

ARMENIA

2023 IFRC network country plan

Funding Requirement **CHF 6.1M**

Appeal number **MAAAM002**

In support of the Armenian Red Cross Society



12

National Society branches



300

National Society staff



5,800

National Society volunteers

People to be reached



17,000

Climate and environment



15,000

Disasters and crises



410,000

Health and wellbeing



26,000

Migration and displacement



6,000

Values, power and inclusion

IFRC network multiyear focus

Longer term needs

- Disaster risk reduction and preparedness
 - Protracted displacement
- Health, water, sanitation and hygiene
- Elderly care • Climate change adaptation

Capacity development

- Digital transformation
- Community Engagement and Accountability
 - Branch development
- Youth engagement & volunteer management
 - Resource mobilization

Key country data

Population **3M**

INFORM Severity rating **low**

Long-term Climate Risk Index **156**

Human Development Index rank **85**

Population below poverty level **27.0%**

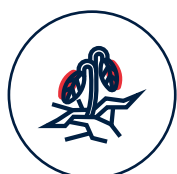
Hazards



Earthquakes



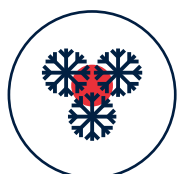
Conflict



Drought



Floods



Hailstorms



Population movement

Funding requirements

Total 6.1M CHF

Through the IFRC

2.4M CHF

Through Participating National Societies

1.9M CHF

Host National Society

1.8M CHF

IFRC Breakdown

Longer term needs

25,000 CHF
Climate and environment

508,000 CHF
Disasters and crises

593,000 CHF
Health and wellbeing

650,000 CHF
Migration and displacement

211,000 CHF
Values, power and inclusion

441,000 CHF
Enabling local actors

Participating National Societies

American Red Cross*

Austrian Red Cross

British Red Cross*

Finnish Red Cross*

Italian Red Cross

The Netherlands Red Cross (510)

Norwegian Red Cross

Red Cross of Monaco

Swiss Red Cross

The Canadian Red Cross Society*



NATIONAL SOCIETY PROFILE

The Armenian Red Cross Society is an auxiliary to the public authorities in the humanitarian field and the largest voluntary organization in the country. It was founded in 1920 and admitted to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) in 1995.

The National Society has a network of 12 regional branches, one territorial branch and 52 community sub-branches. It has 300 experienced and committed members of staff and more than 5,800 volunteers. Increasingly, young people and volunteers are taking an active role in Red Cross services.

By implementing disaster risk reduction projects in recent years, the National Society has formed strong disaster management capabilities. It has equipped seven experienced disaster response teams at headquarters and branch level, and plans to train and equip an additional four, to cover all regions of Armenia.

In addition to disaster preparedness and response services, the National Society is well recognized in the country for its provision of social services and health care, including mental health and psychosocial support, and assistance to migrants and displaced groups. The National Society is well positioned as a key humanitarian actor to the Government in supporting disaster management and response activities.

Recent Armenian Red Cross humanitarian operations include the response to the conflict escalations in 2020 and 2022. With support from International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement partners, the National Society supported conflict-affected individuals with services such as the distribution of non-food items (100,000 people reached); shelter (more than 16,000 people); food; mental health and psychosocial support (24,000 people); first aid; children's resilience; and medical care and other health services (70,500 people). In addition, the National Society has been implementing cash and voucher assistance activities for displaced people and their host families, gaining considerable experience in this area.

From the start of the COVID-19 state of emergency in Armenia, the National Society has been implementing activities in response to the needs of vulnerable groups, in coordination with various government departments. These include the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure, all administrative regions of Armenia, and the Yerevan Municipality.

Working together, they have delivered vital life-saving services. The Armenian Red Cross has been the leading and most relied-upon humanitarian partner of the public authorities during the COVID-19 response, due to its ability to cover the entire country at once. The National Society is part of the national response mechanism, which is led by the Deputy Prime Minister. It works closely in partnership with the National Centre for Disease Control, the World Health Organization (WHO), various UN agencies, the European Union, international and local NGOs and corporations.

Within the COVID-19 response, the National Society supported the Ministry of Health by organizing vaccination uptake events across the country. National Society volunteers disseminated information materials, personal protective equipment, masks and hand-sanitizers to the population, while organizing and coordinating queues at mobile vaccination points. More than 10,000 people were vaccinated during these campaigns. In addition, the National Society conducted a COVID-19 street awareness campaign, promoted vaccination on social media platforms, shared information to address misinformation and a lack of knowledge about COVID-19, and supported mobile vaccination points in communities across Armenia.

The Armenian Red Cross [Strategy 2022–2026](#) defines three strategic goals for the Armenian people:

- To better anticipate and respond to disasters and crises, and recover more quickly
- To lead safe, healthy and dignified lives, with opportunities to thrive
- To mobilize for inclusive and supportive communities

National Society development is also a cross-cutting strategic objective.

The National Society has made clear progress in its organizational development, including maintaining transparency and conducting annual audits. It is building the capacity of regional and community branches in areas such as resource mobilization, visibility, strategic and operational planning, and improving internal management processes.

Joint situational analysis

Nearly 30 years after Armenia became an independent state, it remains strategically sensitive in the South Caucasus region. Two of the country's four land borders are still open, but its borders with Azerbaijan and Turkey are closed. Conflict escalation remains a risk. According to the INFORM Risk Index, Armenia's risk severity score has increased to 10 because of increased hostilities in 2020. This is a similar score to some of the crisis-stricken countries in the Middle East. In addition, there have been large anti-Government protests since April 2022, and opposition leaders continue to demand the removal of the current Government.

Armenia is also exposed to a number of complex natural hazards including earthquakes, droughts, floods, hail storms and landslides.

