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Disaster relief emergency fund (DREF) Armenia: Hail Storm

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

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The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies` (IFRC) Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) is a source of unearmarked money created by the Federation in 1985 to ensure that immediate financial support is available for Red Cross and Red Crescent emergency response. The DREF is a vital part of the International Federation's disaster response system and increases the ability of National Societies to respond to disasters.

CHF 242.501 has been allocated from the IFRC's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to support the Armenian Red Cross Society (ARCS) in delivering immediate assistance to some 4,000 beneficiaries (900 households). Unearmarked funds to repay DREF are encouraged.

Summary: Between 12 to 17 May 2013, devastating hail storms damaged almost all yield capacity of more than half of the communities in Armavir region, Armenia. According to the rapid assessment reports jointly conducted by the Armenian Ministry of Agriculture, the Armavir Regional Emergency Commission and the ARCS's Armavir Branch, 46 communities and 12,800 households have been affected by the disaster. In terms of the level of the damages, 7,131 households from the total of 12,800 households in the 14 most affected communities have lost 100 per cent of their farms` yield capacity. Therefore, these 14 most affected communities were selected to be targeted by this DREF operation. Among the most damaged crops are vineyards with grapes and orchards with apricots. Moreover, there were also a few cases of the storms damaging houses` and cattle farms` roofs, but the greatest problem lies in the supply with daily necessities.

Namely, with the loss of the harvest the communities will not only be unable to repay the debts they have already acquired but they are not in a position to buy goods in the shops on credit any longer. Furthermore, many of the shops have had to close due to lack of customers which means that even if the communities did have some cash there is nowhere to buy even basic products.



Devastated vineyard right after the disaster.
Source: Armenian Red Cross Society

The Armenian Red Cross Society, together with its Armavir Regional branch has established a Disaster Response Team (DRT) with the participation of five staff members from HQ and regional branch and three local volunteers from the region. ARCS DRT has conducted several meetings with regional authorities, obtained all available official assessment's reports and in its turn organized needs assessment in some of the most affected 14 communities. After a meeting with regional government representatives and presenting the ARCS's initiative, DRT has developed criteria for the selection of the beneficiaries from the affected communities. Afterwards, ARCS DRT had an additional meeting with local authorities from the affected 14 communities, and presented to them those criteria, based on which they were assigned to prepare a list of the most affected people/families. Moreover, ARCS DRT has developed a range approach scheme for assistance distribution and prepared a final list of beneficiaries. Additionally, ARCS DRT had a

meeting with UN OCHA, the Ministry of Emergency Situations and the Ministry of Agriculture of Armenia and agreed to share all information and coordinate their activities in the affected region.

It is important to highlight the very special local business practices, considering the local economy, the context and the people's traditional relations that allow for small markets to sell their products from spring to autumn period mostly without cash, i.e. on credit, being guaranteed that locals will get their money after the harvest and pay back their debts. With the loss of the crops the farmers – apart from not being able to repay their accumulated debt – will not be able to buy any more on credit. Furthermore, according to the heads of communities, small markets in their communities are closing due to people's financial shortages. The closure of small markets makes people even more vulnerable, because alternative markets in the regional center are far away and they do not have enough cash to pay for the goods anyway. Therefore the Red Cross action aims at food distribution and also at the distribution of hygiene kits. The Armenian National Society considers hygiene kits as an essential part of assistance together with food parcel, realizing that the limited accessibility of local markets, the poor quality and scarcity of drinking water in addition to the population's cash deficit will negatively influence the sanitary and hygienic conditions of the beneficiaries.

To help the communities to recover from the lost crops, the Government decided that residents of the 46 communities affected by the hail storm for some period will not pay land tax and water tax and will be provided with seeds, fertilizers and diesel fuel for the machines. The loans granted to villagers will be frozen for some time, depending on each case. Additionally, new anti-hail stations will be installed in the villages and will be controlled from one centre. The Government has also initiated the establishment of funds for possible fundraising activities aimed at assisting the affected population of the region.

This operation providing the communities with basic food and hygiene parcels is expected to be implemented over three months, and it will therefore be completed by 31 August 2013; a Final Report will be made available three months after the end of the operation (by 30 November 2013).

