



2020 September Nagorno Karabakh War Crisis Impact on the Affected Community Facilities and Service Delivery in Armenia

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Executive Summary

Background

The ongoing dispute over Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh in Armenian), which erupted again on September 27, 2020, halted by a Declaration of Cease-fire on November 10, 2020. In addition to significant human casualties during the 44-day fighting between Armenian and Azerbaijan forces, the conflict has resulted in painful territorial losses for the Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh (NK), and an ongoing humanitarian crisis. Tens of thousands residents of NK have been displaced from their homes in the conflict zones and were seeking refuge in Armenia. Thousands of households in the Republic of Armenia also were severely affected by the war having their family members perished, missing, or wounded.

VNGi, the Netherlands and the Urban Foundation for Sustainable Development, Armenia has conducted an assessment with the aim to understand the current priority needs of war-affected people and households including those displaced from NK, having victims, as well as wounded or missing household members. Also, the research attempted to scan how the war affected on community facilities and service delivery. Such understanding will help to ensure systemic, coordinated and sustainable support for war-affected people and households.

The research looked at the communities, which most affected by the rapid migration flow: Yerevan (capital city), Vedi community (Ararat region), Charentsavan community (Kotayk region), Areni community (Vayots Dzor), Goris community (Syunik region), and Vardenis community (Gegharkunik region).

The impact scan has been done using the following methods:

- Desk research.
- In-depth interviews with the community heads and/or council members in each selected city, relevant government representatives, and if possible CSO representatives from the affected cities that represent interests of both, the newcomers and the citizens.

In total around 30 in-depth interviews were conducted with 35 people.

Desk Research and In-depth Expert Interviews

Issue with Data related to Displaced HHs/persons and Missing of Unified Database

Series of expert interviews with the representatives of relevant Government agencies and non-governmental organizations¹ revealed that after the war in the course of six months (as of May 2021) there was not a unified system of data collection and unified database. The overall understanding was that this was connected with not as much to resources and capacity, but most likely with the data protection, security issue and with the fluidity of migration process.

- **Data related to the influx of displaced persons from Artsakh**
91,000 forcibly displaced people have been registered in the database of RA Migration Service since the start of the conflict as of submission of this report. RA Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MLSA) have their own database, which is not linked to the databases of other ministries and agencies, including to the database of Migration

¹ Interviews have been conducted with the representatives of the RA Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, RA Migration Service within the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructures, RA Committee of Urban Development adjunct to the Government, from ministerial to advisory levels as well as with international and local organizations.

Service. Yerevan municipality has its own database comprising 2,000 households they are supporting in the course of 6 months. *The only official figure reported in an official legal document by RA Migration Service about the number of persons displaced from Artsakh to Armenia is 100,000.*²⁾.

- **Data related to returnees**

In general, the figures provided by official sources about those who returned to Artsakh from Armenia after the end of the war are controversial. RA Migration Service does not track number of returnees to Artsakh. The information about returnees could not be found also from any other relevant governmental agencies. There is back and forth mobility that hinders to track the number. The figures obtained from different sources at the moment of this assessment, provide a range from 50,000 -100,00 (Russian Defense Ministry provided figure 50,000³ as of January 2021 and then stopped providing information, Artsakh authorities provided a figure 70-80,000 as of January 2021⁴, and 100,000 as of February 2021).

- **Data related to displaced households who have to or decided to stay in Armenia**

Data related to displaced households who have to or decided to stay in Armenia are also changeable. Based on the information by Armenian and Artsakh authorities, REACH survey⁵, Mission Armenia Charitable NGO, it can be concluded that the data range of displaced people who had to or decided to stay in Armenia vary from 20,000 to 40,000. Vast majority are from the territories which now are under Azerbaijan control.

Issue of Legal Status of the Persons Displaced from Artsakh to Armenia

Displaced persons from Artsakh as a result of the war do not have any legal status. They are not eligible to receive a status of refugee, internally displaced persons, asylum seekers, returnees, etc. The main reason is that legally they are citizens of Armenia and Artsakh is mentioned as permanent registration address in their passports. Until the end of May 2021, the displaced persons were not assigned a legal status. A Concept on RA State Migration Management adopted on May 20, 2021 uses a legal term **forcibly displaced persons**. The term refers also to the displaced persons from Artsakh.

Support measures

Rapid response and humanitarian assistance

Right after the war the RA Government, local and international donor organizations, private benefactors have been providing emergency humanitarian assistance to the displaced persons from Artsakh.GOAM:

- Supports displaced persons and host families to pay the rent and utilities of the shelter.
- Provided a compensation to the residents of Armenia in some communities of the Syunik region of Armenia, whose property was damaged as a result of shelling.⁶
- Provided compensation to the owner and to family members of the residential house destroyed in Artsakh during the war.

² Source: Concept of Armenia State Migration Management

³ Source: <https://www.civilnet.am/news/> referring to the official website of the Ministry of Defence of Russian Federation

⁴ Source: <https://ampop.am/temporary-residence-in-ra-and-return-to-artsakh/>

⁵ Source: [Document - Armenia: MSNA 2nd Round PowerPoint Presentation - May 2021 \(unhcr.org\)](#)

⁶ Source: <https://www.arlis.am/DocumentView.aspx?DocID=148318>

- Provided cash assistance (one-time payment) for each displaced persons^{7,8}.

Number of displaced people assisted by cash vary from 80.000-100,000 people.⁹

Among international organizations major humanitarian aid providers are UN Armenia, USAID (including USAID Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA))¹⁰, European Union (including European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations ECHO)¹¹, and the Government of France. The humanitarian assistance has been provided through different international and local partners such as UN Agencies (UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, etc.), ICRC, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), People in Need (PIN), Caritas Armenia (CA), Mission Armenia, Armenian Red Cross Society, KASA Swiss Humanitarian Foundation, Fund for Armenian Relief, Armenian General Benevolent Union, Oxygen, World Vision, Save the Children, Round Table of Churches, etc. Armenia All-Armenian Fund also has been providing support to the GOAM and directly to the displaced persons¹².

Support to disabled persons and families with victims and missing members

Number of support measures¹³ have been adopted and applied by the Government:

- Social assistance measure for families with civilian victims and disabled persons.
- Assistance to the families with missing persons but no more than for 6 months.
- Paying of tuition fees for the students who or whose parents participated in the war.

Such support was provided through Insurance Foundation for Servicemen (Soldiers' Insurance Fund) and Armenia All-Armenian Fund.

Government Approach to Assist Displaced Persons

The priority of Government and Artsakh authorities has been to provide a rapid response to the immediate needs of displaced persons and returnees. GOAM has established a working group headed by the Deputy Prime Minister for dealing with the humanitarian disaster, urban infrastructure, ensuring safe and dignified return of displaced persons, and for revival of normal living conditions in Artsakh¹⁴.

The Government does not have a comprehensive strategy for addressing the needs of displaced persons. Its first priority remains to encourage displaced HHs to return to Artsakh, to the localities which are under the control of Artsakh authorities. Ad hoc assessments of the situation and needs of displaced HHs from Artsakh have been conducted by RA Human Rights Defender¹⁵ and international organizations (REACH Initiative and UNHCR) as a result of which priority needs of displaced persons were identified.

⁷ Source: <https://www.gov.am/am/support-measures/>

⁸ Assistance period was foreseen end of May, but it's more likely to be prolonged for 3 months

⁹ Source: [Hayastan All Armenian Fund \(himnadram.org\)](http://himnadram.org)

¹⁰ Source: [02.05.2021- USG Nagorno-Karabakh Complex Emergency Fact Sheet #1 \(usaid.gov\)](https://www.usaid.gov)

¹¹ Source: https://ec.europa.eu/echo/news/nagorno-karabakh-conflict-eu-allocates-additional-10-million-support-those-affected_en

¹² Source: [Hayastan All Armenian Fund \(himnadram.org\)](http://himnadram.org)

¹³ Source: <https://www.gov.am/am/support-measures/>

¹⁴ Source: <https://www.arlis.am/DocumentView.aspx?DocID=147488>

¹⁵ Source: https://ombuds.am/en_us/site/SpecialReports;
<https://ombuds.am/images/files/883f55af65e3c33553139031c7ac0ce6.pdf>

The Government recognizes that social, healthcare and shelter problems increased as a result of war and displacement. The overall approach is to suggest a comprehensive solution to the problem, rather than focus on ad hoc solutions for a specific vulnerable group, in this case, for displaced persons from Artsakh.

For instance, a new system of unified social service is being operated within the RA Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MLSA). Social workers are studying cases related to social, including housing problems of displaced HHs from Artsakh as well as other vulnerable groups affected by 2020 war, amendment is planned in the the government decision as of September 10, 2015 to include displaced households in a social housing project for the socially vulnerable people. The ministry aims to introduce several models for shelter provision: HPC, social mortgage as well as introduce a model of management of social housing stock.

On May 20 a Concept on State Migration Management of Armenia has been adopted by the Government which among others recognizes displaced persons as target groups by using a legal term **forcibly displaced persons**, which refers also to the displaced persons.

The Concept stipulates provision of legal and social protection, employment and economic involvement of forcibly displaced persons, promotion of tolerance among the society, raising public awareness of current problems of forcibly displaced persons.

Challenges of Local Governments Facing War Consequences (expert interviews)

Locations of Displaced Households from Artsakh in Armenia

The displaced households/persons have found refuge in various regions (marzes) of Armenia. According to the information provided by the RA MTAI¹⁶, the largest concentrations (75%) are in Kotayk, Ararat, Armavir and Syunik Regions. Based on expert interviews with Yerevan Municipality, estimated 45,000 displaced persons moved to Yerevan at the early stages of displacement. Some displaced persons think of further moving to other places inside Armenia or abroad but not to Artsakh for different reasons: due to harsh climatic conditions, limited opportunities for engaging in farming, for feeling insecure, etc.