The country has evolved from having a solid manufacturing base to a service-based and small-scale agricultural economy. According to data from 2020, the service sector employs 51.2 per cent of the labour force. Agriculture remains a significant employer, with a labour market share of 24 per cent, and there is a high rate of unemployment. Based on the country's definition of the poverty line, poverty persists and affects about 26 per cent of the population, which is gradually decreasing.

According to the World Bank, price levels started to rise more quickly at the end of 2020, after a long stable period of low inflation. Prices accelerated further in 2021, driven mainly by 17 percent food inflation, and reached their peak in November 2021 when inflation was running at 9.6 per cent per year. Direct geopolitical risks and domestic political uncertainty have subsided, because the agreed ceasefire between Armenia and Azerbaijan in November 2020, along with the snap elections in mid-2021, have helped stabilize internal political tensions. However, geopolitical challenges continue to limit Armenia's growth prospects, because some of its borders are closed, it has no economic relations with two of its four neighbours, and some regional communication networks are blocked.

Since 1992, Armenia has been a member of the inter-governmental military alliance known as the Collective

Security Treaty Organization. The country joined the Eurasian Economic Union in 2015. In 2017, Armenia and the European Union signed a comprehensive and enhanced partnership agreement, envisioning cooperation in economic trade and political matters. The Armenian economy is expected to be adversely affected by the conflict in Ukraine, because global food and fuel prices are rising and the country has substantial trade and financial links with Russia, along with remittances and foreign direct investment. Armenia still faces significant structural challenges, including the need for improvements in the business and investment environment, persistently high unemployment, mismatched labour skills, and weak levels of competitiveness between companies.

There have been substantial short- and long-term effects of the conflict escalations in Armenia. According to the Armenian Migration Service, during the early September 2020 escalation, more than 90,000 people fled from conflict-affected areas to Armenia, and the majority (about 88 per cent) were women and children. Continuous assessments by the National Society, the IFRC, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the public authorities and international organizations show that there are still an estimated 20,000 displaced people or more in Armenia. They need shelter, food, essential hygiene items, access to health services, mental health and psychosocial support, longer-term livelihoods and recovery support.

In 2021 and 2022, Armenia experienced its second and third waves of the COVID-19 pandemic, and this took its toll on the country's health and social care system and the economy. In 2021, the Government did not impose strict lockdowns or restrictive measures, because it needed to recover economically from the dual shocks of conflict and the pandemic. Armenia began its COVID-19 vaccination rollout on 13 April 2021, but vaccine hesitancy and scepticism remain widespread. According to the latest data from WHO (May 2022), more than 2.1 million vaccine doses have been administered. Approximately 36.3 per cent of the population are fully vaccinated.

Strategic priorities

Climate and environment

According to the World Bank Group's Climate Change Knowledge Portal, all four seasons in Armenia are steadily getting warmer. Projections indicate an increase in overall annual precipitation by 2050, but a decrease over the summer months, and this suggests a likely increase of heavy precipitation events. Armenia regularly gets very hot in the summer – the average maximum temperature in August is 34.3°. The current likelihood of a heatwave is about three per cent per year, and this is expected to increase to 5–18 per cent by the end of the century.

Climate change is likely to influence food production in Armenia. There is already a significant probability that the country will experience severe droughts, and as droughts are expected to become more frequent and intense, it is likely that the quality of the soil across the country will decline. Changes in rainfall and temperature and the availability of carbon dioxide will directly affect crop cultivation. Other factors include the availability and seasonality of water resources, soil erosion, changes in pest and disease profiles, the introduction of invasive pest species, and a decline in arable areas.

Household heating continue to be an important part of Armenia's energy needs. An estimated 35 per cent of households use wood for heating, primarily because it is affordable. However, the rate of deforestation in Armenia is likely to continue, so more biomass fuel will be used for heating, there will be less firewood available, and it will get more expensive. This trend is expected to have an adverse impact on the poorest households.

There is a lack of climate change adaptability and resilience among people who are dependent on the agricultural sector, and this will become more apparent as the growing seasons change, extreme weather events increase, and new invasive species of pests appear. A recent baseline assessment in the Tavush region showed that these threats are likely to significantly affect food security and people's livelihoods, but most households engaged in agriculture are not resilient to disasters and they have no insurance. The effects of climate change are likely to disproportionately affect the most vulnerable people: poorer businesses are the least able to afford air conditioning; poorer farmers and communities are the least able to afford local water storage, irrigation infrastructure and the technologies needed to adapt. According to the Food and Agricultural

Organization, most agricultural holdings in Armenia are small, many farming households are poor, and some rely on remittances sent from family members who migrate seasonally for work.

It is expected that climate-related hazards will create increased risks to human health, including heat-related illnesses and an increased vulnerability to outbreaks of communicable diseases.

Main actions and areas of support

The Armenian Red Cross Society has demonstrated its ability to implement climate change initiatives that strengthen the capacities of civil society organization networks to participate effectively in policy dialogue. Their discussions on climate change adaptation – with local and national authorities, EU institutions and international organizations – contribute to national and local policy-making processes while raising public awareness. The National Society has played a leading role in these networks. It has supported climate-smart activities at the community level, and the development of infrastructure including solar panels, water systems, street lighting and clean water banks.

The National Society has established a Climate Change Adaptation Centre in the Lori region, and this has enabled it to coordinate the activities of existing network members, local authorities and other relevant stakeholders, while conducting training and implementing small-scale climate change mitigation initiatives. However, due to the limited level of donor interest in climate change mitigation in Armenia, the National Society has been unable to mobilize sufficient resources to continue its efforts in this area.

The National Society is committed to developing and implementing programmes that contribute to reducing the adverse impacts of climate change, and prevent any further degradation of the environment. It plans to serve as an agent of change, to encourage mitigation initiatives and promote more sustainable environmental practices by engaging and training its senior management, volunteers and youth. Furthermore, the National Society seeks to mainstream and integrate environmentally friendly practices into its projects and programmes.

