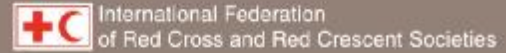


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Emergency Plan of Action (EPoA)

Armenia: Extreme Winter Condition



DREF Operation	Operation n° MDRAM002 Glide n° CW-2014-000012-ARM
Date of issue: 31 January 2014	Date of disaster: January-February 2014
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Operation start date: 30 January 2014	Expected timeframe: until 31 March 2014
Overall operation budget: CHF 138,746	
Number of people affected: 12,000	Number of people to be assisted: 1,000
Host National Society presence in this project (n° of volunteers, staff, branches): 10 volunteers, 10 HQ staff members, 1 volunteer responsible for the operation on Service Contract base, HQ office and all regional branches.	
Red Cross Red Crescent Movement partners actively involved in the operation:	
Austrian Red Cross	
Other partner organizations actively involved in the operation:	
Armenian Ministry of Diaspora and the NGO "Centre for Coordination of Syrian Armenians"	

A. Situation analysis

Description of the disaster

The harsh wintry weather conditions in Armenia make the Syrian refugees even more vulnerable. Starting from December 2013, the temperature in Yerevan and the surrounding regions has remained below minus 12 degrees Celsius. At nights the temperature was falling down to minus 20 degrees Celsius. Due to the cold temperature, the sewage and water supply systems have been mostly frozen in Yerevan. The Syrians are not used to such a cold weather and are mostly unprepared for a cold winter. They do not have proper clothing. According to the filed applications and personal observations, these people mostly need winterization items at the moment to face one of the coldest winters in the history of Armenia.

The majority of these people, although being citizens of Syria, have Armenian ethnicity. Besides those currently residing in Armenia, around 300 newcomers arrive from Syria every month according to the data of the Armenian Ministry of Diaspora. Presently about 3,300 Syrian refugees have applied to the Armenian Red Cross Society (ARCS) for support and are registered in the ARCS database. The first registration of Syrian refugees was announced by the ARCS at the end of 2012, as a result of winterization assistance provided within a UNHCR funded annual project and the second was been started in the autumn of 2013, due to the implementation of the relief project funded by the Austrian Development Agency and supported by the Austrian Red Cross. Based on the assessment of the overall situation, the social conditions of most Syrian refugees in Armenia are worsening as a result of the lack of any income.

Summary of the current response

Overview of Host National Society

The Disaster Management and Migration services of the Armenian Red Cross (ARCS) have developed significantly during the recent years. The ARCS has strengthened its capacities in Community Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and its institutional preparedness and response. The National Society has seven IFRC Regional Disaster Response Teams

members. It has an emergency stock for 500 families to provide temporary shelter in case of a large scale disaster. The NS also has a disaster response and contingency plan developed in 2007 for an eventual earthquake scenario. The NS DM department consists of eight people including the staff in the branches. Some 350 active volunteers are involved in DM activities countrywide.

Since 2002, ARCS has acted as an implementing partner of UNHCR, having annually funded projects. During recent years the project activities have been expanded from relief provision to advocacy, broader monitoring and integration activities. All the activities are directed at supporting refugees and asylum seekers residing in Armenia. Moreover, ARCS has gained strong experience within its other projects also in socialization activities including the organization of summer camps and social clubs for refugee children.

The ARCS developed the Community Based DRR model, which includes community risk identification, community CB through training and establishment of voluntary groups, development of disaster preparedness and mitigation action plans and support in mitigation measures. The NS is reaching families and schools in Armenia through its awareness raising activities. From 2014 the NS has engaged in developing its Urban DRR capacities.

In response to the hailstorm in Armavir region of Armenia in May 2013, ARCS implemented three disaster response operations. Thus, 4,020 people were assisted with food and hygienic items for three months through the DREF operation. To complement the DREF support, the Austrian RC provided additional funds to ARCS to assist 200 people. Currently the assistance continues through the Danish RC in the form of hygiene parcels to 3,000 people affected by the hailstorm and lost 100 per cent of their crops.

Action already taken by the Host National Society

With the extreme cold weather, the ARCS has prioritized those newly arrived Syrians who arrive with no reserves and who are not accustomed to extreme weather conditions and are therefore particularly vulnerable to the extremely cold weather. The National Society, after conducting needs assessment among beneficiaries, sees its role in providing warm clothes, shoes, blankets, and hygiene and sanitary items to the most vulnerable refugee families to cope with the harsh winter conditions. Under the project supported by the Austrian RC, the Armenian RC has already provided some support to the Syrian refugees with winterization items including clothes and shoes, hygiene and sanitation items, household items, blankets and heaters will be distributed to the affected families.