Competences of municipalities to confront the consequences of the war

Current situation shows that great deal of work in emergency situations lays on municipality's shoulders, and even the strong ones are not equipped to handle the situation. Article RA Law on local self-government entitles the community head with voluntary and delegated powers in Protection of the Population from Emergency Situations and Organization of Civil Defense. However, the existing mandate and competences of local governments do not allow them to provide a proper response during emergency situations. Moreover, there are lack of funds for due implementation of responsibilities during the emergency situations. Despite lacking of full mandate, local governments with displaced persons, mobilized volunteers, private sector donors and CSOs to help municipalities distribute emergency humanitarian assistance and find premises to serve as temporary shelter.

¹⁶ Source: <https://ampop.am/temporary-residence-in-ra-and-return-to-artsakh/>

Resilience of Municipal Budgets to the Emergency Situations

Apart from scarcity of funds, usually, the community budget lines are quite rigid to amend and adapt to emergency situations, as soon as they are projected and approved. The budgets do not have a special line for emergency situations. So most of the municipalities were not able to spend financial resources from the community budget to support displaced persons. However, there were handful of municipalities which found legal ways to support the displaced persons from the community budget, although those solutions were ad hoc, not institutional. The support includes from so called “one-time financial assistance” budget line, amendment in the budget to compensate utility costs of displaced persons, used budget line for social services to provide assistance for displaced persons: in emergency situation this has been done at the expense of socially vulnerable residents of the community by temporarily holding on the assistance to them. Other support arrived from the government, local and international organizations.

In general, it can be concluded that during the emergency situation the host municipalities managed to mitigate the primary and urgent needs of displaced persons by coordinating assistance from community budget, monetary and material assistance from state and donor organizations. Interviewed municipalities stated that they have learned lessons from the past year and will reflect emergency situations in their plans (1 year and 5 year).

Municipal Services after the War

Social service departments of local governments were largely overwhelmed with addressing the consequences of the war in their communities. As most of the assistance has been arriving from the central government and international organizations, local social services are mostly coordinating distribution, reaching out displaced persons, helping them to fill in documents and forms, etc. Three main socially vulnerable groups appeared in the communities as a result of the war: displaced persons from Artsakh, disabled as a result of war and families with war victims. The experience showed that in such emergency situations, like COVID and war, a second social worker is top priority.

Expert interviews with local governments and NGOs supporting disabled persons as a result of the war showed they need psychological support, an assistance in adaptation to life, need for prosthetics, since those most of them have now are of low quality. Adequate physical environment, building and transportation facilities are required to ensure minimum mobility and integration of disabled war participants. An additional challenge for supporting of disabled residents is relatively long legal procedure for receiving a disability status¹⁷.

Another vulnerable group for local governments became wives of killed, disappeared or disabled participants of war. Young women of killed or disappeared participants of war faced the “left-behind” syndrome – remaining without husband support young wives have to take care of kids and sometimes with old parents. As usually the main breadwinner used to be husbands, now finding themselves being at risk to stay without income, young wives had to become a breadwinner, which is not easy thing because many of them, not having work experience before, do not have necessary skills and profession to get quality jobs or start business to ensure decent income for the family. The wives with disabled husbands who have mobility issues are event in worse situation, since they have to take care of their husbands and do not have any opportunity for outside job.

¹⁷ Source: Expert interviews with local governments and local NGOs.

In Goris and Charentsavan, where large number of displaced persons are concentrated, many other municipal services are experiencing additional burden such as waste management service, preschool/ kindergartens, primary health care, etc. Besides, those municipal institutions that had hosted displaced persons as initial settlement/distribution centers, now need renovation and refurbishing.

Livelihood and Local Economic Development

Findings of HH survey by REACH Initiative in May 2021 suggest that the employment status among the displaced persons from Artsakh changed considerably after the conflict, with the share of unemployed HHs seemingly having tripled, while the share of those who had held permanent jobs has decreased noticeably¹⁸.

Host local governments have limited resources for assisting economic activity HHs and persons affected by war. However, as expert interviews indicate, they provide whatever support they can by ensuring temporary employment if possible (also cooperating with UNFP, World Vision, etc.), or create prerequisites that will lead to employment and income generation.

According to the annual communique of RA Human Rights Defender on human rights situation in Armenia in 2020¹⁹ defender, there should be developed and applied a policy for creating opportunities and favorable conditions for displaced persons from Artsakh to be involved in entrepreneurship. Such approach will ensure long-term and perspective solution of social needs.

In December, 2020 a new measure was introduced under the Government N 2061-L decision on providing temporary employment to the unemployed residents displaced from Artsakh²⁰. Community heads or their representatives will sign contracts for maximum 3 month period with the displaced persons for involving them in implementing paid public works.

Relations between Displaced Persons and Local Population

Interaction and integrations between displaced households and local population differ based on the period and situation. In majority of cases displaced persons and local population are quite kind and friendly to each other, they share common feelings of loss and disaster and try to be supportive to each other. Some tensions reported in the findings of REACH studies (two rounds)²¹ and expert interviews relate to war period when residents of host communities had family members fighting in the frontline or perished but they had to host male residents from Artsakh^{22, 23}. In very few cases locals complain that they do not get any assistance although they too are in need, their children do not have an opportunity to go to kindergarten, while the children of displaced persons have been provided with such opportunity. The municipalities plan to increase the places in the kindergarten so that no children are left behind.

Priority Needs of Displaced Persons in Host Communities

The findings of REACH survey in all regions of Armenia summarized in May 2021 indicate that 40 % of displaced HHs reported that they did not intend to move or and will stay until they can

¹⁸ Source: [Document - Armenia: MSNA 2nd Round PowerPoint Presentation - May 2021 \(unhcr.org\)](#)

¹⁹ Source: https://ombuds.am/en_us/site/SpecialReports;
<https://ombuds.am/images/files/883f55af65e3c33553139031c7ac0ce6.pdf>

²⁰ Source: <https://www.arlis.am/DocumentView.aspx?docid=148383>

²¹ Source: <https://reliefweb.int/report/armenia/reach-armenia-msna-presentation-findings-22-january-2021>

²² Source: Expert interviews with NGOs

²³ Source: Expert interview with the representative of international organization

safely return home and 18% will not move at all.²⁴ Although thousands of displaced households have already returned to Artsakh, there are still estimated 20,000 which will continue to leave in Armenia for indefinite period of time.

Expert interviews, desk research, as well in the findings of REACH studies suggest that shelter (48%), cash (26%), and food (8%), are the main priority needs among the displaced HHs possibly to be addressed by local governments²⁵.

Recommendations

1. **Finding:** Data related to the number of displaced persons (who moved to Armenia, returned to Artsakh and decided or have to stay in Armenia) are controversial. Government does not have a unified database and tracking system. Estimated 20,000-25,000 displaced persons will continue to live in Armenian communities for indefinite period of time thus adding the burden on local governments as a vulnerable group.

Recommendations:

- Developing employment, entrepreneurship, and shelter projects by central government.
- Helping local governments in raising funds for implementation of the project.
- Building local governments' capacity in managing such projects.
- Assisting the government in developing unified database for displaced persons.

2. **Finding:** Local Governments in Armenia do not have broad mandate to provide rapid response during emergency situations. Nor they have funds to duely carry out their delegated responsibilities regarding emergencies. In the meantime, the experience showed that regardless of the mandate, human and financial capacities, the local governments are in the forefront of providing assistance in emergency situations.

Recommendations:

- Ensuring funding by central government to local governments implementation of delegated responsibilities during emergency situations.
- Budgeting funds by local governments for emergency situations.
- Legislative amendments should be made to allow local governments to use funds rapidly and flexibly in case of emergency situations.
- Training local governments' staff, especially social workers, to respond adequately to the emergency situations.

3. **Finding:** The Government's first priority remains to encourage displaced HHs to return to Artsakh, to the localities which are under the control of Artsakh authorities. In the meantime, the Government understands that for indefinite period of time thousands of displaced persons have to stay in Armenia and need assistance. For instance, MLSA initiates some procedural changes to enable displaced persons to be eligible for different housing solutions: social housing, housing purchase certificates, and social mortgage.

Recommendations:

- Assisting the Government in developing a comprehensive strategy suggesting multiples shelter solutions combined with economic development opportunities.
- Assisting MLSA in developing models and procedures for social mortgage, social housing and housing purchase certificates.
- Assisting MLSA in implementation of housing models for displaced households.

4. **Finding:** The highest priority for displaced persons from Artsakh is housing issue.