[<click here for the DREF budget; here for contact details; here to view the map of the affected area>](#)

The situation

The last month of the spring, i.e. May 2013, was marked with an unprecedented hail storm that destroyed almost all agricultural yield capacity in Armavir region of the Republic of Armenia. Totally 46 communities were affected by the disaster. According to rapid needs assessment reports, among the most damaged crops are grapes, apricots, cherries, tomatoes and water melons. According to official data, the disaster affected 46 communities, 12,800 households and over 5,000 hectares of agricultural lands in the region.

In Alashkert community, 128.5 hectares of vineyards out from 144 have been totally damaged. Arevik community has 227 hectares of damaged grapes out from 233 hectares. Eye witnesses say that crops have been left without leaves after the hail storm so that the annual harvest is totally destroyed. One hundred per cent of the grape and apricot yield capacity has been destroyed in 14 communities out of the 46 regions affected by the disaster. Damages to other communities amount to a range of 50 to 80 per cent for almost all types of crops.

The communication by the Armenian Ministry of Agriculture states that almost 3,000 hectares of grapes have been totally damaged. Two thousand hectares of apricot and tomato sown areas have been destroyed. The total damage caused to affected communities calculated by the Armenian Ministry of Agriculture amounts to 25,268.56 million AMD, or 60 million USD.



In the storm, not only this year's crops, but the plantations have also been destroyed.
Source: Armenian Red Cross Society

On 16 May 2013, the Government made a decision to procure seeds and provide them to Armenia's hail-stricken region. The Minister of Agriculture noted that this step is being made to ease the situation of the farmers of the region. An emergency consultation meeting was convened and "the heads of the hail-stricken

communities were tasked to set up community commissions to calculate the exact amount of damage as soon as possible.”

Furthermore, on 23 May 2013, the Government decided that residents of 46 communities affected by the hail storm would not pay land tax and water tax for a certain period of time, and would be provided with seeds, fertilizers and diesel fuel for their machines. The loans granted to villagers will be frozen for some time, depending on each case. Additionally, new anti-hail stations will be installed in the villages and will be controlled from one operational centre. The Armenian Government has initiated the establishment of funds for possible fundraising activities aimed at assisting the affected population of the region.

The present situation for the communities is nevertheless very harsh. The village shops provide credits for the goods sold to be repaid after the harvest. With the loss of the harvest the communities will not only be unable to repay the debts they have already acquired but they are not in a position to buy goods in the shops on credit any longer. Furthermore, many of the shops have had to close down due to the lack of customers which means that even if the communities did have some cash there is nowhere to buy the goods. Many of the community members are now preparing to go abroad for seasonal work but until they are able to send remittances back home the families will be left in a very vulnerable situation.

Coordination and partnerships

The Armenian Red Cross Society (ARCS) has, in coordination with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), and the national, regional and local authorities, initiated several meetings to identify the humanitarian consequences of the disaster, the size of the affected population, the communities and their needs.

On the national level the exchange of information with the IFRC Office in Armenia and the IFRC Europe Zone Office and relevant partners is taking place at this stage.

The Armenian National Society as a UN DMT member is receiving and sharing information on the situation with all stakeholders. For the time being, the Armenian Red Cross Society is the only organization among INGOs and NGOs that is taking action for the provision of humanitarian assistance to the storm-affected people. The head of the Disaster Management and Population Movement Department of the Armenian Red Cross met with UN OCHA representative in Armenia who is coordinating all efforts of INGOs and NGOs in this regard and informed them about the NS's action. The UN OCHA representative delivered a situation report to all partners on 27 May 2013.

On the regional level, the ARCS Disaster Response Team (DRT) met with the Governor of Armavir Region, where an agreement for cooperation and information exchange was reached.

On the local level, ARCS DRT met with local authorities of affected communities and is receiving regular updated information regarding the situation on the site. Moreover, the ARCS Armavir regional branch team visited several affected communities to assess the situation and met with the affected people.

The Armenian National Society is in permanent contact with the above mentioned structures to avoid any type of duplication and ensure that the most vulnerable and most affected residents are reached.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The Armenian Red Cross Society's auxiliary role is mandated by the 1993 Presidential Decree. The mission of the Red Cross is to reduce the vulnerability of the population through mobilization of the power of humanity, to be prepared to cope with emergencies and to provide essential support by assisting people who are made vulnerable by harsh socio-economic conditions. ARCS implements its mission countrywide through 11 regional, 3 territorial and 52 community branches and with the support of over 3,500 volunteers. ARCS focuses its activities on the spheres of health and social care, disaster preparedness and response, disaster risk reduction, population movement, youth, and first aid.