Disasters and crises

For real-time information on emergencies, see IFRC GO page [Armenia](#)

Armenia faces significant disaster risks and experiences earthquakes, rock falls, mudslides, hailstorms, spring freezing, forest fires, storms and floods. It is highly exposed to hydrometeorological hazards, which are expected to increase as the climate changes. The risks associated with geophysical hazards are also significant, because Armenia is in one of the most seismically active regions in the world. According to the 2005 report *Natural Disaster Hotspots: A Global Risk Analysis*, more than 80 per cent of Armenians are at risk of catastrophic events. According to the Natural Hazard Assessment Network, all Armenians are at risk of earthquakes, 98 per cent of the population are at risk of droughts, and 31 per cent flooding. In some geographical areas, these hazard events happen every year, affecting the same people, damaging crops and irrigation channels, depriving small-scale farmers of their sources of income and leaving them exposed to longer-term indirect losses.

In August 2022, a major explosion occurred in the Surmalu market, one of the largest in the capital Yerevan, about 2kms south of the city centre. It killed 16 people and injured 62. It is believed that the explosion was caused by a fire in the nearby fireworks warehouse that had started several minutes earlier. The scope of the disaster challenged the capacity of civil protection authorities. It highlighted how the Armenian Red Cross has a critical role as an auxiliary to the public authorities in the humanitarian field, and the organization most capable of mobilizing its resources and volunteers to support the Government's response to disasters and crises.

The Government and other stakeholders in Armenia have worked towards establishing anti-hailstorm stations. However, there is only a limited number of them, because they are expensive, and even when they are installed, they often do not provide significant protection from hailstorm damage. The Government is considering other alternative preventive measures, such as protective nets, but this solution is only effective on gardens and small land plots, not farms growing crops like wheat or barley.

Main actions and areas of support

The Armenian Red Cross Society is a first responder to crises in Armenia and it remains in the communities it serves before, during and after emergencies. In recent years, the National Society has implemented several programmes focused on strengthening its capacity in the field of disaster management, in particular disaster preparedness and risk reduction. It did this in partnership with the IFRC, the Austrian Red Cross, Danish Red

Cross and Swiss Red Cross. These efforts have improved the National Society's capacities and capabilities to respond to disasters as a leading humanitarian actor. The National Society has demonstrated its emergency preparedness, its experience, expertise, and its proven track record in delivering services through its professionally equipped and trained teams. These include in-kind and cash and voucher assistance, mental health and psychosocial support, livelihoods and resilience activities, health care, search and rescue, first aid and tracing.

The National Society will continue to engage with local communities to provide risk information on natural and man-made hazards, including weapon contamination, and reduce communities' vulnerability and exposure. This will help people to prepare, address the impacts of disasters, and enhance disaster risk reduction. The National Society will also continue to support vulnerable people displaced by crises and disasters, and their host communities, through integrated emergency response services including the distribution of non-food items, cash and voucher assistance, emergency health and in-kind services through the IFRC's Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF) and Emergency Appeal mechanisms. It will improve preparedness and response mechanisms through contingency planning, and train and equip disaster response teams and volunteer firefighters. It will engage with local and national authorities to enhance joint early warning mechanisms with civil protection, and encourage volunteer participation within the National Society and with civil society organizations. It will continue to conduct and update its IFRC Preparedness for Effective Response (PER) action plan, review and update its Movement Contingency Plan, and refine its disaster management organizational structure and standard operating procedures.

The National Society also aims to replenish its stocks of non-food items and continue improving its logistics processes. It will enhance its auxiliary role by participating in shelter coordination in emergencies, and accelerate its cash and voucher assistance plan of action.

Health and wellbeing

Armenia's constitution enshrines a commitment to universal health coverage, but the country's health system faces several challenges. Its public spending on health is among the lowest in the region and, in recent years, improvements in health outcomes have been slower than in neighbouring countries. Co-payments for services covered under the Basic Benefit Package, as well as a lack of coverage for the more expensive aspects

of health care (in particular hospital care and outpatient pharmaceuticals), have resulted in 'out of pocket' spending by households. At present, the key health and well-being challenges in Armenia include elderly care, communicable and non-communicable diseases, mental health and psychosocial support, and water, sanitation and hygiene.

Elderly care

In Armenia, people aged 65 years and over make up 10.51 per cent of the population, according to the 2011 census, but the care needs of elderly people are not being met. There are social protection institutions that provide care to the elderly, along with day care centres, medical and social service organizations, hospices and other institutions, home care providers and foster families. Older people are entitled to free or subsidized medical services only if they are classified as the most vulnerable, so many people cannot access medical services. Standards for palliative care were introduced in 2017, but there are no specialized medical centres for palliative care. Instead, this is provided by family members or a small number of private medical institutions. Many older people are not aware of their rights and entitlements, and find it too difficult to secure free state-funded day care, home care or care in residential institutions.

Communicable and non-communicable diseases

The effects of climate change can have an adverse impact on people's health and well-being – in particular, the changing patterns of disease, extreme weather events, and water and food insecurity. The most common diseases that spread after a disaster are measles and other vector-borne diseases, acute respiratory infections, and diarrhoeal and other water-borne diseases. This is due to overcrowding in shelters, a breakdown in hygiene practices, and a lack of access to water and sanitation. Malnutrition increases the impact of these diseases, especially in children under the age of five. In 2021, the Armenian Red Cross conducted a baseline survey into the main diseases in the country and their prevention. It examined people's knowledge, attitudes and practices, along with topics such as vaccination, clean water, personal hygiene, food safety and first aid. The results showed that significant knowledge gaps need to be addressed, particularly around vaccination and communicable diseases.

