with access to food, shelter healthcare, mental health services, and protection. This funding comes in addition to the **€12.2 million** already announced by the European Commission in response to the mass exodus of Karabakh Armenians in September 2023.

### **Security/political situation**

- On February 13, 2024 the units of the Azerbaijani Armed Forces opened fire from small arms in the direction of the Armenian positions located in the Nerkin Hand sector, Syunik Province, as a result of which, 4 Armenian soldiers were killed and one wounded. According to the statement of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia, the incident “indicates that Azerbaijan is looking for pretexts for escalation on the border.”<sup>2</sup>

## **2. CARITAS RESPONSE**

Thanks to the substantial support by the partner organizations, Armenian Caritas (AC) continues implementing comprehensive intervention activities for the most vulnerable displaced population by providing them need-based humanitarian assistance. The funds for the projects were contributed by Caritas member organizations - Caritas Austria, Caritas Belgium International, Caritas Canada, Caritas Denmark, Caritas France, Caritas Korea, Caritas Germany, Caritas Italiana, Caritas Romania, Caritas Slovakia Caritas Spain, CAFOD, CRS and other donor organizations (Christian Solidarity International, CSI Schweiz, CSI France, L’Oeuvre d’Orient, JTI Armenia and others).

AC works in partnership with Government agencies and other stakeholders working in the field for better communication and coordination of the intervention activities.

Currently, **4** rapid response projects have been completed and **6** more projects being in progress of implementation. The target areas of the projects are **6** provinces of Armenia - Shirak, Lori, Gegharkunik, Ararat, Kotayk, Syunik and the capital – Yerevan.

Through the available funds Caritas Armenia will be able to reach around **3.700** households or no less than **20.660** forcibly displaced persons from NK. The beneficiary households were provided with most necessary and essential items for them: food and non-food items, shelter and accommodation, multi-purpose cash grants and vouchers, livelihood and winterization items, as well as, psychological assistance and social consultation services.

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<sup>2</sup> [https://www.mfa.am/en/interviews-articles-and-comments/2024/02/13/mfa\\_statement\\_azaggression/12489](https://www.mfa.am/en/interviews-articles-and-comments/2024/02/13/mfa_statement_azaggression/12489)