Recommendations:

²⁴ Source: [Document - Armenia: MSNA 2nd Round PowerPoint Presentation - May 2021 \(unhcr.org\)](#)

²⁵ Source: [Document - Armenia: MSNA 2nd Round PowerPoint Presentation - May 2021 \(unhcr.org\)](#)

- There are several options for addressing housing issues apart from construction. Alternative housing solutions could be housing purchase certificates, housing improvement grants for single family houses and apartment buildings, renovation of community buildings and providing them as social housing, etc.,
 - Housing should be linked to economic development and income generating opportunities. For example, displaced families that wish to cultivate land, engage in farming can be made eligible for a reconstructed house nearby and some production means.
5. **Finding:** As a result of the war most of the displaced households lost their employments and sources of income. Large number of displaced HHs now are dependent on aid or remittances. Agriculture, education, and manual construction were main professional sectors they were involved in Artsakh before the war.
Recommendation: Creating rural economic development opportunities combining it with the shelter solution. Such opportunity is recommended to suggest the displaced persons being engaged in agricultural activities in Artsakh before the war.
6. **Finding:** Social assistance departments of municipalities are very weak and understaffed. In general, social assistance is a centralized competence provided through territorial divisions of the MLSA. However, they deal only with services that are commissioned from the 'center'. The everyday groundwork is done by municipalities with their weak capacities. In communities where the number of displaced persons is big, have problem with work efficiency, coordination, outreach, data management.
Recommendation: Municipalities should be assisted to develop or improve capacities for emergency preparedness and provision of social assistance. Multi-settlement communities shall employ a second social worker. Municipalities should be supported in putting in place effective data management systems, improving capacities in outreach and case management, coordination with the state agencies (MLSA). Municipalities should have necessary resources (such as transportation) for carrying out their duties. Physical and psychological rehabilitation centers should be created in the regions, accessibility of public spaces should be improved due to large number of disabled people.
7. **Finding:** Expert interviews with local governments and NGOs supporting disabled persons as a result of the war showed they need psychological support, an assistance in adaptation to life, need for prosthetics, since those most of them have now are of low quality. Adequate physical environment, building and transportation facilities are required to ensure minimum mobility and integration of disabled war participants. An additional challenge for supporting of disabled residents is relatively long legal procedure for receiving a disability status²⁶. Wives of killed, disappeared or disabled participants of war became as another socially vulnerable group. Many young women remaining without husbands became a breadwinner, which is not easy thing because many of them, not having work experience before, do not have necessary skills and profession to get quality jobs or start business to ensure decent income for the family.
Recommendations:
- Ensuring psychological support to disabled soldiers and wives of killed, missing and disabled participants of war to re-integrate them into society.
 - Providing vocation training for the aforementioned vulnerable groups.
 - Building capacities of vulnerable groups in creating and running small and medium business.
 - Ensuring opportunities for vulnerable groups for launching own businesses and look for employment.

²⁶ Source: Expert interviews with local governments and local NGOs.

Background

The ongoing dispute over Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh in Armenian) erupted again on September 27, 2020, halted by a Declaration of Cease-fire on November 10, 2020. In addition to significant human casualties during the 44-day fighting between Armenian and Azerbaijan forces, the conflict has resulted in painful territorial losses for the Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh (NK), and an ongoing humanitarian crisis. Tens of thousands residents of NK have been displaced from their homes in the conflict zones and were seeking refuge in Armenia. Thousands of households in the Republic of Armenia also were severely affected by the war having their family members perished, missing, or wounded.



The displaced households (HHs) have found refuge in various regions (marzes) of the Republic of Armenia including capital Yerevan. However, this migration process was quite dynamic and fluid. The TDHs in Armenia have found temporary shelter in some community centers, hotels, and/or are hosted by families in Armenia.

The priority of the Government of the Republic of Armenia (GOAM) and the Artsakh authorities was to provide a rapid response to the immediate needs of the displaced HHs and returnees. The Government encourages the displaced HHs, especially from the territories that remained under the control of the Artsakh authorities, to return to their homes. Tens of thousands displaced HHs have already returned to Artsakh, however, still many had to remain in Armenia because their home settlements are under the control of Azerbaijan. Their needs are growing over time from basic humanitarian support to more sustainable support for decent living conditions, like permanent shelter and employment.

To ensure systemic, coordinated and sustainable support for displaced households, an Assessment should be conducted before any substantial intervention.

Objective and methodology

This assessment aims to understand the current priority needs of war-affected people and households including those displaced from NK, having victims, as well as wounded or missing household members. Also, the research attempted to scan how the war affected on community facilities and service delivery. Such understanding will help to ensure systemic, coordinated and sustainable support for war-affected people and households.

Methodology and the expected results

The research looked at the communities most affected by the rapid migration flow. These were: Yerevan (capital city), Vedi community (Ararat region), Charentsavan community (Kotayk region), Areni community (Vayots Dzor), Goris community (Syunik region), and Vardenis community (Gegharkunik region). Two communities by their day-to-day life style were farmer communities (Areni and Vardenis).

The impact scan has been done using the following methods:

- In-depth interviews with the community heads and/or council members in each selected city, relevant government representatives, and if possible CSO representatives from the affected cities that represent interests of both, the newcomers and the citizens, CSO lawyers association.
- Analysis of the response of the government to the influx of the displaced persons, its support mechanisms to the cities and the relevant legislation.

Points to be checked and analyzed

Mandate: What mandate does the local government have in providing shelter and support to displaced persons/HHs, and what is the mandate of the national government? Of those points, what have the municipalities taken on in reality? What are the current bottlenecks when it comes to providing services and support to the displaced persons/HHs in addition to providing services to the regular city population?

Municipal budget composition: What was the financial situation of the city before the crisis, how it has changed now and what are the city's authority's actions to improve the situation? How does the influx of displaced persons/HHs influence municipal financial flows, what support do cities get from the government?

Impact on municipal service delivery and administration of available resources: What challenges do municipalities face when it comes to providing basic services such as education, health care, housing, jobs to the increased city population? In which areas of municipal service provision is most pressured? How is urban infrastructure impacted? Are there organizational and staffing challenges within the municipal councils?

Social cohesion: How has influx of the displaced persons/HHs influenced the social relations in the cities? Has it led to social tensions or had other consequences?

Distribution of facilities for refugee-like families: what kind of support to the influx of displaced persons/HHs and municipalities is delivered by international actors and non-governmental organizations?

Displaced persons as a driver of local economic development: Is economic inclusion of refugees reflected in community development plans?

Legislative framework: Which laws related to the accommodation and settlement of displaced persons/HHs and remigrating nationals are there at the national level? Do they have full access to the administrative services, are they allowed to vote and how are the newcomers registered?

Do the displaced persons/HHs retain a permanent refugee status and are there any mechanisms supporting a possibility of the return back to Aartsakh.

In total around 30 in-depth interviews were conducted with 35 people.

Desk Research and In-depth Expert Interviews

Issue with Accuracy of Data related to Displaced HHs/persons and Missing of Unified Database

According to the survey by REACH Initiative, before the war of 2020, the population of Artsakh was around 150,000²⁷. This figure is close to the figures of the Census conducted in Artsakh in 2016.

TABLE 1: Population of Artsakh based 2016 Census

Region	2016 Regional Government Census
Martuni	24,341
Askeran	18,316
Martakert	19,351
Stepanakert	55,200
Hadrut	14,758
Kashatagh	10,489
Shahumyan	3,779
Shushi	5,668
Total population before conflict	151, 902

Series of expert interviews with the representatives of relevant Government agencies and non-governmental organizations²⁸ revealed that after the war in the course of six months (as of May 2021) there was not a unified system of data collection and unified database. The overall understanding was that this was connected with not as much to resources and capacity, but most likely with the data protection, security issue and with the fluidity of migration process. As of reporting period, this process was not as dynamic, as it was during the war and couple of months after the war.

²⁷ Source: <https://reliefweb.int/report/armenia/reach-armenia-msna-presentation-findings-22-january-2021>

²⁸ Interviews have been conducted with the representatives of the RA Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, RA Migration Service within the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructures, RA Committee of Urban Development adjunct to the Government, from ministerial to advisory levels as well as with international and local organizations.

Data related to the influx of displaced persons from Artsakh

From the very first day of the unleashing of the war by Azerbaijan, the Migration Service²⁹ of the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructures (RA MTAI) has been collecting and processing the data of the displaced persons from Artsakh, providing them to other relevant departments according to their work needs. During the initial stage of the conflict, data were collected through home visits, conducted by representatives of the staff of the Children and Social Protection Department of the Yerevan Municipality³⁰, and by the representatives of the local self-government bodies and regional governors' offices using a unified template³¹ provided by the MTAI's Migration Service. The collected data were entered into the electronic database developed by the Migration Service on a daily basis, by involving a wide range of volunteer and interagency human resources. 91,000 forcibly displaced people have been registered in the database of RA Migration Service since the start of the conflict till May 2021. RA Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MLSA) have their own database. MLSA has introduced a social rapid response system for registration of displaced HHs from Artsakh, however the database is not linked to the databases of other ministries and agencies, including to the database of Migration Service. Yerevan municipality has its own database comprising 2,000 households they are supporting in the course of 6 months. **The only official figure reported in the legal document about the number of persons displaced from Artsakh to Armenia is 100,000.**³² Thus, the Migration Service indicates two different number on influx of displaced people – 91000 (as registered in the database) and 100 000 (as indicated the It is also reported that an international organization proposed the Government assistance in developing database for displaced persons but was refused as the government is kin on observing confidentiality of data of displaced people, therefore sensitive data are classified. Only a small group of trained volunteers were trained to work with the data.



Back to Home

Data related to returnees

In general, the figures provided by official sources about those who returned to Artsakh from Armenia after the end of the war are controversial.

RA Migration Service registered in its own database only entries of displaced persons, however it does not track number of returnees to Artsakh. From time to time the Migration Service receives information about returnees from Artsakh authorities, but there is not a set mechanism of data transfer. The information about returnees could not be found also from any other relevant governmental agencies. Yerevan municipality tried to track the number of returnees based on the number of buses taking the displaced persons from Yerevan to Artsakh from main station area. However, most likely some displaced persons returned to Artsakh by private cars.

²⁹ Source: RA Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructures, Migration Service: <http://migration.am/news/412>.

