

Alert

Armenia

Response to the Syrian Refugee Crisis in Armenia

Geneva, 31 May 2016

1. Brief description of the emergency and impact

Since the eruption of the ongoing Syrian conflict millions of people were forced out of Syria. More than 20,000 Syrian refugees came to Armenia. The vast majority of them are of Armenian descendants (the figure announced by the Minister of Foreign Affairs E. Nalbandyan in the EU meeting). UNHCR, Armenia¹ gives the figure of 16,623 refugees, asylum-seekers and persons in a refugee-like situation by country of origin reported. Arrivals are ongoing. Only in 2015 and 2016, 3500 people (450 families) fled from Syria to Armenia. Some people come without any documents and means for survival.

2. Why is an ACT response needed?

The information reported from the Armenian government so far indicates that currently about 10,000 Syrian refugees are registered as vulnerable and in need of humanitarian assistance. Besides the existing socio-economic difficulties in the country and continuous recession, Armenia faces an escalating armed conflict with Azerbaijan². Having limited protection and response capacity to absorb newcomers and cater for their needs, Armenia offers several protection measures including simplified naturalization for 15,000 Syrian refugees. Armenia also accelerated asylum procedures and facilitated short, mid and long-term residence permits that create great problems for the refugees as they are deprived from any social assistance from the state.

Based on the information by local and international organizations, and several meetings organized by the ACT Armenia Forum, Syrian refugees residing in Armenia require shelter, employment, education, health and psychosocial support. Because of the current hardships many of them have physical and mental disorders. Considering the urgent needs of Syrian refugees the ACT Armenia forum would like to provide humanitarian assistance to affected populations to address the needs of the 100 most vulnerable families by providing shelter, employment opportunities and psychosocial support to the affected population.

3. National and international response

The crisis of refugees in Armenia is worsening and needs an urgent response. Armenia urgently needs international support to help deal with the crisis. UNHCR Armenian office is providing 3-6 months house rentals to new arrivals. The projects implemented by Red Cross Armenia, Save the Children and other organizations cannot cover all humanitarian needs of affected populations.

4. ACT Alliance response

ACT Armenia Forum is planning to apply for ACT Alliance assistance to cover housing and employment opportunities needs of the displaced and affected Syrian refugee community.

1 <http://armenpress.am/eng/news/841788/12-year-old-child-killed-by-azerbaijani-artillery-fire-against-civilian-settlements-2-wounded.html>

2 <http://www.panorama.am/en/news/2016/04/02/Official-statement-War-in-Nagorno-Karabakh-Azerbaijan-undisguised-offence-on-the-frontline/1555733>

5. Planned activities

The main activities will be implemented by the members of the ACT Armenia Forum (ART, ECLOF and UMCOR) and its partners; namely the Armenian Apostolic Church and the “Aleppo” NGO, as well as with others if needed. The planned activities are as follows:

- a) To provide shelter to the most vulnerable families
- b) To provide vocational trainings for women and the youth
- c) To provide psychosocial assistance to the affected groups of refugees.

6. Constraints

There are no constraints in relation of the project implementation except refugees leave Armenia for Europe and USA as the result of very complicated economic and psychological situation in Armenia.

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