



Urgent needs in Armenia and Azerbaijan related to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict

Figures at a glance



22,500

VULNERABLE PEOPLE IN A REFUGEE-LIKE SITUATION IN ARMENIA TARGETED FOR PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE

30,000

TEMPORARY DISPLACED PEOPLE OR IN CONFLICT-AFFECTED AREAS OF AZERBAIJAN TARGETED FOR PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE

90%

OF ALL DISPLACED PEOPLE ARE WOMEN AND CHILDREN

\$25.4 million
TOTAL REQUIREMENTS

This appeal presents UNHCR’s adjusted financial requirements for its response to the needs of the people who fled from Nagorno-Karabakh and the adjacent districts to Armenia and are currently in a refugee-like situation, as well as for the provision of assistance to people temporarily displaced in conflict-affected areas of Azerbaijan. UNHCR requires **\$17.3 million** to support the lives and protection of **52,500** people affected by the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict for the **first six months of 2021**, bringing UNHCR’s overall financial needs for Armenia and Azerbaijan to **\$25.4 million**.

Overview

On 27 September 2020, fighting broke out along the line of contact between Armenia and Azerbaijan and quickly expanded in Nagorno-Karabakh and adjacent districts until a ceasefire was signed on 9 November 2020. The conflict forced a large number of people to flee from Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia and forced tens of thousands of people living near the conflict area into temporary displacement within Azerbaijan.

Above: A displaced Azerbaijani man with his young child in a house damaged during the conflict. He and his wife are expecting a second child in the summer.
©UNHCR/Elsevar Aghayev

According to Armenia's Migration Service, as of 8 December 2020, some 90,000 people were in a refugee-like situation across the country, almost 90% of whom are women and children. Critical needs include basic assistance in the areas of shelter, food assistance, and winter items such as heater, warm clothing, and shoes. Protection interventions, including legal assistance, mental health and psychosocial support, also continue to be urgently required. Reports indicate that several thousand people have returned to Nagorno-Karabakh since mid-November 2020, but the nature and sustainability of these returns are yet to be determined.

In Azerbaijan, 112,000 people were found to be affected by the conflict, of whom 80,000 were temporarily displaced. Although most have returned home, the rapid needs assessment found that there are up to 60,000 people still in need of humanitarian assistance, given that their homes are still damaged. Following the ceasefire statement, some 30,000 have been unable to return as their homes were heavily damaged or destroyed. Rapid needs assessments confirmed the urgency of providing displaced people living in temporary shelters or villages/settlements with household and core relief items. Emergency shelter, education, psychosocial support and mine action to address the threat of unexploded remnants of the conflict are among the most urgent protection needs.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact in both countries, especially during the peak of the conflict when the number of cases were reported to have risen significantly. It is compounding the socioeconomic consequences of the conflict on the displaced and host communities and brings an additional layer of complexity to the delivery of humanitarian response.

Both in Armenia and Azerbaijan the central and local authorities, supported by national civil society organization, displayed significant efforts to assist the affected populations, also with the strong engagement of the host communities. From the onset of the crisis, UNHCR worked closely with its local partners to support the national response. Three months after the end of the conflict, UNHCR's collaboration with authorities has further intensified.

It is against this backdrop that UNHCR adjusted its financial requirements for its operations in Armenia and Azerbaijan to be able to continue responding to the needs of the forcibly displaced. UNHCR is seeking **\$25.4 million for Armenia and Azerbaijan** in 2021, including **\$17.3 million needed within the next six months** to urgently assist and protect 52,500 people affected by the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict. This appeal does not cover the needs of people in Nagorno-Karabakh itself, an area where UNHCR has not had access to date.



Armenia, Dilijan, Tavush Province. Refugee-like children play in a new child-friendly space created in a former boarding school, that is now being used as an emergency shelter. ©UNHCR/Anahit Hayrapetyan

UNHCR's response to date

From the start of the conflict in late September to the end of 2020, UNHCR's response included the following:

Armenia

- As part of the winterization response, **14,244** people received hygiene kits, over **1,600** folding beds were distributed, over **58,000** items of clothing were provided, **8,000** people received bedding supplies, and **2,200** families received electric heaters¹.
- **239** families (nearly **950** people) were interviewed during protection monitoring where protection risks, needs and living conditions were identified in a systematic and harmonized manner².
- Daily monitoring was conducted of people returning to Nagorno-Karabakh from the Yerevan bus station.

- **200** people were provided with legal assistance related to documentation and access to services.
- **5,000** people received psychosocial support.
- **1,500** children were supported through psychosocial projects.
- **350** children and adolescents were reached through peaceful coexistence projects.