³⁰ Source: Letter response by Yerevan Municipality to the inquiry of the head of Journalists for Future NGO.

³¹ "Registration form of displaced person/HH from Artsakh Republic."

³² Source: Concept of Armenia State Migration Management

There is also back and forth mobility that hinders to track the number. According to expert interviews there are many returnees who come back to Armenia from time to time to receive assistance from the Government and donors, and then again move back to Artsakh. At earlier return stages, the Ministry of Defense of Russian Federation was providing its own figures related to returnees. As of January 2021, the Ministry reported about 50,000 returnees³³, however later such information was not provided. According to the Minister of Labor and Social Affairs of Artsakh Mané Tandilyan, the combined estimation of the Ministry's sources suggested that 70-80 thousand people had returned to Artsakh as of January 2021³⁴. In February, 2021 the Minister already stated about 100,000 returnees to Artsakh. The figures obtained from different sources at the moment of this assessment, indicate that from 50,000 -100,000 displaced households returned to Artsakh. Currently, Artsakh census is being conducted by Armenian Association of Social Workers (AASW)³⁵.

Data related to displaced households who have to or decided to stay in Armenia

Data related to displaced HHs who have to or decided to stay in Armenia are also changeable. In early 2021 Minister Mané Tandilyan of Artsakh and Armenia's Deputy Prime Minister Tigran Avinyan had announced that around 40,000 displaced households still remained in Armeinia.

In March 2021, the Operative Headquarters of Government of the Artsakh in Armenia published that the estimated number of displaced households/people from Artsakh in Armenia is 24,456.

TABLE 2: Current trends of numbers of the displaced population by home location/region³⁶.

NK/Artsakh Regions	Estimated number of households/people from Artsakh in Armenia	
	Households	People
Shahumyan	540	2,772
Askeran	95	411
Hadrut	2,388	8,579
Mardakert	57	309
Martuni	96	424
Shushi	410	1,632
Kashatagh	2,720	10,329
Total	6,306	24,456

According to the data provided by the Head of RA Migration Services Armen Ghazaryan to the Hetq online newspaper in June 2021, vast majority of displaced households have returned to Artsakh. He stated that currently 24,500 displaced persons are residing in Armenia of which 9,140 are from Hadrut, 4,160 are from Shushi, 2,666 are from Shahumyan, and 8,569 are from

³³ Source: <https://www.civilnet.am/news/referring-to-the-official-website-of-the-Ministry-of-Defence-of-Russian-Federation>

³⁴ Source: <https://ampop.am/temporary-residence-in-ra-and-return-to-artsakh/>

³⁵ [Document - Armenia: MSNA 2nd Round PowerPoint Presentation - May 2021 \(unhcr.org\)](#)

³⁶ Source: the operative headquarters of the Government of the Artsakh in Armenia: update as of the end of March 2021

Kashatagh³⁷. Overall number of displaced people now in Armenia stated by the Head of Migration Service and the breakdown of some figures are almost identical to those provided above by the Operative HQ of Artsakh. In the meantime, some broken down figures on original locations of displaced differ.

RA Migration Service cooperates with Mission Armenia Charitable NGO. An expert interview with the Mission Armenia indicates that currently from 20,000-25,000 displaced persons from Artsakh are residing in Armenia. Mission Armenia's figures also coincide with those of the Migration Service and Operative HQ of Artsakh, with some range, though.

According to the second round of HH survey conducted by REACH Initiative³⁸ as of May 2021, 40% of the respondents reported that they did not intend to move until they can safely return home. 18% of respondents will never return, while were unable to communicate their intentions. Among respondents 78% were from areas which now are under Azerbaijan control. However, interviews carried out in the framework of this study indicated that majority of respondents are willing to return provided their housing issues are solved in Artsakh.

Based on the available data it can be concluded that the data range of displaced people who had to or decided to stay in Armenia vary from 20,000 to 40,000. Vast majority are from the territories which now are under Azerbaijan control.

Issue of Legal Status of the Persons Displaced from Artsakh to Armenia

Displaced persons from Artsakh as a result of the war unleashed by Azerbaijan against the Artsakh do not have the any legal status. They are not eligible to receive status of refugee, internally displaced persons, asylum seekers, returnees, etc. (the migration data portal³⁹ provides definitions for displaced persons with different status). The main reason is that most of the displaced people who are temporary residing in Armenia are citizens of Armenia and their passports have been issued by the RA under the code 070 as issuing authority of passport and visa department and in their passports as a permanent registration address is mentioned an address located in Artsakh.

For some international organizations (UNHCR, REACH Initiative, etc.) displaced persons from Artsakh are considered to be "people in refugee-like situations". Persons in a **refugee-like situation** include "groups of persons who are outside their country or territory of origin and who face protection risks **similar to those of refugees**, but for whom **refugee** status has, for practical or other reasons, not been ascertained." ([UNHCR, 2013](#)).

Until end of May, displaced persons were not assigned a legal status.

On May 20 a Concept on State Migration Management of the Republic of Armenia was adopted by the Government according to which target groups of the migration state management are: foreign citizens, returnees, repatriates, internally displaced persons, asylum seekers, refugees,

³⁷ Source: <https://hetq.am/hy/article/131644?fbclid=IwAR0R9hOGZ2ykjCwtY2L4-tV0J-qVTZyedSU9cmISMnekmKx4c76HmgUYmCI#.YLfZzraQK-o.facebook>

³⁸ Source: [Document - Armenia: MSNA 2nd Round PowerPoint Presentation - May 2021 \(unhcr.org\)](#)

³⁹ Source: [Forced migration or displacement data \(migrationdataportal.org\)](#)

forcibly displaced persons, and emigrants. The Concept officially uses a legal term **forcibly displaced persons**. The term refers also to the displaced persons from Artsakh.

Locations of Displaced Households from Artsakh in Armenia

Staging Areas

GOAM has established staging areas in Kanaker District (Hayordats Tun) and Shengavit, Yerevan, where displaced persons were received, assigned to shelter and provided with temporary basic food assistance, until their needs are identified and more durable temporary or transitional shelter can be provided. This staging areas have existed by the end of December 2020. The displaced Artsakh residents had to call the hotline 114 and 117 if they need temporary shelter and other assistance.

From the first day of the war groups of volunteers have assisted the MLSA to deal with the issues of displaced HHs. Volunteers served as coordination hub to unify the efforts of the state, communities, private sector and international organizations as well as to coordinate ad hoc social assistance, undertake first response actions to accommodate displaced households in the staging centers of Kanaker and Shengavit, Yerevan. Volunteers have assisted relocation of displaced households in guesthouses and host families of Yerevan, Gegharkunik, Lori, Kotayk, Aragatsotn and also resettlement of households as needed.

Locations in Armenia

The displaced households/persons have found refuge in various regions (marzes) of Armenia. According to the information provided by the RA MTAI⁴⁰, the largest concentrations (75%) are in Kotayk, Ararat, Armavir and Syunik Regions. Official sources do not provide number of displaced persons currently residing in Yerevan, the capital, because according to them they do not have clear calculations. Based on expert interviews with Yerevan Municipality, around 45,000 displaced persons were estimated entering Yerevan at the early stages of displacement. Currently, the number is unknown because of fluidity (from Yerevan to other regions of Armenia and from Yerevan to Artsakh). They exactly know that currently they provide humanitarian assistance to around 10,000 displaced people (around 2,000 HHs.) In general, the RA Migration Services reported that there are cases of internal migration (around 800 displaced people moved from their initial regions in Armenian to another regions).



One of staging areas in Yerevan -
Source: <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news-feature/2020/11/5/nagorno-karabakh-armenia-azerbaijan-conflict-humanitarian-impact>

⁴⁰ Source: <https://ampop.am/temporary-residence-in-ra-and-return-to-artsakh/>

Support measures: rapid response and humanitarian assistance

Right after the war the RA Government, local and international donor organizations, private benefactors have been providing emergency humanitarian assistance to the displaced persons from Artsakh.

One of the support measures of GOAM is assisting to displaced persons to pay the rent of their shelter, as well as and to families hosting displaced persons:

- \$30/AMD15,000 (one-time payment) for those displaced who do not have any property in Armenia.
- \$60/AMD30,000 monthly payment is provided to host families for six month period from December 2020 to May 2021 inclusive for each displaced person. It is anticipated that this assistance will for prolonged by 3 more months, however, at this point there is not any Government decision, yet.
- A compensation to the residents of Armenia in some communities in the Syunik region of the Republic of Armenia, whose property was damaged by shelling. Eligible citizens can apply for such compensation through the regional governor's offices. The damage will be assessed and compensation transferred to the beneficiary bank account.⁴¹
- A compensation to the owner and to family members of the residential house destroyed in Artsakh during the war. The compensation is around \$500/AMD250,000 per family member to be transferred to their bank account.

Cash Assistance

Data collected from different sources during the desk research regarding cash assistance by Government is again confusing from different perspectives: eligible categories, timing of provision of assistance, sources of funding, etc. If summarized, it can be stated that the Government has been providing cash assistance to the displaced households starting from the end of the war till now. In October 2020, the All Armenia Fund Board of Trustees decided to transfer some 60% (around \$105 million from around \$170 million⁴²) raised to the Government of Armenia for refugee and healthcare purposes as stated by Fund's Director Haykak Arshamyan.⁴³ For the same purpose - cash assistance, funds also have been provided to the Government by EBRD (\$ 3.7 million)⁴⁴, also the Government allocated around \$14.5 million⁴⁵ from the state budget.