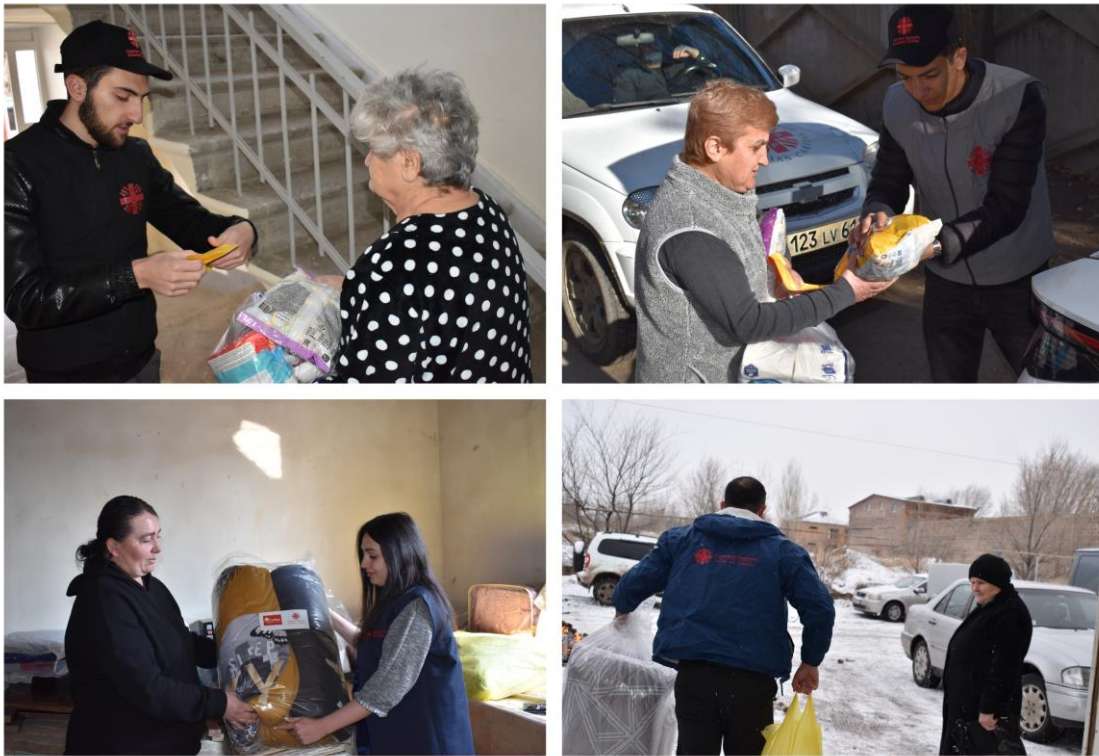


Figure 1 Food and NFI distribution by AC staff members

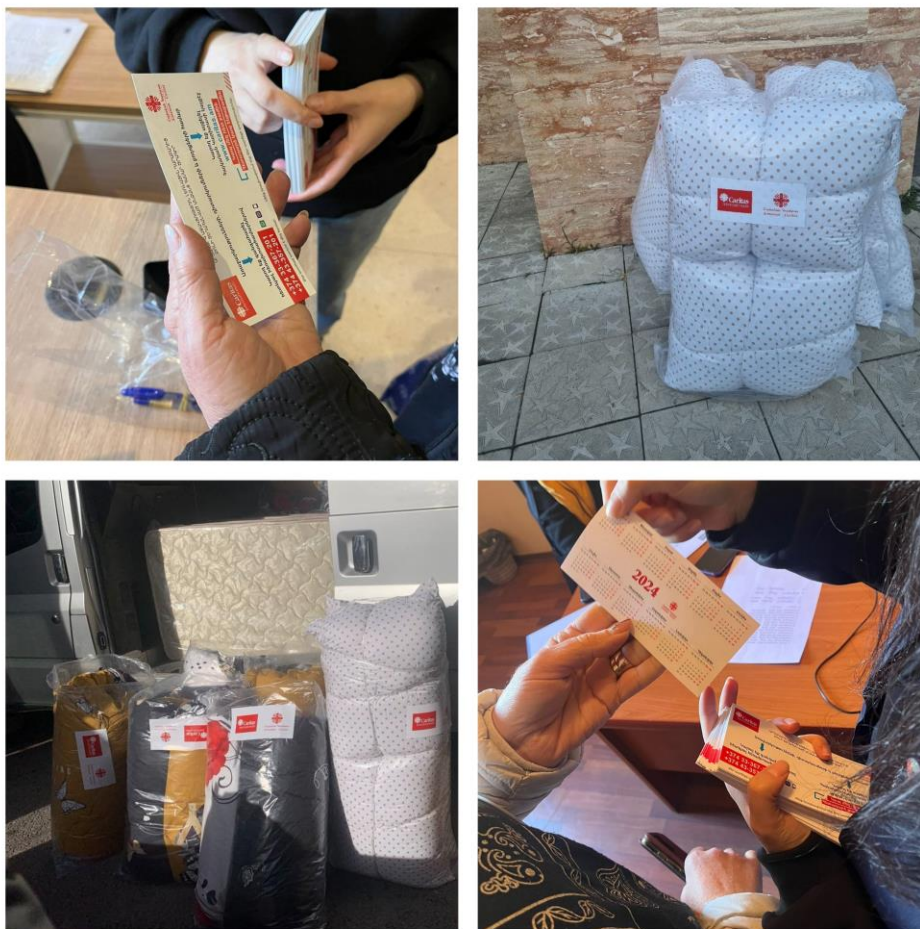


Figure 2 NFI distribution by AC staff members



Figure 3 Psycho-social work with the displaced people by AC staff members



Figure 4 Christmas Celebration Event for the refugee children

### 3. HUMAN STORY

#### *"I want my Artsakh..."*

*The family of Aghajanyans was forcibly displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh (aka Artsakh) and have settled in Gyumri since November, 2023. On September 27, first the mother, 37-year-old Maral Aghajanyan with her four minor children left Artsakh, and later on, the father - Avetik Aghajanyan joined them.*

*The family had to leave everything behind they had created over many years - the house with garden, poultry and cattle... taking with them only two bottles of water and two pieces of bread.*

*"We hardly managed to escape, at that horrible moment the most important thing for us was the safety of our children, we didn't even manage to take warm clothes. Now we are living at a friend's house in Gyumri," says Maral. Until now they have not paid rent for the apartment, the landlord is in Russia, but he is returning in spring, and they have to leave the apartment.*

*Both Avetik and Maral have no job currently, they have health problems, the only income of the family is the money allocated by the state, which is planned for six months. However, the problems will aggravate when they have to find a new accommodation for renting.*

*Two of the four minor children, 10-year-old Arusyak and 9-year-old Ella, have been attending Armenian Caritas "Little Prince" Social Center in Gyumri for several months now. "It is very good that we communicate with peers, play, learn to draw," says Arusyak. Soon they will also use the services of a psychologist, adds Fenya Galstyan, the social worker of the center, as Arusyak's ~~older friend~~ is afraid of loud noises after the war.*

*Although Arusyak is 10 years old, she has already witnessed three major armed conflicts and the same number of forcible resettlements. The only dream for the girl now is peace and returning to her homeland - Artsakh, but she doesn't want not live side by side with Azerbaijanis, the girl says, she is scared.*

*"It's very nice in Gyumri and especially at Little Prince Center. The day passes happily, but I want my Artsakh and peace...", Arusyak adds.*



Figure 5 Arusyak at Little Prince Social Center of Armenian Caritas; the Aghajanyans Family

#### 4. MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS

##### Reference links

EU increases humanitarian aid	<a href="https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/armenia/eu-increases-humanitarian-aid-displaced-karabakh-armenians-%E2%82%AC55-million_en">https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/armenia/eu-increases-humanitarian-aid-displaced-karabakh-armenians-%E2%82%AC55-million_en</a>
Visit of Slovak Embassy in Armenia to the headquarters of Armenian Caritas	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=779666220864314&amp;set=pcb.779660837531519">https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=779666220864314&amp;set=pcb.779660837531519</a>
<b>Caritas Response</b>	
Distribution of food and NFI (CNEWA support)	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=758844399613163&amp;set=pcb.758848116279458">https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=758844399613163&amp;set=pcb.758848116279458</a>
Christmas Party for children from NK (CSI support)	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=758955286268741&amp;set=pcb.758957159601887">https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=758955286268741&amp;set=pcb.758957159601887</a>

#### 5. KEY CONTACTS

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