The prevalence of HIV/AIDS in Armenia is currently estimated at 0.2 per cent of the population – up from 0.1 per cent in 2003. The Armenian Red Cross has been working on the prevention of tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS

(which are often manifested as comorbidities) for about 18 years. These activities are continuous, long-term, and supported by a global fund through the Ministry of Health.

There is also growing concern about the increase in non-communicable diseases in Armenia, which account for approximately 93 per cent of all deaths. The IFRC recently supported the National Society with conducting a baseline assessment, which found that there is a serious shortage of health workers outside the capital city, severely affecting people's access to health services, including primary care.

Mental health and psychosocial support

The COVID-19 pandemic and the September 2020 escalation generated increasing demand for mental health and psychosocial support services in Armenia, and later among people who were on the move while resettling. A National Society review conducted in September 2021, with the support of the IFRC and the Austrian Red Cross, showed that there are greater mental health and psychosocial needs during the recovery process of a disaster or crisis situation. The National Society has called for better coordination and mapping of available resources, including facilitating referrals, raising awareness and increasing competencies. Despite the current high demand for mental health and psychosocial support in Armenia, human resources and services in this area are limited and the pervasive stigma around mental health makes matters worse. In order to achieve universal health coverage and achieve the sustainable development goals, it is critical that the growing gap between need and response is addressed.

Water, sanitation and hygiene

Universal, affordable and sustainable access to water, sanitation and hygiene is a key public health issue in Armenia. Equitable and accessible water and sanitation for all are the focus of the first two targets of the sustainable development goals. Improving access to water, sanitation and hygiene services will improve people's health and life expectancy. Safe water, adequate sanitation and hygiene education will improve socio-economic development, gender equality and the ability of students to learn, while reducing illness, poverty and death. According to a recent assessment among border communities in the Tavush region, conducted jointly between the National Society and the IFRC, 30 per cent of people do not have regular access to drinking water, and 15 per cent must travel between six and 15 minutes to their nearest water source. Furthermore, 24 per cent of people treat their own drinking water.

Main actions and areas of support

Public health

The Armenian Red Cross Society will continue to play an active role in public health emergency preparedness and response platforms, and work with the Government to develop a clearly defined role in health emergencies. The National Society will also continue to be a member of public health advocacy groups that promote healthy and active ageing by lobbying and advocating for the rights and needs of vulnerable population groups, including migrants and people being cared for at home or in residential care. It will do this by participating in community initiatives, conducting intergenerational work and engaging in national and regional platforms.

The National Society aims to increase access to safe water for 9,500 vulnerable people in rural Armenian communities that have irregular access to water, and reach 200,000 people through hygiene promotion. It is expected that these activities will significantly contribute to improving people's overall health and the quality of life in these communities, and help improve sanitation and hygiene practices.

The Armenian Red Cross has been providing first aid training courses since 1996, and it established its First Aid Training Methodological Centre in 1997 to improve basic knowledge and skills. The centre delivers training on first aid, psychosocial first aid, healthy lifestyles, elements of hygiene, and the promotion of safe children's behaviour. The centre also provides the examination and certification of first aiders and instructors, it designs and publishes first aid educational materials, and it supplies first aid kits.

The National Society plans to continue building the resilience of local communities to health emergencies, and position itself as a provider of training on health in emergencies.

Communicable diseases

In the area of tuberculosis, the Armenian Red Cross Society will continue to carry out activities designed to decrease stigma and discrimination, and provide psychosocial support to patients, while making sure they implement their treatment plans. The National Society cooperates with primary health care providers, who participate in diagnosing and treating tuberculosis. Activities to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS include raising awareness and promoting rapid testing among at-risk population groups across Armenia. The National Society will also continue to work on maintaining the skills and capacities of staff who provide quality home

and residential care services, and staff who work in non-communicable disease prevention and tuberculosis treatment.

Elderly care

The National Society will continue to support the Government with improving living conditions at the residential elderly care centre in Gyumri, and the quality of the services it provides.

Mental health and psychosocial support

The National Society aims to improve people's mental health and well-being by addressing the mental health and psychosocial support needs of communities, frontline workers, staff and volunteers. It will organize psychosocial support meetings in targeted regions on a number of themes, including re-establishing traditional rituals, sports, literacy, informal education, activities appropriate for certain ages and social groups, and cohesion-building cultural events.

Migration and displacement

There was a massive population displacement in the region between 1988 and 1992. Most of the affected people in Armenia have found a durable solution, and the number of remaining displaced people is now estimated to be about 1,430. The escalation of conflict in early April 2016 led to the displacement of up to 2,500 people across Armenia, of whom an estimated 573 have remained after a verification exercise was conducted in November 2016. The National Society continues to support 150 of those people, as part of its general assistance scheme.

The escalation of the conflict that started on 27 September 2020 and lasted for six weeks provoked the displacement of nearly 90,000 people, according to official figures from the Migration Service on 2 December 2020. Most of these were older people, women and children. In 2022, it is estimated that more than 20,000 of them remain across Armenia, and many still live in a refugee-like situation. The Armenian Government has organized initial humanitarian response activities for people displaced from conflict-affected areas during the 2020 escalation, and its activities are supported by national and international organizations and agencies. This includes the Armenian Red Cross Society, which is supported by the IFRC, participating National Societies, the ICRC, UN agencies, local non-governmental organizations, and civilians who volunteer. A new escalation in September 2022 has caused the displacement of an estimated 7,600 people across Armenia. Despite the cessation of active hostilities, the humanitarian needs of the affected people persist, and ongoing support must be assured.

Armenia also hosts people from Syria, almost all ethnic Armenians, who have arrived since the beginning of the conflict in Syria. According to UNHRC, nearly 15,000 of these people remained in Armenia by the end of 2021, and most are still dependent on various integration support schemes. The Armenian Red Cross has been implementing activities to support Syrian Armenians since 2012. They are the second-biggest target group of displaced people, and they are living in a refugee-like situation, although they have a variety of different legal statuses in terms of citizenship, temporary residency permits and asylum seeking.