The types of cash assistance has been as follows⁴⁶:

- \$130/AMD68,000 (one-time payment) for all displaced persons (except male and state employees)⁴⁷,
- \$600/AMD300,000 (one-time payment) for the displaced who resided in the territories which currently are under the control of Azerbaijan (more than 100 settlements in Kashatagh, Martakert, Shahumyan, Hadrut, Shushi, Askeran and Martuni regions of Artsakh),

⁴¹ Source: <https://www.arlis.am/DocumentView.aspx?DocID=148318>

⁴² Source: <https://www.himnadram.org/en/we-are-our-borders-all-for-artsakh>

⁴³ Source: <https://hetq.am/en/article/128075>

⁴⁴ Source: <https://www.mlsa.am/?p=27826>

⁴⁵ Source: <https://www.mlsa.am/?p=27578>

⁴⁶ Source: <https://www.gov.am/am/support-measures/>

⁴⁷ Assistance period was foreseen end of May, but it's more likely to be prolonged for 3 months

Number of displaced people assisted by cash vary from 80.000-100,000 people.⁴⁸

The displaced people from Artsakh also can apply to the Operative Headquarters (HQ) of the Artsakh Government. It has been established at the end of October 2020. The main function of the operative headquarters established in Armenia has been to coordinate the socio-economic problems of the displaced people in Armenia.

Emergency Humanitarian Assistance

From the early stages of displacement from Nagorno Karabakh, international organizations have been providing considerable emergency humanitarian assistance to displaced households and persons. Among major humanitarian aid providers are UN Armenia, USAID (including USAID Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA))⁴⁹, European Union (including European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations ECHO)⁵⁰, Government of France. The humanitarian assistance has been provided through different international and local partners such as UN Agencies (UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, etc.), ICRC, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), People in Need (PIN), Caritas Armenia (CA), Mission Armenia, Armenian Red Cross Society, KASA Swiss Humanitarian Foundation, Fund for Armenian Relief, Armenian General Benevolent Union, Oxygen, World Vision, Save the Children, Round Table of Churches, etc. Armenia All-Armenian Fund also has been providing support to the GOAM and directly to the displaced persons⁵¹.

Support by UN Agencies

The UN in Armenia quickly mobilized a response and from early October began complementing Government humanitarian support provided by ten priority municipalities as well as the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs to those displaced. The UN Armenia country team [discussed](#) the UN's support programme with Deputy Prime Minister Grigoryan and Foreign Minister Ayvazyan on 9 and 21 December respectively, noting the close partnership with the Government and the municipalities⁵².

In January 2021 under the joint leadership of the UN Resident Coordinator and UNHCR, the United Nations Country Team, together with NGO partners, launched the **Armenia Inter-Agency Response Plan** to support conflict-affected people from Nagorno-Karabakh and affected communities in Armenia. The Response Plan involves 36 humanitarian partners and 188 projects with total financial requirements amounting to USD 62.6 million across six key sectors: protection, education; shelter and non-food items; food security and nutrition; health, and early-recovery.

In February 2021 the UN's Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) **released** US\$2 million of emergency relief funding for the Armenia Inter-Agency Response Plan. The funding from

⁴⁸ Source: [Hayastan All Armenian Fund \(himnadram.org\)](http://himnadram.org)

⁴⁹ Source: [02.05.2021- USG Nagorno-Karabakh Complex Emergency Fact Sheet #1 \(usaid.gov\)](https://www.usaid.gov/press-releases/02-05-2021-usg-nagorno-karabakh-complex-emergency-fact-sheet-1)

⁵⁰ Source: https://ec.europa.eu/echo/news/nagorno-karabakh-conflict-eu-allocates-additional-10-million-support-those-affected_en

⁵¹ Source: [Hayastan All Armenian Fund \(himnadram.org\)](http://himnadram.org)

⁵² Source: <http://un.am/en/p/nk-crisis-response>

CERF which is delivered through UNHCR, UNICEF and IOM, will help provide assistance for persons in refugee-like situations and host communities: protection support to ensure access to schools, psychosocial support and primary health services, as well as shelter and non-food items assistance to endure the winter⁵³.

Tens of thousands persons in refugee-like situations and host communities from Gegharkunik, Tavush, Syunik and Kotyak received humanitarian assistance, particularly, bedding items, towels, hygiene supplies, and household items. As part of the winterization response, winter blankets heaters, and warm clothing were distributed across different regions.

In February 2021 the Government of Japan **has announced** an Emergency Grant Aid of US\$ 3.6 million in support of the Inter-Agency Response Plan. This support aims to contribute to the improvement the living conditions of the refugee-like population by renovating and providing equipment and supplies to hospitals, evacuation centers, schools, and directly to the affected population.⁵⁴

The current funding level for the Inter-Agency Response Plan 2020-2021 stands at \$ 8,794,260 which is equivalent to approximately 14 percent of the required amount. Contributions have been received from the governments of the USA and Japan, the European Union and CERF

Details about assistance is provided in **Armenia Inter-Agency Response Plan**.

Support by US Government

US Government has been providing assistance in the following areas: health and WASH through Catholic Relief Services (CRC), People in Need (PIN), and ICRC to implement health and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) interventions in Armenia, food assistance through WFP, cash assistance, through ICRC, Shelter and settlements through ICRC for ensuring safe and dignified living conditions.

Total humanitarian funding of USG for Nagorno Karabakh response in FY 2021 is \$5,000,000 of which \$2,500,000 is allocated by USAID/BHA for health, shelter and settlements, WASH and \$2,500,000 – by state/PRM for health, livelihoods, protection, shelter and settlements. For more information about USG assistance please access to USG Nagorno Karabakh-Complex Emergency Factsheet^{55 56} as well as to [Success Story](#).

Support by the European Commission

On 17 May, 2021 the European Commission through European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) provided an additional €10 million in humanitarian aid⁵⁷.

⁵³ Source: <http://un.am/en/news/1083>

⁵⁴ Source: <http://un.am/en/news/1085>

⁵⁵ Source: https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/02.05.2021- USG_Nagorno-Karabakh_Complex_Emergency_Fact_Sheet_1.pdf

⁵⁶ Source: <https://www.wfp.org/news/wfp-provides-cash-assistance-displaced-people-armenia>

⁵⁷ Source: https://ec.europa.eu/echo/news/nagorno-karabakh-conflict-eu-allocates-additional-10-million-support-those-affected_en

The assistance will benefit the most vulnerable conflict-affected people, including displaced persons, returnees and host communities.

The funding will help to provide emergency assistance including:

- food
- hygiene and household items
- multi-purpose cash
- healthcare
- protection assistance, including psychosocial support
- education in emergency

The assistance will also ensure early recovery assistance through livelihood support. Since September 2020 the EU assistance to the displaced persons exceeded €17 million.

Support by Armenia All-Armenian Fund

During the war, within the campaign “We Are Our Borders” Armenia All-Armenian Fund raised \$170,702,568.16, out of which \$105,000,000 has been transferred to the state budget to support displaced people from Artsakh.⁵⁸

Each our compatriot displaced from more than 100 settlements in Kashatagh, Martakert, Shahumyan, Hadrut, Shushi, Askeran and Martuni regions of Artsakh is eligible to receive a one-time financial support of 300,000 AMD (\$600).⁵⁹

Tens of thousands of people from Artsakh have been received a one-time financial support of 68.000AMD (\$130) or more. Estimated 80-100 thousand people from Artsakh financial support of 10 billion AMD (around \$19,230,700).⁶⁰

The Fund also allocated \$1.1 million to the Soldiers' Insurance Fund in Armenia and also is supporting Homeland Defenders' Rehabilitation Center.

Support to disabled persons and families having victims as a result of war

The number of victims in the second Artsakh war is not known yet. As of April 2021 officially, this number is around 4,000 based on the number of identified bodies. Still over 300 servicemen are missing and 200 bodies have not been identified yet⁶¹. There is not an official figures on wounded participants of the war: according to media and word of mouth, the number of people who were wounded as a result of the war exceeds approximately two times the number of victims.

⁵⁸ Source: [Hayastan All Armenian Fund \(himnadram.org\)](http://Hayastan.All.Armenian.Fund(himnadram.org))

⁵⁹ Source: <https://www.himnadram.org/en/1606118499>

⁶⁰ Source: <https://www.himnadram.org/en/1606137496>

⁶¹ Source: <https://armeniasputnik.am/armenia/20210414/27172831/paterazmi-zoheri-tivy-mot-4000e-varchapet.html>

Supporting the families of victims and supporting wounded participants, especially those who became disabled, and even regular participants of the war are priority for the government. The Government adopted number of support measures⁶² to assist the aforementioned vulnerable group:

- Social assistance measure for families with civilian victims and disabled persons as a result of war. The biggest amount is provided to the families with victims (around \$10,000). Assistance of disabled people vary depending on the degree of disability. Separate assistance is provided for disabled children.
- Assistance to the families with missing persons as a result of the war – around \$600/month for each missing person but no more than for 6 months.
- Assistance in paying 100% of tuition fee for the first semester for the students who participated in the war and who had parents or husband/wife participating in the war.

Support to Disabled and Families with Victims

Support by Insurance Foundation for Servicemen (Soldiers' Insurance Fund)- The Foundation was established in 2017 to provide stable, equal compensation for the well-being of fallen, missing, and disabled soldiers and their families.

Main funding sources of the Foundation are mandatory payments (“stamp fee”) by all employees (amounting from \$3 to \$30 monthly), entrepreneurs and notary offices (Amounting from \$35-\$350 annually) of Armenia and private donations⁶³.

At the beginning of 2021 the Foundation has served more than 700 beneficiaries.