The hail that hit the region has caused a huge damage not only to the people living there, but also to the state as such. For that reason the DRT assigned by ARCS, composed with five staff members from HQ and regional branch and three local volunteers from the region, have met with the Governor of Armavir Region (Marz) where the actual situation and the ongoing process of state assistance were presented in details. As a result, the governor assigned the respective departments to provide all necessary technical assistance to the ARCS DRT for conducting needs assessment.

Based on the data available from official sources and ARCS Armavir regional team, ARCS DRT together with regional government representatives, selected the worst damaged 14 communities as a target of the operation.

List of the 14 most affected by the Hail Storm Communities of Armavir region targeted by the DREF Operation:

Shenavan	Amasia	Berkashat
Nor Artagers	Alashkert	Araks
Haykavan	Arevik	Mrgashat
Aygeshat	Armavir	Jrashen
Nalbandyan	Nor Armavir	

A meeting was held with the heads of the 14 most affected communities (where 100 per cent of the yield capacity has been destroyed) to present the criteria for selecting beneficiaries. According to them, the hail storm in these communities has destroyed even the leaves of the plants, leaving farmers without resources of living for several years. Furthermore, the heads of those communities based on the criteria for selecting beneficiaries have prepared a special list of the most vulnerable families of those 14 most affected communities and presented them to ARCS DRT. Overall, Armenian RC has conducted the following activities:

- Data collection from official sources, partners and media
- Primary needs assessment in some of the most affected 14 communities
- Meeting with the Governor of Armavir region and other regional government representatives, where the ARCS initiative was presented
- Selection of communities to be targeted
- Development of criteria for selection beneficiaries
- Development of a range approach scheme for assistance distribution
- Meeting with local authorities of the 14 selected communities to assign the preparation of list of beneficiaries (based on the developed criteria)
- Collection of all beneficiaries` lists presented by the communities and preparation of the final/consolidated list of beneficiaries
- Meeting with UN OCHA to discuss the situation and present ARCS initiative
- Permanent information-sharing through UN Disaster Management Team.

The needs

Based on the information received from local communities and from ARCS DRT assessment, the priority needs of people affected by hail are basic hygiene means and food. As it was mentioned above, the affected communities have been receiving some assistance from the Government and private sector (fertilizers, seeds, diesel fuel etc.). However, there are urgent needs to be met right now in terms of responding to peoples' basic household needs such as shortages of basic hygiene means and food. Also, it is worth to note that Armavir region is known with its limited access to potable water resources and poor water quality which during the summer period often becomes a cause for different epidemic diseases as well as worsening sanitary and hygienic conditions.

The action is therefore proposing to support the communities with both food and hygiene packages. ARCS has considered using cash distribution but in view that many shops have closed, cash will not be a feasible option. Also as many are looking to go abroad for work the cash would probably be used to buy airplane tickets. Therefore, cash distribution would accelerate labour migration process at local level and would also, negatively affect future efforts for agricultural recovery.

Taking into consideration the above mentioned arguments as well as the fact that ARCS has no experience in cash distribution to disaster affected population, the ARCS decided to urgently apply for DREF to provide hygiene kits and food parcels to the affected population and not use cash distribution.

Out of the estimated 7,131 affected families from 14 communities, the ARCS aims to cover the needs of the most affected 4,000 people from almost 900 families. The beneficiaries have been selected according to the following criteria:

- Families with children under 16
- Families with people with disabilities
- Refugee families (Armenia is hosting refugees of Armenian origin mainly from Azerbaijan, Iraq and Syria)
- Single mothers / women-headed households
- Families with older individuals
- Large families (more than 5 members)
- Households with heavy bank loans (debts).

The proposed operation

Based on the needs in the affected region, the Armenian Red Cross Society, supported by the IFRC and partner RC / RC National Societies, aims to provide two hygiene family kits and a food parcel to each of the 4,000 most affected people from almost 900 households. It is planned to distribute a hygiene family kit and a food parcel in the first month of the operation to meet their basic needs from two to three months and the second hygiene family kit in the third month of the operation. The operation will be implemented over a three month period.