Azerbaijan

- As part of the winterization response, **30,000** blankets, **12,000** pillows, **6,000** mattresses, **4,000** kitchen sets, **580** dignity kits and **50** rolls of reinforced plastic tarpaulins were distributed through partners such as the Azerbaijan Red Crescent Society and local authorities.

¹ As of 31 December 2020.

² As of 5 December 2020.



UNHCR visits a displaced family in Armenia to deliver hygiene supplies and COVID-19 preventive items. ©UNHCR/Anahit Hayrapetyan

UNHCR's continued response during the first six months of 2021

In this context, UNHCR's key strategic objectives during the first six months of 2021 are as follows:

1. Assist the Governments of Armenia and Azerbaijan in providing gender-sensitive protection support to refugee-like and displaced populations, particularly the most vulnerable, enabling them to enjoy their rights equally and efficiently, including through the provision of legal assistance and counselling.
2. Strengthen access of the forcibly displaced population to dignified living conditions, and provide support to meet their basic needs, including strengthened access to basic services.
3. Strengthen the resilience and access to livelihoods of people of concern and enhance the integration of the forcibly displaced population hosted in the two countries.

Armenia

- Provide shelter assistance (cash) during the winter months while advocating for long-term solutions, including social housing initiatives. Undertake repairs at collective accommodation centres and other public buildings, including the rehabilitation and improvement of water and sanitation systems.
- Provide core-relief items to the most vulnerable individuals and families from the refugee-like population. This includes personal hygiene kits, domestic items (household hygiene items), kitchen supplies and winterization kits (bed frames, mattresses, sheets, pillows, blankets and electric heaters).
- Conduct protection monitoring to identify protection risks and needs of people of concern in a systematic and harmonized manner. Enhance access to protection services, including free legal assistance.
- Support the prevention of and protection from gender-based violence targeting people from the refugee-like population and the host community.
- Raise awareness among people of concern and host communities about their rights and access to services, using a community-based protection framework.

- Enhance community-based protection mechanisms, including but not limited to activities related to mental health and psychosocial support, referral and feedback mechanisms.
- Strengthen self-reliance and access to livelihoods for the refugee-like population, and search for durable solutions.

Azerbaijan

- Carry out protection interventions, including free legal assistance, aimed at ensuring that the rights of affected individuals who are still displaced as a result of the recent escalation of the hostilities are respected.
- Raise awareness among people of concern and host communities on their rights and access to services.
- Provide cash assistance or, where not feasible, distribute non-food items, including winterization kits, core relief items and electric heaters, to meet the basic needs of the displaced population.

Initial needs prior to the conflict

Activities mentioned to the right will be additional to the ones already planned in the regular programmes of both countries.

Prior to the conflict, Armenia was hosting some 18,000 people who were granted international protection and 961 stateless persons. In 2021, UNHCR with its partners will continue to work towards providing assistance to people of concern to meet their basic needs while enhancing the protection environment for those most at risk. UNHCR also advocates for the strengthened integration of people of concern into national response plans, including the COVID-19 Socio-Economic Response and Recovery Plan. Furthermore, preventing and reducing statelessness and protecting the rights of stateless persons will be key priorities for the Office.

Azerbaijan continues to host some 1,884 refugees and asylum-seekers. In 2021, UNHCR will continue with its core protection and advocacy interventions to widen the protection space—and potential for solutions—for people of concern. The operation will pursue a strategy for the inclusion and integration of people of concern into Azerbaijani society as well as support the authorities to align and enhance the national refugee status determination process with international standards. Other key priorities will be to increase access to the labor market and strengthen inclusion of people of concern in the Mandatory Health Insurance law by working closely with the Government, academia and the private sector.

Furthermore, UNHCR will continue its legal counselling programme for IDPs, as well as its long-standing statelessness reduction programme as part of the UNHCR #IBelong Campaign to End Statelessness.

Urgent needs



Shelter and basic needs

- Monthly rental cost support for shelter assistance.
- Provide urgent repairs and building upgrades to improve living conditions in public facilities/collective centres.
- Provide winterization kits.
- Deliver emergency cash assistance for basic needs.

Requirements: Armenia: \$10,780,571; Azerbaijan: \$2,136,397



Protection

- Ensure communication with communities and community-based protection mechanisms.
- Conduct awareness-raising campaigns targeting people of concern to facilitate access to their rights.
- Conduct gender-based violence prevention and response.
- Strengthen access to information about assistance programmes and services.