The families with victims are eligible for one-time payment amounting \$ 20,000 and monthly compensation amounting \$400-\$600 (depending on the military rank – from private to officer) foreseen for 20 years. Disabled with the 1st degree of disability status also are eligible with the same amount of compensation. Other disabled with lower disability degree receive lower compensation.

There are several factors that hinder the quick completion of the process .

- DNA Identification process of dead servicemen, which is slow.
- Provision of disability status for the injured as needed, which takes time because of required procedures.
- Recognition of the legal status of missing servicemen, to be carried out by a court decision. This also takes time.

The Foundation currently provides \$600 a month to servicemen with disabilities until the disability status is determined. Same approach is applied for the missing persons until they are found or recognized missing by a court decision.

Armenia All-Armenian Fund also provided support to disabled persons. The Fund allocated \$1.1 million to the Soldiers' Insurance Fund in Armenia and also is supporting Homeland Defenders' Rehabilitation Center.

⁶² Source: <https://www.gov.am/am/support-measures/>

⁶³ Source: <https://ampop.am/insurance-foundation-for-servicemen/>

A step to a full life: For the first time, 8 servicemen who took part in the defense of the homeland walked with prostheses

On March 24th, eight soldiers with lower limb amputations took their first steps at the Homeland Defender's Rehabilitation Center with prosthetics financed by the Hayastan All Armenian Fund thanks to the generosity of Armenians around the world⁶⁴.

The Fund's Executive Director Haykak Arshamyan assured that all servicemen needing prosthetics as a result of injuries sustained during the recent war would be fully supported.

"It is our collective duty to help our homeland defenders recuperate and lead full lives. We are



prepared to invest all the necessary resources to provide complete care and support to all servicemen in need of prosthetics as a result of this war," said Haykak Arshamyan. He stated that to date, the Fund has spent around \$1 million on the prosthetic project thanks to donations from all over the world. "We have a cooperation agreement with the

Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs on the further rehabilitation process and care of prostheses," added Haykak Arshamyan.

The laboratory established through the joint efforts of the Hayastan All Armenian Fund and the Medical University is a state-of-the-art center with access to innovations which will provide high quality prostheses to those in need.

As part of the continued support to the Homeland Defenders' Rehabilitation Center, the Fund has provided "Phonak Naida V30 Up" digital hearing devices to our brave servicemen who have hearing issues due to the recent Artsakh War.



⁶⁴ Source: <https://www.himnadram.org/en/1616594050>

Government Approach to Assist Displaced Persons

The priority of the Government of the Republic of Armenia (GOAM) and the Artsakh authorities was to provide a rapid response to the immediate needs of displaced persons and returnees. GOAM has established a working group headed by the Deputy Prime Minister for dealing with the humanitarian disaster, urban infrastructure, ensuring safe and dignified return of displaced persons, and for revival of normal living conditions in Artsakh⁶⁵. The working group comprised the representatives of the Ministries of Education; Labor and Social Affairs; Economy; Territorial Administration and Infrastructures; Healthcare; Emergency Situations; Migration Service; Committee of Urban Development; Deputies of National Assembly. The areas of activity of the working group include: education, social issues, healthcare entrepreneurship, and infrastructures. Expert interviews showed that as a result of large mobilization and due to the efforts of the Government, local and international donor organizations, volunteers, it was possible to provide sufficient humanitarian assistance to the displaced persons. In the meantime, interviewed experts reported that despite this enthusiasm, there was poor coordination among different supporters: between the Government and international organization, and also among different government agencies.

There is not a unified database of displaced persons. MTAI Migration Services, MLSA, UNHCR/Mission Armenia NGO, Yerevan Municipality, each run their own database. According to an interviewee the government has not been open to the proposal of an international organization to develop a unified data management system. It can be assumed that the reason for the government for being not quite open with sharing data and developing a comprehensive database with unified efforts (through cooperation) was for the sake of ensuring data security. Anyway, such situation hinders to have a clear idea at least on the number of displaced persons from Artsakh in Armenia.

The Government does not have a comprehensive strategy for addressing the needs of displaced persons. The first priority remains to encourage displaced HHs to return to Artsakh, to the localities which are under the control of Artsakh authorities. According to the expert interviews, there were ad hoc inventory or needs assessment related to the provision of temporary shelter for disabled persons as a result of the war as well as accommodation of displaced persons. Assessment of the situation and needs of displaced HHs from Artsakh is provided in the annual communique of RA Human Rights Defender on human rights situation in Armenia in 2020.⁶⁶ The ombudsman report approaches the issue from the perspective of rights protection. Assessment is based on regular meetings and discussions with relevant central and local authorities and site monitoring visits during which the human rights defender and his team directly met with displaced persons. Assessments have been conducted also by international organizations: HH survey by REACH Initiative and UNHCR as a result of which priority needs of displaced persons were identified.

⁶⁵ Source: <https://www.arlis.am/DocumentView.aspx?DocID=147488>

⁶⁶ Source: https://ombuds.am/en_us/site/SpecialReports;
<https://ombuds.am/images/files/883f55af65e3c33553139031c7ac0ce6.pdf>

The RA MLSA and RA Committee of Urban Developed are interested in proposed different long-term and sustainable shelter solutions,

The Government recognizes that social, healthcare and shelter problems have added to the overall social problems of Armenia even after the return of thousands of displaced HHs to Artsakh. The overall approach is to suggest a comprehensive solution to the problem, rather than focus on ad hoc solutions for a specific vulnerable group, in this case, for displaced persons from Artsakh.

From 2021 a new system of - unified social service – is being operated within the RA MLSA. However, since the system is new it objectively needs some time to work and prove its effectiveness, whereas most of the problems of displaced persons require urgent solutions. The unified social system will ensure more targeted and comprehensive needs assessment and will increase the quality of social services. The unified social service has its own website: www.socservice.am . It has 49 territorial centers as well as hotline - 114.

Based on the government decision N 1069-Ն as September 10, 2015 MLSA is conducting social housing project for the socially vulnerable people or for those who are classified in special groups, does not have residential real estate with ownership rights, and lives in temporary shelter. The resident should apply to the territorial social assistance agency to check eligibility for receiving housing assistance. Since decision is adopted in 2015 the issue of displaced persons from Artsakh are not addressed under this decision. MLSA is now developing a procedure for regulating housing issues of separate social groups and will submit it to the government approval on June 22, 2021. Most probably, housing issues of displaced people from Artaskh also will be regulated by this document. The ministry aims to introduce several models for shelter provision: HPC, social mortgage as well as introduce a model of management of social housing stock.

Currently, the Ministry through unified social service and community social workers is studying cases related to social, including housing problems of displaced HHs from Artsakh as well as other vulnerable groups affected by 2020 war: wounded soldiers, volunteers, and families with victims and missing war participants, and will develop a system with comprehensive information.

On May 20 a Concept on State Migration Management of the Republic of Armenia has been adopted by the Government. Target groups of the migration state management concept are: foreign citizens, returnees, repatriates, internally displaced persons, asylum seekers, refugees, forcibly displaced persons, and emigrants. The Concept officially uses a legal term **forcibly displaced persons**. The term refers also to the displaced persons from Artsakh.

The Concept stipulates:

- Provision of legal and social protection of internally displaced persons and forcibly displaced persons (persons who do not have legal qualifications to apply for refugee status, in particular RA citizens transferred from Syria to Armenia, forcibly relocated from the Artsakh Republic)
- Support to employment and economic involvement: Supporting the employment and economic involvement of the target groups of the concept, reduction of risks and challenges due to the status of migrants.
- Creation a hospitable environment in Armenia: increased tolerance among the society, reducing hate speech, preventing discrimination

- Raising public awareness about the current problems and cultures of foreigners living in Armenia, promoting closer cooperation between local communities, target groups, and organizations.

The Concept foresees to increase preparedness to respond migration crises. Main directions to respond crisis are suggested:

- Establishment of a crisis management system for migration. Establishment of a crisis management coordinating body, establishment of institutional mechanisms for work coordination, as well as mechanisms for cooperation with national partners.
- Ensuring crisis management of borders. Capacity building of border guards to work in crisis conditions.
- Establishment of mechanisms for running statistics, monitoring, and two-way transmission of information. Registration of inflows, effective collection of statistical data, classification of displaced persons (on the spot and on the road).
- Establishment of documentation, registration and referral systems for displaced persons without complete documentation during a mass influx.

Challenges of Local Governments Facing War Consequences

As a result of the war, the displaced persons were relocated in different Armenian communities including in Yerevan. Around 30% of the displaced persons from Artsakh have found temporary shelter in some community centers, hotels, other community facilities⁶⁷. The others were hosted by families in Armenia.

Expert interviews were conducted in 11 communities of 5 marzes (regions) with the representatives of local governments, NGOs, and displaced persons. The communities where expert interviews have been conducted reported the following data regarding displaced persons currently residing in their settlements:

Region	Gegharkunik region					Yerevan
Town/village	Vardenis	Martruni	Gavar	Chambarak	Sevan	Yerevan
Persons/families	300 /76	114/29	186/54	85/25	163/41	10,000/ 2,000 ⁶⁸
Where from in NK	Hadrut, Kashstagh, Shushi, Karvachar, Jrakan, Shahumian	Hadrut, Kashstagh, Karvachar	Karvachar, Jrakan, Kashatagh, Shushi	Karvachar, Jrakan, Kashatagh	Shushi, Hadrut, Karvachar	To be checked

⁶⁷ Source: https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/02.05.2021- USG_Nagorno-Karabakh_Complex_Emergency_Fact_Sheet_1.pdf

⁶⁸ Number of people provided humanitarian assistance. No information about other Artakh households in Yerevan.