The 2014 conflict in Ukraine led to the arrival of Ukrainian refugees in Armenia. Sixteen Ukrainian families applied to the National Society for assistance and were supported between 2014 and 2019. In addition, the renewed hostilities since February 2022 have resulted in a further influx of Ukrainian and Armenian nationals who had been residing in Ukraine. There is no official data about people affected by the Ukrainian conflict currently living in Armenia. However, the Migration Service of the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure has received more than 2,000 calls to request different types of support, mainly cash assistance and housing. Between February and June 2022, 200 people applied for asylum in Armenia.

In addition, after the massive explosion that occurred in Lebanon in August 2020, more than 2,000 Lebanese Armenians arrived to start a new life in Armenia. According to recent government figures, Armenia hosts 1,076 refugees from Iraq, primarily of ethnic Armenian origin. Since 2014, Armenia has also granted refugee status to 814 people from Iran, Lebanon, Yemen, Cuba, Afghanistan, Georgia, Ivory Coast, Cameroon, Nigeria, Turkey and other countries. It is also expected that asylum seekers from a number of nations will continue to arrive in Armenia, and will need support.

Main actions and areas of support

The Armenian Red Cross Society, with support from the IFRC, devised an Escalation Response Plan of Action. This enabled it to assist families and individuals displaced from areas affected by the conflict, providing access to essential services and aid, while addressing their longer-term needs and ongoing welfare. Within an IFRC DREF operation, the National Society supported people who left the affected areas after the conflict escalation in 2020 and were living in a refugee-like situation. It addressed many of their urgent basic needs and provided food and hygiene supplies to 33,200 people (11,620 men and 21,580 women). Furthermore, 2,500

children affected by conflict were given mental health and psychosocial support by trained National Society volunteers.

In December 2021, the IFRC launched an additional DREF winterization response operation, to support the conflict-affected people living in displacement. The needs of the targeted population were identified through a thorough analysis of primary and secondary data. This included the Armenian Red Cross's continuous needs assessments and community engagement work, desk reviews by REACH and UNHCR, and other assessment reports from international organizations. A team of volunteers interviewed 366 people, and data from post-distribution monitoring and satisfaction surveys was collected and analyzed. Overall, the findings suggested that 92 per cent of the assisted households could meet their basic winterization needs, according to their priorities. As a result of the DREF operation, 7,158 people received cash assistance for the winter months of January and February 2022 – more than the 6,120 initially planned. The Armenian Red Cross also responded to the escalation of September 2022 through an IFRC DREF operation.

The National Society also works to provide mental health and psychosocial support to people who are displaced and living in a refugee-like situation in Armenia. It approaches integration in an inclusive manner, engaging both displaced and host families.

In 2023, the National Society will continue to assess the needs of displaced people and migrants, and respond accordingly. It will build the capacities of its staff and volunteers to address their needs. It will engage with global and regional networks such as the Movement Leadership Group on Migration, the IFRC Global Migration Task Force, the Movement Reference Group on Internally Displaced Persons, the Asia Pacific Migration Network, the Sahel+ Technical Group on Migration, and PERCO in Europe. This will facilitate learning and information sharing, and establish coordination mechanisms.

Values, power and inclusion

According to international indicators, Armenia is steadily advancing in terms of human development, and this has a positive impact on both women and men. However, key indicators used for international comparisons on gender equality suggest that gaps in human development continue to exist.

The country's constitution guarantees equal rights for women and men. The Law on Equal Rights and Equal

Opportunities for Men and Women in Armenia laid the foundations for gender policies and new legislation. Moreover, Armenia has signed international conventions on gender equality that require it to make a commitment to improve its legislative and policy framework on gender equality. The country has recently drafted its Gender Equality Strategy 2019–2023, articulating its priorities and the way it intends to mainstream gender equality across sectors. Gender equality goals are mentioned in recent national development policies, but it is necessary to mainstream them more meaningfully within strategies.

The participation of women in the labour force (51.4 per cent of working age women) is lower than it is for men (70.6 per cent). Unemployment is high among young people in general (45 per cent), compared with men in the same age group (33.3 per cent). Occupational stereotypes limit women's choices, and more than 60 per cent of them work in just three sectors – agriculture, education and health – which pay relatively low salaries. Several global gender imbalance trends also apply in Armenia – for example, fewer women work in business, industry and senior management roles. Women do the bulk of domestic tasks and unpaid work such as agricultural labour and caring for children, the elderly and sick family members. This lowers their potential for participation in formal work settings. Disasters and water shortages increase the time it takes for women to do their unpaid work, so they become poorer and more isolated from workforce participation.

Violence against women is a serious issue, with eight per cent of women experiencing physical or sexual violence from their partner. However, many women do not report domestic violence, so the actual incidence is likely to be higher. The Government has introduced domestic violence legislation, but it requires further amendments to meet international standards for women's access to justice and support services.

The conflict escalation and the COVID-19 pandemic has reduced children's access to education in Armenia.

Main actions and areas of support

The Armenian Red Cross Society will continue to mainstream protection, gender and inclusion in needs assessments, programme and project design, and the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of its interventions. This will ensure that they are tailored to the diverse needs and problems of both men and women, and more vulnerable groups such as the youth, people living with disabilities, those living with HIV/AIDS, displaced individuals, refugees and those living in a

refugee-like situation, LGBTQI+ people and other minority groups. Through continuous analysis and action, with due consideration of all aspects of protection, gender and inclusion, the National Society will ensure equal and equitable access to its services.