Relief distributions (food and basic non-food items)
Outcome: The most affected population (4,000 people / 900 households) are provided with basic food and non-food items to help them cope with the consequences of the hail storm.
Outputs (expected results) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the disaster area to identify the most affected households. • Coordination with local and regional authorities. • Develop beneficiary targeting strategy and registration system to deliver intended assistance. • Procure relief supply from local suppliers according to Federation standards. • Distribute relief supplies and control supply movements from point of dispatch to end user. • Monitor and evaluate the relief activities and provide reporting on relief distributions.

The content of a kit/parcel will include:

Food parcel for the period of three months:

Items	Content of one parcel
Wheat flour	3 kg
Canned food (meat)	6 cans
Sugar	2 kg
Cooking oil	4 l
Rice	5 kg
Pasta	4 packs
Condensed milk	3 cans
Buckwheat	4 kg
Lentils	4 kg

Hygiene family kit for the period of three months:

Items	Content of one kit
Washing detergent	4.5 kg
Washing powder for washing machines	4 kg
Soap	18 pieces

Shampoo	3.6 l
Tooth paste	9 pieces per 80 ml
Dishwashing liquid	10 pieces per 0.5 l
Tooth brush	4 pieces
Toilet paper	12 pieces

The ARCS developed a distribution approach scheme according to the following formula:

Family size	Number of kits/parcels
1-2 members	1
3-4 members	2
5-7 members	3
8 and more members	4

The ARCS will, in close cooperation with the IFRC Office in Armenian, monitor the implementation of activities and provide the necessary technical advice. The ARCS will provide to the IFRC Disaster Management Coordinator in the Europe Zone a weekly update related to the progress of the operation.

After completion, ARCS will organize a workshop on the national level with participation of all involved parties to share experience and lessons learnt during the operation.

The visibility of Armenian Red Cross Society activities and strengthening of the National Society's image will be ensured through maximizing the visibility of National Society during relief distribution, visits to the affected people, monitoring and evaluation by ARCS volunteers.

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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Click here

1. **Click here** to see the budget of the DREF operation
2. **Click here** to see the map of the affected areas
3. **Click here** to return to the title page

How we work

All IFRC assistance seeks to adhere to the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) in Disaster Relief and the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (Sphere) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

The IFRC's vision is to inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.

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The IFRC's work is guided by Strategy 2020 which puts forward three strategic aims:

1. Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disaster and crises.
2. Enable healthy and safe living.
3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace.