Region	Syunik	Vayots Dzor			Ararat	Kotayk
Town/ village	Goris	Yelpin	Arpi	Chiva	Vedi	Charentsavan
Persons/ families	2,000/720	1	13/4	6/2	134/34	850/170
Where from in NK	Hadrut Shushi Kashatagh	Kashatagh	Kashatagh	Kashatagh	Talish, Hadrut, Shushi, Kashatagh	Kashatagh, Hadrut, Shushi, Talish, Mataghis Akna

As mentioned above, the numbers of displaced persons are not stable and being changed over time, although the intensity of their movement has considerably subsided. Some displaced persons, especially those whose native places are now under Azerbaijan control, think of further moving to other places inside Armenia or abroad but not to Artsakh. For instance, such cases revealed during the expert interviews in Charentsavan where people are displaced from Talish, Mataghis, Akna, Kashatagh, Hadrut, Shushi. In general, majority of the interviewed displaced persons (primarily from Kashatagh, Karvachar, and Jrakan) stated that they intend to remain in the host settlements if their housing issues are somehow solved. However, most displaced persons from Hadrut and Shushi wish to return to Artsakh, Stepanakert or nearby villages if their housing issues are settled. Some displaced persons settled in Gegharkunik, consider resettling in other places of Armenia due to harsh climatic conditions and limited opportunities for engaging in farming. Displaced persons sheltered in Goris and nearby villages are rethinking their initial plans of remaining in Syunik due to recent escalation of tension on the border.

Therefore, as it has been already mentioned above, the numbers of displaced persons in communities remain unstable and being changed over time, although the intensity of their movement has considerably subsided.

Competences of municipalities to confront the consequences of the war

According to the Article 41 of the RA Law on local self-government, the Community head has own and delegated powers in the sphere of Protection of the Population from Emergency Situations and Organization of Civil Defense.

As its own power, the community head should take measures to ensure operation of community facilities, notify/alert the population, and as powers delegated by the state, the community head should organize planning and implementation of civil defense measures, carryout emergency and rehabilitation measures to ensure continuous work of vital community facilities, organize rescue activities, etc.

Current situation shows that great deal of work in emergency situations lays on municipality's shoulders, and even the strong ones (like Goris) are not always equipped to handle the situation.

The Law on Local Self-Government innumerate what the local governments (Council and Mayor) should do for social protection of the population which is a mandatory competence, but it is linked to another clause which says that financial resources must be made available for those competencies. No money, no service. The law also mentions voluntary responsibilities but it is very vague about how the council should earmark funds from the budget. Interviewed municipality representatives state that it would be good to amend the law in a way that certain percentage of local budget is earmarked for addressing emergency situations. , Besides, as social assistance, the Council authorizes the traditional 'One-time financial support' (only a certain layer of population is getting it regularly and becoming used to getting assistance). It is expedient that the Mayor is given more flexibility in using budet lines for social protection in emergency situations, force majeure, natural disasters, epidemics, wars, etc.

It can be concluded that the mandate and competences of local governments do not allow them to provide a proper response during emergency situations.. This is the sole responsibility of the national government. Local governments supported displaced persons also in 1990's during the first Artsakh war. The situation is different after the 2020 war, when the state does not have sufficient resources⁶⁹.

In the course of provision of humanitarian response after the 2020 war, the first function of the municipalities was to serve as intermediate and facilitator between the national government/international/local organizations and displaced persons particularly, for checking identities (based on their passports registration (code # 070) and certificates on Artsakh residency provided by Artsakh authorities. If the documents were missing (such cases especially were in place with displaced persons from Artsakh). The Municipal employees) and registering the displaced persons based on the special forms provided by RA MLSA Migration Service, created their own databases.

Despite lacking full mandate, local governments having displaced persons in their communities, mobilized volunteers, private sector donors and non-governmental organizations (Martuni, Goris, and Charentsavan) to help municipalities distribute emergency humanitarian assistance and find vacant premises to serve as temporary shelter. At the early stages of displacement, the local government staff worked overtime and without weekends.

Resilience of Municipal Budgets to the Emergency Situations

This issue is different among municipalities: Thus, because of scarcity of local budgets, and because of the budgets being projected beforehand, some municipalities were not able to spend own financial resources to support displaced persons. There were some exceptions. Among interviewed municipalities, only Yerevan municipality reported to have a budget line of 70,000 Euro for emergency situations since 2019 now. . Echmiadzin (Vagharshapat) municipality, as

⁶⁹ Source: Expert interviews with the representatives of the communities local and international organizations

reported during an expert interview⁷⁰, although did not have regular budget line for emergency situations, but it made changes in the community budget to adapt it to the needs of displaced households. It was the initiative of the Mayor. The amendment as made to subsidize utility payments for winter season. There are municipalities (for instance, Charentsavan municipality), which used budget line for social services to provide assistance for displaced persons: in emergency situation this has been done at the expense of socially vulnerable residents of the community by temporarily holding on the assistance to them.

In general, the only possibility for municipalities to provide financial support has been the so called “one-time financial assistance” budget line. Municipalities have applied different approach in using the line: in Areni, displaced persons were also made eligible for such financial support, in Vardenis were not, in Goris it was decided to support only local host families.

Other support arrived from the central government through territorial governors’ offices (Marzpetarans), from donor organizations/NGOs and from individual benefactors including those in diaspora. Donor organizations’ funding is now declining.

It can be concluded that in emergency situation the host municipalities managed to mitigate the primary and urgent needs of displaced persons by coordinating assistance from community budget, monetary and material assistance from state and donor organizations. However, given the tendency that still many displaced persons have to or wish to stay in Armenian communities, and also the existence of new vulnerable groups – disabled residents, and families with war victims – the local governments need extra funds and better coordination capacities to deal with their minimum needs.

. In many communities there are going to be local election later in autumn this year, and after that new 5-year plans will be elaborated. Interviewed municipalities state that they have learned lessons from the past year and will reflect emergency situations in their plans (1 year and 5 year).

Municipal Services after the War

Social service departments of local governments were largely overwhelmed with addressing the consequences of the war in their communities. Chambarak municipality does not have a social department, and the deputy mayor is responsible for related issues. Three main socially vulnerable groups appeared in the communities as a result of the war: displaced persons from Artsakh, disabled as a result of war and families, especially young ones, with war victims.

It should be noted that municipal social services are in daily contact constantly with displaced persons but they often lack capacity in record keeping and outreach. There were cases that certain displaced families were left out from getting assistance, while others benefit regularly. In addition, local governments have only one social worker on their staff who is just managing paperwork. The experience showed that in such emergency situations, like COVID and war, a second social worker is top priority. The second social worker could do outreach, better identify cases and make the services accessible.

⁷⁰ Source: Expert interview with the representative of international organization

To date, as most of the assistance has been arriving from the central government and international organizations, local social services are mostly coordinating distribution, reaching out displaced persons, helping them to fill in documents and forms, etc. However, the volume of assistance is being decreased over time if not terminated at all. This refers also to the assistance by central government.

Yerevan municipality, which also has been supporting displaced persons (around 10,000), has its own stance on future assistance⁷¹. Yerevan Municipality, is experiencing difficulties in providing assistance to the displaced persons. The municipality has tight social protection budget (around Euro 800,000/year) and cannot afford to provide ongoing social assistance to displaced persons. Municipality's approach is that the displaced persons from Artsakh either need to be integrated through different projects by central and local governments. Also, given the fact that Yerevan is overpopulated, it would be advisable that the government comes up with shelter and employment projects for displaced persons outside Yerevan, since many of them were engaged in agricultural activities in Artsakh before the war.

Despite their scarce budget, communities are trying to support disabled residents. For instance Charentsavan local government allocated Euro 12,000 for one-time payment for disabled participants of the war – around Euro 200 for each participant. Expert interviews with local governments and NGOs supporting disabled persons as a result of the war showed they need psychological support, an assistance in adaptation to life, need for prosthetics, since those most of them have now are of low quality. Adequate physical environment, building and transportation facilities are required to ensure minimum mobility and integration of disabled war participants. An additional challenge for supporting of disabled residents is relatively long legal procedure for receiving a disability status⁷².

Another vulnerable group for local governments became wives of killed, disappeared or disabled participants of war. Young women of killed or disappeared participants of war faced the “left-behind” syndrome – remaining without husband support young wives have to take care of kids and sometimes with old parents. As usually the main breadwinner used to be husbands, now finding themselves being at risk to stay without income, young wives had to become a breadwinner, which is not easy thing because many of them, not having work experience before, do not have necessary skills and profession to get quality jobs or start business to ensure decent income for the family.

The wives with disabled husbands who have mobility issues are event in worse situation, since they have to take care of their husbands and do not have any opportunity for outside job. The reasonable assistance for them would be create opportunities for home-based employment after provision of necessary skills.

In Goris and Charentsavan, where large number of displaced persons are concentrated, many other municipal services are experiencing additional burden such as waste management service, preschool/ kindergartens, primary health care, etc.

⁷¹ Expert interview with Yerevan Municipality officials and Council Members

⁷² Source: Expert interviews with local governments and local NGOs.

Besides, those municipal institutions that had hosted displaced persons as initial settlement/distribution centers, now need renovation and refurbishing.