The IFRC has supported the Armenian Red Cross to identify community engagement and accountability as a strategic priority area of its work, enabling it to support diverse programme delivery and disaster preparedness and response capacities. A fundamental pillar of the National Society's community, engagement and accountability approach is establishing and managing a well-functioning and sustainable central community feedback mechanism. This comprises tools and processes for receiving feedback, managing, analyzing and sharing the resulting data, acting on feedback, responding to communities, and informing them of what actions have been taken. A central feedback mechanism was set up at headquarters level in 2022, and it will be refined, strengthened and rolled out in branches from 2023. A community, engagement and accountability strategy will also be developed, when key staff members have been trained.

The Armenian Red Cross has established an education unit to comprehensively address the compounded educational needs that have arisen from armed conflict, disasters and other emergencies. Since 2021, in cooperation with the IFRC, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Norwegian Red Cross, the National Society has piloted the Movement approach to education. This aligns with the ICRC's Access to Education 2021–2026 Strategy and the IFRC Strategic Framework on Education 2020–2030. Since September 2022, with support from the Norwegian Red Cross, the IFRC has been mobilizing a dedicated education in emergencies delegate for the South Caucasus.

The National Society will expand its education in emergencies programme, by continuously training its staff and volunteers, while mainstreaming standard operating procedures in its regional branches. At the community level, through education in emergencies activities, the National Society plans to support up to 500 vulnerable and marginalized children by addressing the main challenges that hinder their access to education – in particular the effects of the conflict and the COVID-19 pandemic. The programme will reflect the needs of displaced children from conflict areas, the local community environment, and parents and caregivers. The National Society will also continue to strengthen its strategic partnerships and collaborations in the areas of education in emergencies and building life skills, with

key actors at national and local level. This includes the education authorities, UNICEF, Save the Children, Plan International, World Vision, and education cluster and working groups. This will position the National Society to carry out its work effectively and reinforce its auxiliary role in the education sector.

The National Society will also work to mainstream humanitarian values in the education sector. It will address education-related humanitarian needs through assessment, programmatic integration, research, data collection and analysis, and the dissemination of key messages to stakeholders and policy-makers in Armenia.

Enabling local actors

The Armenian Red Cross Society is committed to pursuing its institutional strengthening, and carried out the self-assessment part of the Organizational Capacity Assessment and Certification (OCAC) in 2014. The self-assessment part of the OCAC process is intended to capture the strengths and weaknesses of National Societies as a whole in relation to a wide range of organizational capacities. The National Society is also committed to the Preparedness for Effective Response (PER) process, and is at the action and accountability phase. The PER approach is a continuous and flexible process that enables National Societies to assess, measure and analyze the strengths and gaps of its preparedness and response mechanism, and ultimately take necessary action to improve it.

In the area of National Society development, the Armenian Red Cross has started to develop and implement several strategies that will consolidate its long-term vision, and align this vision with IFRC Strategy 2030 and the priorities of Movement partners. It intends to systematize its programming under a coherent internal normative framework. The Armenian Red Cross has identified and communicated its medium-term vision in its Strategy 2021–2026. Furthermore, it has mapped out its priority fundraising actions within its resource mobilization strategy plan for 2021–2025. It has also formalized its intentions in its National Society development 2021–2023 plan, and its three-year master plan of action.

To put these strategies into action, the National Society has completed a Movement Contingency Plan review, established a planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting (PMER) framework for its 2022 operational plan, and built the capacity of its staff members in a results-based management monitoring and evaluation exercise. It has created and established an information management mechanism, an integrated digitalized community, and a digital engagement and accountability component. It has also started digitalizing its humanitarian services (through the Digital Maturity Quick Scan), started branch development activities in 10 out of 12

branches, and begun the process of reforming its volunteer management system.

In order to ensure that the National Society is well equipped to respond to the needs of the communities it serves, it will identify organizational capacity needs and gaps, and define measures to address them.

Engaged

The Armenian Red Cross Society will work on sharing experiences and promoting good practices among National Societies and other international Movement partners. It will do this in the areas of mental health and psychosocial support, civil protection, first aid, home and residential care for older people and people living with disabilities, and the education in emergencies programme. It will also communicate about lifelong learning, cash and voucher assistance, branch development, weapons contamination and awareness, youth and volunteer exchanges and other topics. It will engage with Movement and external partners to showcase the country's humanitarian and development challenges, while exploring opportunities to address them collectively. It will seek to increase and widen National Society involvement in, and leadership of, civil society groups and other coalitions at national and local level. This includes taking an active role in promoting standards on mental health and psychosocial support, and supporting capacity-building initiatives.

In the area of humanitarian diplomacy, the National Society will reinvigorate its communications and public advocacy efforts to increase the impact of its activities, build trust in communities, and develop people's understanding of its role in Armenia. In order to do this, the National Society will ensure that digital IT systems and infrastructures work efficiently, and it will focus on accountability in its daily operations. It will become more data-ready in the areas of staff and volunteer engagement (including recruitment), operational decision-making and business intelligence. It will also ensure that leaders use and understand data in their

work, drawing upon available evidence and research to guide humanitarian actions.

Lastly, the National Society supports the development of appropriate and affordable volunteer platforms, ensuring that volunteers can register, engage and manage their relationships with the National Society, identify service opportunities, record their contributions, and share learning insights.

Accountable

The Armenian Red Cross Society is committed to identifying, developing and adopting innovative approaches to resource mobilization, such as leveraging the use of QR code technology for local fundraising. The National Society will develop the capacity of its staff, at headquarters and in branches, equipping its finance departments with the skills and tools they need to support humanitarian activities. The National Society will also define new donor acquisition strategies, focusing on donations of funds and sustainable income, while establishing and operating commercial and domestic first aid training services.

Trusted

To ensure that the Armenian Red Cross Society is firmly established as a credible source of humanitarian support, it will continue to advocate for the approval of the draft Red Cross law that will legally enshrine its auxiliary role and mandate in times of crisis.