The ARCS has received longer term support from UNHCR and Austrian RC to support the Syrian refugees that have been arriving in Armenia recognizing that they are a very vulnerable group. Armenian RCS has developed a one year plan of action to support the Syrian refugees in order to harmonize its assistance, map the ongoing assistance and identify the main gaps. The ARCS is also closely coordinating its activities with state institutions, non-state actors, international organizations, NGOs and Partner National Societies.

Overview of Red Cross Red Crescent Movement in country

The IFRC has a country office in Armenia staffed with one person, providing PMER support to the NS and facilitating Organization Development.

The ICRC has a country delegation, working in partnership with the ARCS in the areas of RFL, tracing and dissemination.

The Danish RC is present in the region with one International Delegate and is supporting currently the project entitled "Building Safe Communities in South Caucasus", also supporting the people affected by the hailstorm in 2013.

The Austrian RC is providing psychosocial assistance to elderly refugees and children's project of the ARCS, also assisting with building safe and resilient communities in Lori region of Armenia and supporting the ARCS assistance to 300 Syrian refugee families. The Austrian RC is coordinating its work through its Regional Delegation in Tbilisi, Georgia.

Movement Coordination

The Movement Coordination Agreement was signed in 2011 to coordinate the Movement activities in Armenia. The parties are having regular coordination meetings. The Danish RC and Austrian RC have also co-signed the Movement Coordination Agreement.

Overview of non-RCRC actors in country

The Government of the Republic of Armenia has assisted Syrian refugees with free medical consultation, free visa and tax exemptions. The state has also initiated the idea of constructing the "New Aleppo" district for permanent residence of 600 Syrian refugees. In order to implement the construction the Government has been undertaking fundraising efforts.

Caritas Armenia and other NGOs are also providing shelter on a smaller scale.

In order to ensure the coordination of activities related to Syrian refugees, who continue to enter the country, the NGO called “Centre for Coordination of Syrian Armenians’ Issues” was founded with the support of the Ministry of Diaspora of Armenia. One of the advantages of this NGO is that its members are familiar with Syrian Armenian community, its problems; they are monitoring the current situation and are aware of the needs.

Starting from 2012, several organizations have been supporting the Syrian refugees. Among them is WFP which supports the largest number of beneficiaries. It has recently started the provision of food assistance to 5,000 vulnerable Syrian refugees for six months.

In the autumn of 2012, ARCS started the registration of Syrian refugees to provide assistance within the framework of a UNHCR funded annual project. Overall, about 300 Syrian refugees received warm clothes and shoes through voucher distribution.

Caritas Armenia is providing 100 Syrian refugee families with apartment rent fees, clothes, shoes, and household items.

All these organizations are coordinating their humanitarian assistance through the NGO “Centre for Coordination of Syrian Armenians’ Issues” and the Armenian Ministry of Diaspora.

Needs analysis, beneficiary selection, risk assessment and scenario planning

Needs assessment has been conducted in three phases:

1. Registration of beneficiaries that includes filling detailed application about their needs and key problems.
2. Collecting information from and doing cross-reference with counterparts, namely the Ministry of Diaspora, the NGO “Centre for Coordination of Syrian Armenians’ Issues”, UNHCR and CARITAS Armenia.
3. Interviews with the families of potential beneficiaries and random visits.

All this allows ARCS to cross-check the information and obtain reliable data about the beneficiaries and their needs.

The assessment shows that refugees do not need food assistance at the moment as the WFP is providing food to 5,000 vulnerable beneficiaries for six months. However, due to the cold winter they are in need of warm clothes and shoes, blankets, as well as hygiene and sanitary items as basic needs, which are not met due to other priorities, such as apartment rents and heating costs.

Based on the assessment of needs, the ARCS decided to urgently apply for DREF assistance to provide warm clothes and shoes, blankets, and hygiene and sanitary items, to the most vulnerable refugee families. Through this operation, ARCS intends to support 250 vulnerable families consisting of some 1,000 people.

The beneficiaries targeted by the operation have to meet the specific criteria adopted by ARCS.

- Born in Syria and citizen of the Arab Republic of Syria,
- Affected by the current conflict in Syria.
- Families with people with disabilities.
- Families with children below 18.
- Single-headed households with children.
- Families with elderly and/or lonely elderly.
- Families living in the regions of Armenia.
- Not receiving the same type of assistance from any other organization.

It is worth highlighting that ARCS has enough experience and a working mechanism for the distribution of vouchers – experience gained within its similar recent projects, and it is going to apply the same approach within the DREF operation for distribution of clothes and shoes. The beneficiaries are receiving vouchers which are valid for certain shops that the ARCS has signed a contract with. Due to the contract terms, after completing all shopping via distributed vouchers, the shop management presents to ARCS the bill per each voucher stating the type of expense, co-signed by the beneficiary and the cashier, after which the ARCS transfers the funds for the vouchers.

Risk Assessment

Weather conditions may deteriorate faster than expected resulting in more people in need. Moreover, as a result of low temperature, the health conditions of the vulnerable families could get worse while the risk to get injured in the frozen streets is higher, which might have a negative impact on the distribution process.