Requirements: Armenia: \$1,374,036; Azerbaijan: \$1,169,955



Community empowerment (Azerbaijan)

- Community mobilization.

Requirements: \$1,415,788



Logistics and operations support (Azerbaijan)

- Warehouse management and maintenance.
- Capacity-building of partners and coverage of distribution costs.

Requirements: \$463,286

Key challenges

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact in both countries, compounding the socioeconomic consequences of the conflict on the displaced and host communities, adding another layer of complexity to the current crisis. The congested living conditions in host and communal accommodations and the fragile health systems in both countries can contribute to the rapid spread of COVID-19. Despite providing personal protective equipment to the displaced population as well as to UNHCR partners to facilitate the

implementation of activities, the pandemic significantly impacted the pace of UNHCR's response in 2020. Should the COVID-19 situation worsen in 2021, critical delays could impact the delivery of assistance.

Limited funding available constitutes another key challenge to UNHCR. With insufficient funding, the Office will not be able to address all the needs of the displaced population, which remain urgent.

Coordination

Armenia

From the onset of the conflict, and in support of the Government's efforts, UNHCR and the UN Resident Coordinator's Office have coordinated the UN and partners' response with a focus on humanitarian and early recovery activities. The coordination structure established includes five working groups: protection, shelter/NFIs (both UNHCR-led), health, food and nutrition, as well as early recovery to strengthen the resilience capacity of the refugee-like and host communities. UNHCR co-leads sub-working groups on cash assistance (with UNICEF) and information management (with REACH).



Under the leadership of UNHCR and the UN Resident Coordinator's Office in Armenia, an [Inter-Agency Response Plan 2020-2021](#) addresses the conflict's broader humanitarian consequences. The Plan is country-specific, covers the nine-month period from October 2020 to June 2021 and presents the planned activities of 35 UN, NGO and Red Cross Movement partners and overall financial requirements of \$62 million. The Plan is linked to broader UN plans, such as the COVID-19 UN Socio-Economic Response Plan and the UN Sustainable Development Framework (under development).

Azerbaijan

In support of the Government's efforts, the UN Country Team has established a cluster-like coordination structure to maximize the humanitarian response. UNHCR leads working groups for protection and shelter-NFIs, and coordinates with the Office of the Deputy Minister, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, the Ministry of Emergency Situations, the State Committee on Refugees and IDPs and the Azerbaijan Red Crescent Society.

Funding the response

Since the onset of the crisis, UNHCR has been responding to the urgent humanitarian needs that emerged from the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in both Armenia and Azerbaijan.

To date, UNHCR has been able to protect and assist people who fled from Nagorno-Karabakh conflict within available reprioritized resources, and UNHCR is grateful to all donors, in particular those that provided unearmarked contributions that enabled the initial crucial scale up. However, four months after the beginning of the emergency, UNHCR is urgently seeking \$17.3 million to sustain its response in Armenia and Azerbaijan during the first six months of 2021.

UNHCR's revised financial requirements in Armenia and Azerbaijan amount to \$25.4 million for 2021, of which \$17.3 million are urgently required within the first six months of 2021.

2021 financial requirements | USD

Activities	Armenia requirements		Azerbaijan requirements		Total requirements
	Initial requirements ¹	Urgent requirements (Jan-June 2021)	Initial requirements ²	Urgent requirements (Jan-June 2021)	
Basic needs and essential services	989,246	10,780,571	2,034,688	2,136,397	15,940,902
Community empowerment	203,136	-	762,807	1,415,788	2,381,731
Durable solutions	247,666	-	264,717	-	512,383
Fair protection process and documentation	490,763	1,374,036	448,242	-	2,313,041
Favourable protection environment	755,993	-	1,130,613	1,169,955	3,056,561
Leadership, coordination and partnerships	97,933	-	105,763	-	203,696
Logistics and operations support	394,899	-	110,605	463,286	968,791
Sub-total	3,179,636	12,154,607	4,857,436	5,185,426	
Total		15,334,243		10,042,862	25,377,104

¹ Includes COVID appeal requirements of \$200,000.

² Includes COVID appeal requirements of \$168,000.

The importance of flexible funding

Flexible financial support greatly facilitates UNHCR's ability to kick-start an emergency response, bolster forgotten or under-resourced crises, and enable the fullest possible implementation of programmes. Flexible funds enable UNHCR to plan and manage its resources efficiently and effectively, contributing to the collective success in every life that is transformed and saved.

UNHCR is grateful to the donors that have provided unearmarked and softly earmarked contributions. Additional financial and operational information is available on the Global Focus website (reporting.unhcr.org).