The National Society is committed to ensuring its programmes remain relevant by enabling young people from all backgrounds to engage and contribute through the youth academy. It will do this through participatory planning and programme delivery and developing alternative volunteering systems – such as remote and spontaneous volunteering and other schemes that target people working in the corporate sector.

The National Society aims to pilot (in one regional branch) various branch development approaches to the design and leadership of programmes concerned with community resilience and risk reduction thematic areas and projects. This is being done in response to assessment findings concerning communities in rural areas.

THE IFRC NETWORK

The IFRC

The IFRC support to the Armenian Red Cross Society centres on strategic and operational coordination, National Society development and humanitarian diplomacy. It also supports accountability as a cross-cutting theme. The IFRC supports the National Society in strengthening its auxiliary role by meeting key stakeholders at government level on a regular basis. The IFRC has been present in the South Caucasus region, including Armenia, since 1992, delivering large-scale humanitarian assistance. The IFRC has a regional country cluster delegation for the region, based in Tbilisi, Georgia. It supports the three Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies in Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia. There is also an IFRC office in Armenia.

In recent years, the IFRC has supported the Armenian Red Cross through a number of DREF [operations](#) in relation to hailstorms, population movements, conflict and a massive explosion. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the IFRC, through its global appeal, has also supported the National Society in its COVID-19 response. In 2022, the National Society pursued an IFRC [Capacity Building Fund](#) application to enhance its

volunteer management system. In support of National Society development, the IFRC assigned a programme development specialist, who has been in Armenia since March 2022 and has supported the National Society with conducting community resilience assessments.

In 2020, the national security strategy for Armenia (focused on supporting resilient Armenians in a changing world), was adopted by the public authorities. To support this strategy, the Armenian Red Cross identified the need to establish a humanitarian centre. Consequently, a fundamental pillar of its institutional preparedness and strength is the establishment of a humanitarian centre in Ijevan, Tavush region. It has already reached the major milestone of securing a site for the centre – made available by the public authorities – and the IFRC financially supported the renovation of the building, which was completed in February 2022.

IFRC membership coordination

The IFRC coordination involves working with member National Societies to assess the humanitarian context, humanitarian situations and needs; agreeing common priorities; co-developing common strategies to address

Participating National Society Support - Bilateral

Name of Partner NS	Funding Requirements	Climate	Disasters and crises	Health and wellbeing	Migration	Values, power and inclusion	Engaged	Accountable	Trusted
Austrian Red Cross	CHF 1.05M		●	●	●	●		●	
Italian Red Cross	CHF 0.05M		●	●		●		●	
Monaco Red Cross				●					
Norwegian Red Cross							●		
Swiss Red Cross	CHF 0.77M		●	●	●	●		●	

Total

1.86M

issues such as obtaining greater humanitarian access, acceptance and space; mobilizing funding and other resources; clarifying consistent public messaging; and monitoring progress. This also means ensuring that strategies and programmes in support of people in need incorporate clarity of humanitarian action, development assistance, and reinforcing the auxiliary role of the Armenian Red Cross.

The Armenian Red Cross Society is part of the IFRC network New Way of Working initiative, which is piloted in 14 countries. It aims at establishing a new model of membership coordination, working over multiple years to instill a thorough change management in the ways the IFRC network works together and placing the National Society of the country at the centre. This includes prioritizing effective coordination for much greater gains, optimizing the power of working as one IFRC network by sharing resources, learning, and common standards, and to ultimately achieve greater impact. Particular attention is given to collective planning to ensure that National Society partners present in country participate in one multi-year country plan, which will ensure that the resources and expertise of the network in country are used in a complementary and efficient way.

Work on this initiative is now underway. A country coordination team, co-chaired by the IFRC and the Armenian Red Cross, has a membership of committed participating National Societies (the Austrian Red Cross, Italian Red Cross and Swiss Red Cross). The team focuses on milestones and subsequent outcomes, the

development of a shared situation and needs analysis, and the creating of a multi-year country plan. Several studies and assessments have already been carried out in Armenia, and the data has been consolidated to inform strategic priorities, scope and objectives for 2023 onwards. The team has agreed to build the National Society's capacity in PMER to support quality programming. A new member of staff to head up PMER, supported by the IFRC, the Austrian Red Cross and Swiss Red Cross, is expected to join the National Society in the first quarter of 2023.

The National Society is a member of several thematic Red Cross Red Crescent networks, including: the First Aid Education Network (FAEEN), the European Network on Psychosocial support (ENPS), the Europe Regional Health and Ageing Advisory Group (EHAAG), the Regional Expert Group on First Aid, and the European Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS Network (ERNA). The IFRC supports and facilitates the active participation of the National Society in these networks.

The Armenian Red Cross Society has long-term partnerships with several participating National Societies, including the Swiss Red Cross and Austrian Red Cross, which are present in the country:

The **Austrian Red Cross** has worked closely with the Armenian Red Cross since 2012 and has had an office in Yerevan since 2018. Its support for the National Society in Armenia focuses on financial and technical assistance in all five strategic priorities. The programmes and projects they have jointly implemented include activities in

disaster relief, disaster preparedness and risk reduction, health (including home care and psychosocial support), climate change adaptation, and assistance to Syrian Armenians through income generation. A particular priority is given to National Society development, in support of the National Society's strategies and plans.

The **Swiss Red Cross** restarted its partnership with the Armenian Red Cross in 2016, by opening its country representation and introducing its model of integrated community-based home care and active ageing. It has a comprehensive strategy for supporting the National Society in the areas of health and ageing, disaster risk management and response and National Society

development, including building the capacities of regional branches. Since 2016, more than 10 partnership projects have been implemented.