DREF OPERATION

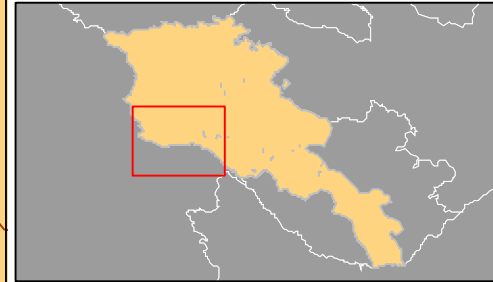
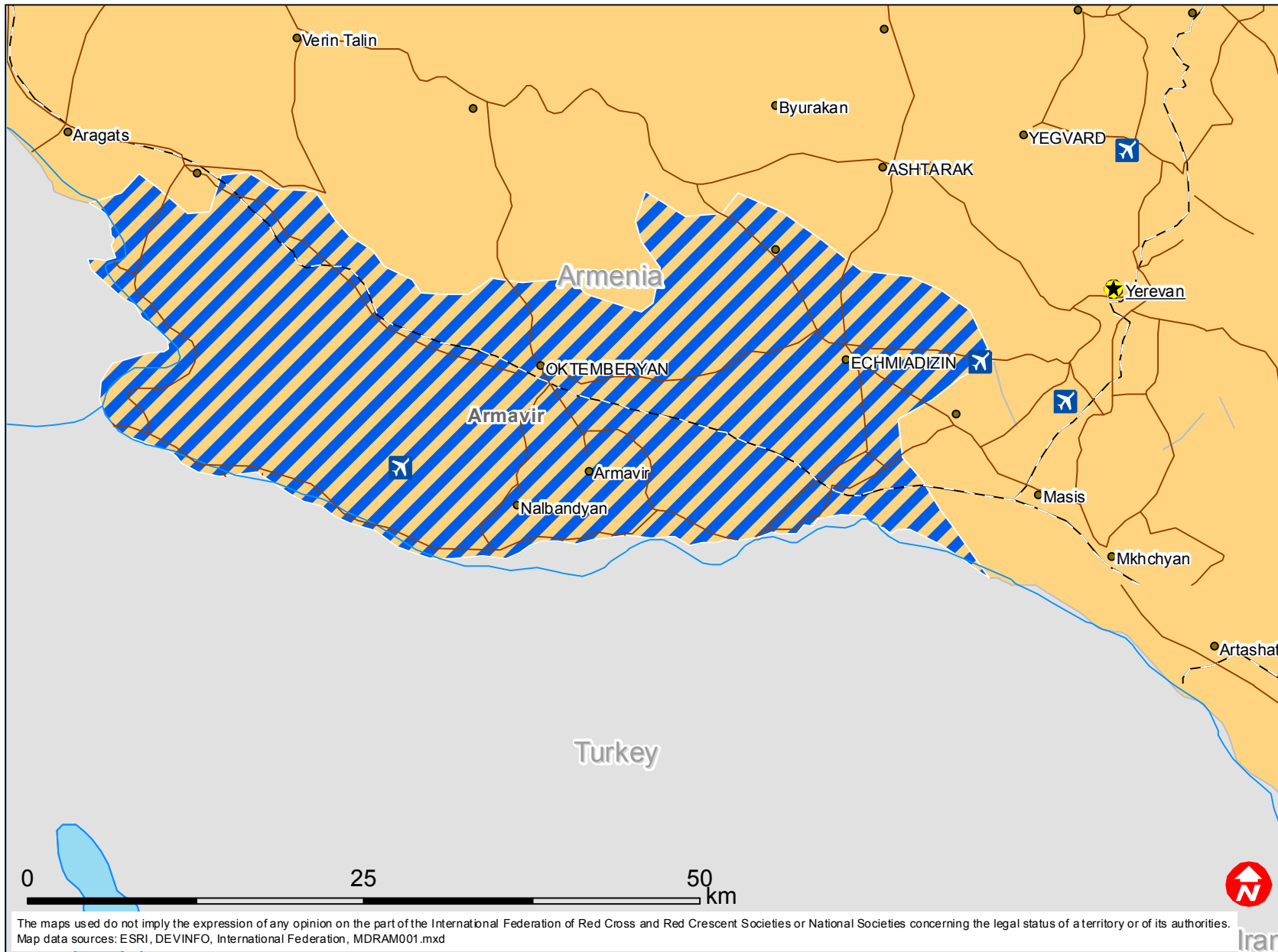
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APPEAL Armenia: Hail Storm

Budget Group	DREF Grant Budget CHF
Shelter - Relief	
Shelter - Transitional	
Construction - Housing	
Construction - Facilities	
Construction - Materials	
Clothing & Textiles	
Food	113,500
Seeds & Plants	
Water, Sanitation & Hygiene	105,000
Medical & First Aid	
Teaching Materials	
Utensils & Tools	
Other Supplies & Services	
Cash Disbursements	
Total RELIEF ITEMS, CONSTRUCTION AND SUPPLIES	218,500
Land & Buildings	
Vehicles	
Computer & Telecom Equipment	
Office/Household Furniture & Equipment	
Medical Equipment	
Other Machinery & Equipment	
Total LAND, VEHICLES AND EQUIPMENT	0
Storage, Warehousing	
Distribution & Monitoring	800
Transport & Vehicle Costs	400
Logistics Services	
Total LOGISTICS, TRANSPORT AND STORAGE	1,200
International Staff	3,000
National Staff	
National Society Staff	1,950
Volunteers	1,000
Total PERSONNEL	5,950
Consultants	
Professional Fees	
Total CONSULTANTS & PROFESSIONAL FEES	0
Workshops & Training	700
Total WORKSHOP & TRAINING	700
Travel	
Information & Public Relations	500
Office Costs	300
Communications	450
Financial Charges	100
Other General Expenses	
Shared Office and Services Costs	
Total GENERAL EXPENDITURES	1,350
Partner National Societies	
Other Partners (NGOs, UN, other)	
Total TRANSFER TO PARTNERS	0
Programme and Services Support Recovery	14,801
Total INDIRECT COSTS	14,801
TOTAL BUDGET	242,501



Armenia: Severe local storm



- ★ Capitals
- Main cities
- ✈ Airports
- Main roads
- Railways
- ▨ Affected region

0 25 50 km