It is expected that having the DREF operation in parallel with the on-going assistance project funded with by ADA the number of beneficiaries registered in ARCS database will continue to significantly increase.

B. Operational strategy and plan

The overall objective is to provide assistance to 1,000 Syrian refugees to cope with the extreme winter conditions.

Proposed strategy

To achieve the overall objective, the following action will be prioritized: provision of warm clothes and shoes and blankets to withstand cold weather, as well as hygiene and sanitary items to insure minimum living conditions and to increase the resilience of the vulnerable population affected by the extreme winter conditions. The distribution of warm clothes and shoes will be done through the provision of vouchers.

More specifically, the following items are planned to be procured and distributed among the affected population.

Each family/household will receive following:

- 1 winterization items voucher, based on family size, for purchasing warm clothes and shoes as well as blankets (four blankets for each family);
- 1 hygiene and sanitary parcel for each family.

Operational support services

Human resources

10 Armenian Red Cross volunteers and over 10 Armenian Red Cross staff members have been deeply involved with Syrian refugees' issues. Presently all the mentioned people are engaged with the on-going projects and will further support the DREF operation with their knowledge and skills.

In addition, a volunteer will be contracted for the initiated DREF operation, who will work full time for the operation and be in charge of managing all required practical arrangements and reporting. He / She will be supported by the Accounting Unit in terms of financial management issues and reporting.

There is no need for international staff deployment as the required technical support, including monitoring and reporting, adherence to standard IFRC procedures and financial management, will be ensured by ARCS.

Logistics and supply chain

Armenian Red Cross Society has a logistic department and procurement guidelines which follows IFRC procurement standards and has been endorsed by several PNSs. The local market allows alternatives in terms of suppliers for all budgeted items.

Information technologies (IT)

Due to heavy reliance on mobile phones to reach the vulnerable families and the volunteers, as well as to communicate with relevant partner organizations, the proportionate phone costs of the staff involved in DREF operation will be covered with the DREF funds, as communication lines need to be maintained throughout the operation.

Communications

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. Operation-related articles will be posted in the web media, newspapers and on the ARCS website.

Weekly operation updates will be sent to the IFRC Europe Zone Office.

Security

As mentioned above, there is a risk to get injured in the frozen streets while moving about for shopping or other personal needs. For that reason, ARCS will inform its beneficiaries about those risks through involving volunteers and limiting its distributions on those icy days.

Based on the experience gained during previous distributions held for Syrian refugees, no serious security problems are anticipated. Nevertheless, there were several cases where the beneficiaries showed some aggression for various reasons which was handled by the NS's experienced staff' through communication and negotiations. Therefore, to reduce that risk, the volunteers will be always accompanied by staff members during distributions, and the overall operation will run under the ARCS DM department's direct supervision and support.

Planning, monitoring, evaluation, & reporting (PMER)

The ARCS will, in close cooperation with the IFRC country office, monitor the implementation of activities and the IFRC Europe Zone Office will provide the necessary technical advice.

Administration and Finance

None of ARCS staff members will receive a salary and/or incentive from the DREF budget, and the administration and finance work done by the NS staff will be their contribution to the operation. Moreover, the National Society's administration and finance costs are handled according to DREF Guidelines and will not cover structural and normal office costs; the costs are limited to supporting only the DREF operation work plan for two months.

DREF OPERATION

17/01/2014

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Budget Group	DREF Grant Budget CHF
Shelter - Relief	
Shelter - Transitional	
Construction - Housing	
Construction - Facilities	
Construction - Materials	
Clothing & Textiles	110,000
Food	
Seeds & Plants	
Water, Sanitation & Hygiene	14,528
Medical & First Aid	
Teaching Materials	
Utensils & Tools	
Other Supplies & Services	
Cash Disbursements	
Total RELIEF ITEMS, CONSTRUCTION AND SUPPLIES	124,528
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	200
Transport & Vehicle Costs	250
Logistics Services	
Total LOGISTICS, TRANSPORT AND STORAGE	450
International Staff	
National Staff	700
National Society Staff	
Volunteers	300
Total PERSONNEL	1,000
Consultants	
Professional Fees	
Total CONSULTANTS & PROFESSIONAL FEES	0
Workshops & Training	
Total WORKSHOP & TRAINING	0
Travel	3,500
Information & Public Relations	300
Office Costs	200
Communications	240
Financial Charges	60
Other General Expenses	
Shared Office and Services Costs	
Total GENERAL EXPENDITURES	4,300
Partner National Societies	
Other Partners (NGOs, UN, other)	
Total TRANSFER TO PARTNERS	0
Programme and Supplementary Services Recovery	8,468
Total INDIRECT COSTS	8,468
TOTAL BUDGET	138,746