The **Danish Red Cross** and **Italian Red Cross** also provide financial and technical support to the Armenian Red Cross from their respective headquarters and regional delegations, and have conducted visits to the country. The **Monaco Red Cross** provides support through the **Swiss Red Cross**, and the **Norwegian Red Cross** gives its support through the ICRC. The National Societies direct their technical and financial support mainly towards disaster management and response, health, migration, education and National Society development.

Movement coordination

Tripartite platform meetings consisting of the Armenian Red Cross Society, the IFRC and the ICRC convene quarterly. The leadership, heads of delegations and heads of operations and cooperation attend to discuss the latest development in Armenia, the country's humanitarian needs and priorities, interventions, and progress on National Society development. This is carried out in line with the Strengthening Movement Coordination and Cooperation (SMCC) principles, and the newly adopted [Seville Agreement 2.0](#).

A Movement Contingency Plan was developed in late 2021. It considered the emergency risks in Armenia, the legislative base in the field of disaster management, and the disaster preparedness and response capacities of the Armenian Red Cross, the IFRC, participating National Societies and the ICRC. It also defines standard operating procedures for contingency scenarios.

At the beginning of the September 2020 conflict escalation, a National Society response plan was put into effect. Red Cross and Red Crescent partners coordinated the response and strategically contributed to it.

The Armenian Red Cross has applied to the [National Society Investment Alliance \(NSIA\)](#) fund. This is a jointly administrated IFRC and ICRC pool fund providing flexible multi-year financing and support for the development of Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies, to strengthen their capacity to deliver relevant and effective humanitarian services. A five-year project was

approved, starting in January 2022, with a total combined budget of CHF600,000. The Swiss Red Cross also allocated additional bilateral funding of CHF300,000. The project enables the creation of a nationwide first aid training and service system. The National Society will develop its capacities in the area of first aid training and services by enhancing the number of first aid instructors, renovating and equipping first aid training centres, and establishing a paid-for training and service system. The National Society will also focus on external targets set by the Government, improving the law on first aid and raising awareness.

The ICRC has a strong presence in Armenia and supports the National Society in its institutional and organizational development, mainly strengthening the capacities of the regional and community branches in five international border regions. The ICRC also supports the National Society in the areas of first aid; mental health and psychological support; access to education; weapon contamination, risk awareness and safe behaviour; the tracing service; the dissemination of humanitarian principles and values; and disaster management. It makes a financial contribution towards resource mobilization development processes, which the Armenian Red Cross leads with strong support from the IFRC. Through the Movement Contingency Plan, the ICRC provides direct support to the Armenian Red Cross for its overall safety and security management, in line with the Safer Access Framework approach.

Coordination with other actors

The Armenian Red Cross Society continuously works in cooperation with governmental bodies at national and community level, and it has Memorandums of Understanding with all relevant government departments. This includes the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Emergency Situations, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure, the office of the Prime Minister, and local and regional authorities.

The Armenian Red Cross is the Government's key partner in its humanitarian response efforts. The recent crises relating to the conflict escalations and the COVID-19 pandemic made their partnership even more robust. The national and local authorities trust the National Society, and they have collaborated more closely than before over the last two years. Since 2021, the National Society has attracted new partners by demonstrating its relevance, effectiveness, accountability and transparency in its implementation of various programmes.

The National Society has enhanced its collaboration with key stakeholders, to ensure the complementarity of activities and avoid duplication. Since 2021, it has actively participated in the inter-agency operational working groups set up by the UN to coordinate humanitarian efforts and maximize the efficiency of response efforts in conflict affected areas. The National Society also coordinated bilaterally with UNHCR, to support shelters and the distribution of non-food items, and with UNICEF on education and mental health and psychological support activities. The National Society also

consulted with local NGOs to provide humanitarian assistance.

The National Society also regularly participates in the health working group meetings coordinated by WHO. The representatives of this working group are WHO, the Armenian Red Cross, the Armenian Ministry of Health, UNFPA, UNICEF, ICRC, MSF and others. The working group is responsible for providing updates on activities, including health components, for the purposes of coordinating and avoiding duplication.

The IFRC supports and facilitates the Armenian Red Cross's cooperation with WHO. The National Society is in the process of agreeing a joint plan of action in partnership with the IFRC and WHO – the plan is adjusted to the country's needs, and based on an agreement between the IFRC and WHO at the Europe region level.

The National Society has joined WHO and UNICEF to co-chair the Armenia Technical Reference Group on mental health and psychological support. This working group aims to serve as a technical forum to ensure the responsibility, accountability and productivity of all actors delivering mental health and psychological support actions and responses.

The IFRC facilitated National Society participation in the national capacity building of newly established emergency medical teams. This process began with a high-level stakeholder meeting in Yerevan, organized by WHO, and an Emergency Medical Team Concept Note Endorsement Ceremony by MoH, MES, WHO and Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund Georgia).

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- [IFRC Global Plan and Country Plans](#)
- [Subscribe for updates](#)
- [Donor response](#) on IFRC website
- [Live Disaster Response Emergency Fund \(DREF\)](#) data
- Operational information: [IFRC GO platform](#)
- National Society data: [IFRC Federation-wide Databank and Reporting System](#)



The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is the world's largest humanitarian network, with **192 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies** and around **14 million volunteers**. Our volunteers are present in communities before, during and after a crisis or disaster. We work in the most hard to reach and complex settings in the world, saving lives and promoting human dignity. We support communities to become stronger and more resilient places where people can live safe and healthy lives, and have opportunities to thrive.

Contact Information

Davron Mukhamadiev

Head of Delegation
IFRC Country Cluster Delegation for
Armenia, Azerbaijan & Georgia, Tbilisi
T +995 595 566 195
davron.mukhamadiev@ifrc.org

Andrej Naricyn

Head of Strategic Engagement &
Partnerships
IFRC Regional Office for Europe,
Budapest
T +36 70 430 6528
andrej.naricyn@ifrc.org

Armenian Red Cross Society

W redcross.am