Livelihood and Local Economic Development

Government and donor humanitarian assistance is being gradually decreased and will eventually end at some point, therefore local governments need to think of more sustainable support to the war-affected vulnerable groups. Findings of HH survey by REACH Initiative in May 2021 suggest that the employment status among the displaced persons from Artsakh changed considerably after the conflict, with the share of unemployed HHs seemingly having tripled, while the share of those who had held permanent jobs has decreased noticeably⁷³. According to survey the 31% of displaced HHs reported being dependent on aid or remittances at the time of data collection. The average reported monthly expenditures for displaced HHs is 159,035 AMD (USD 300). While most (67%) of HHs in a refugee-like situation reported they had livestock before the conflict but did not manage to bring it to RA, 7% of HHs reported having taken livestock with them from Artsakh to primarily Vayots Dzor and Syunik regions. HH heads reported agriculture (22%), education (22%), and manual construction (11%) as main professional sectors they were involved in Artsakh before the war. Involvement in other sectors was reported below 7%.

Host local governments have limited resources for assisting economic activity HHs and persons affected by war. However, as expert interviews indicate, they provide whatever support they can by ensuring temporary employment if possible, or create prerequisites that will lead to employment and income generation.

In Areni, the municipality has provided space free of charge for a displaced HHs to start a small business. Likewise, in Sevan, a displaced persons have also started a business. In Gegharkunik, potato seeds and other plant materials are being distributed. In general, municipalities provide consultancy, refer to business community, help find subsistence and production means. Charentsavan Municipality managed to involve 60 displaced persons in UNDP funded project for socially vulnerable residents of the community for creating temporary jobs during March-May 2021 period. They received 100,000 AMD (157 EUR) per month.

The municipality also cooperates with World Vision to provide business skills to displaced persons. Local NGOs providing support to the war-affected vulnerable groups gradually shift from the provision of cash or other humanitarian aid to more sustainable assistance leading to employment and/or income generation. Some of the examples are provision of oven for baking a traditional Artsakh “bread with zhengial” (bread with greens), also provision of toolkit and equipment for starting hair-dressing business.⁷⁴

Although these efforts are encouraging, they are ad hoc activities, however can serve as models for institutionalized support based on comprehensive needs assessment and vocational training.

⁷³ Source: [Document - Armenia: MSNA 2nd Round PowerPoint Presentation - May 2021 \(unhcr.org\)](#)

⁷⁴ Source: Expert interviews with local governments and local NGOs

According to the annual communique of RA Human Rights Defender on human rights situation in Armenia in 2020⁷⁵ defender, there should be developed and applied a policy for creating opportunities and favorable conditions for displaced persons from Artsakh to be involved in entrepreneurship. Such approach will ensure long-term and perspective solution of social needs.

On December 17, 2020 a new measure was introduced under the Government N 2061-L decision on providing temporary employment to the unemployed residents from Artsakh who were displaced and are living in Armenia⁷⁶. Community heads or their representatives will sign contracts for maximum 3 month period with the displaced persons for involving them in implementing paid public works.

Relations between Displaced Persons and Local Population

Interaction and integrations between displaced households and local population differ based on the period and situation.

In majority of cases displaced persons and local population are quite kind and friendly to each other, they share common feelings of loss and disaster and try to be supportive to each other.

The findings of REACH Initiative studies (two rounds) conducted under USAID, EU, and UNHCR support, indicate that while there were reported almost no tensions between the HHs in refugee-like situation and host HHs during the first round, the situation is changing as the tensions reportedly increase.⁷⁷

For instance, during the war in some places there was some tension because among displaced persons there were adult male residents of Artsakh, whereas adult male residents of Armenia were fighting in the frontline in Artsakh⁷⁸ or sometimes tension had an emotional basis: “I will not give home to Karabakh people (Armenia resident whose son was killed during the war)”.⁷⁹

Also, there are displaced persons that do not put up with the situation they have appeared in and the new environment. Some minor conflicts may ignite not only with locals but also with other displaced persons from other places.

In very few cases, especially in Goris, locals complain that they do not get any assistance although they too are in need, their children cannot go to kindergarten. The municipality says that places in the kindergarten will be increased soon so that no children are left behind.

Priority Needs of Displaced Persons in Host Communities

The Government of Armenia, local and international donor organizations have been providing a significant humanitarian aid - cash and non-cash – to the war affected vulnerable groups located in all regions of Armenia including the capital Yerevan. However, such type of assistance is being gradually reduced.

⁷⁵ Source: https://ombuds.am/en_us/site/SpecialReports;
<https://ombuds.am/images/files/883f55af65e3c33553139031c7ac0ce6.pdf>

⁷⁶ Source: <https://www.arlis.am/DocumentView.aspx?docid=148383>

⁷⁷ Source: <https://reliefweb.int/report/armenia/reach-armenia-msna-presentation-findings-22-january-2021>

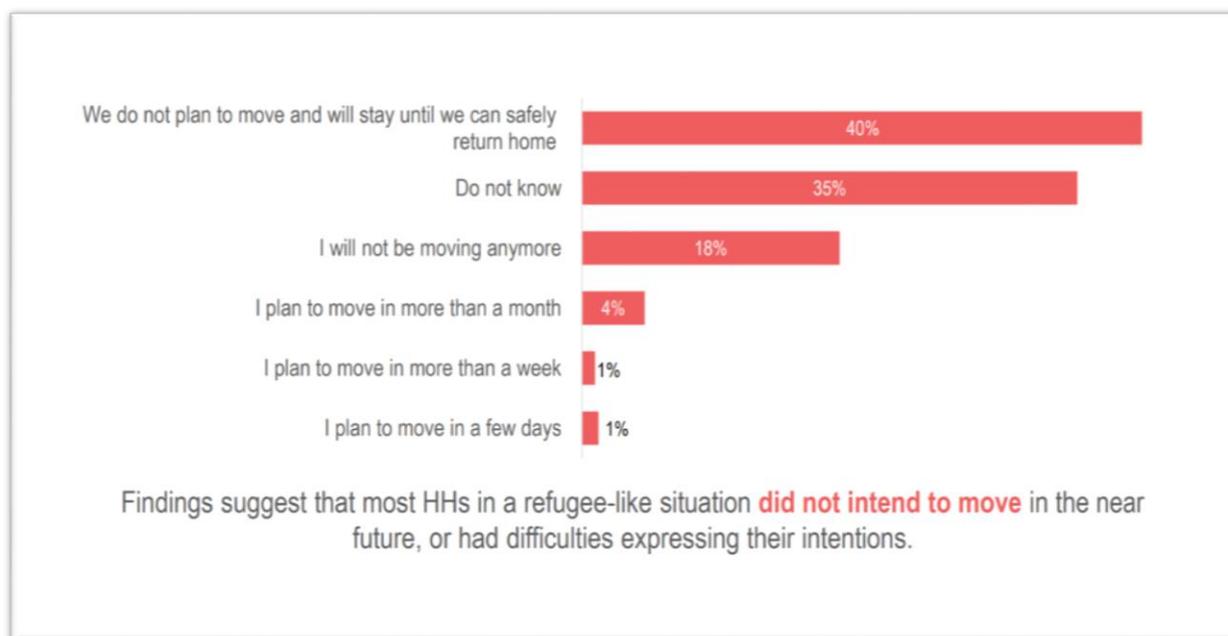
⁷⁸ Source: Expert interview with the representative of international organization

⁷⁹ Source: Expert interviews with NGOs

The findings of REACH survey in all regions of Armenia summarized in May 2021 indicate that 94 % of displaced HHs reported that they did not intend to move or were unable to communicate their intentions⁸⁰. Although thousands of displaced households have already returned to Artsakh, there are still estimated 20,000 which will continue to leave in Armenia for indefinite period of time. Therefore, in near future and on, given the fact of shrinking of external aid and displaced persons increasing the number of community residents, Armenian local governments are expected to face additional challenges in provision of municipal services and looking for sustainable solutions for that purpose.

Priority needs of displaced persons possibly to addressed by local governments were mapped through expert interviews and desk research.

During the expert interviews, displaced and local authorities were unanimous in putting housing issues as top priority. The newcomers were supported by the municipalities to settle from the very moment of their arrival. Most of them now live in rented flats/ houses or hotels. The rent is covered by the state, local budget or donors/benefactors and it is unclear how long such support will last. It is assumed that such support will stop soon due to shortage of funds. Financial support for covering rent from local resources varies among municipalities depending on municipalities' own affordability. At the same time, paying rent for a long time is not quite efficient and sustainable solutions, also adding the fact that traditionally, most of the displaced persons, who are ethnic Armenians, prefer permanent housing.



Martuni municipality, for example, is mobilizing more resources through engaging local businesses. They are now actively trying to raise money to finish the construction of a half-built apartment building to give permanent housing to displaced HHs. There are very cheap houses in many places of Gegharkunik, particularly in Vardenis area, which some displaced families could purchase if cash support was available to top up their own savings. Goris municipality is

⁸⁰ Source: [Document - Armenia: MSNA 2nd Round PowerPoint Presentation - May 2021 \(unhcr.org\)](#)

raising money to build 28 houses in Shurnuhk and Vorotan rural settlements, but the need is much more. There are also substandard houses which could also be turned into permanent dwelling at minimal cost. Local authorities and NGOs working with displaced persons say that it would be preferable that donor community considered joining the resources they spend on humanitarian assistance for addressing housing needs.

Based on the expert interviews another priority is ensuring means for livelihood such as seeds, cattle, equipment, house appliances, and furniture. Although international/national NGOs, individual benefactors are taking care of food and clothing, there is still some need for those things. Older people say they need medicine. In Goris, there is also scarcity of places in the preschools and kindergartens for displaced children.

A mapping of priority needs of displaced persons in host communities is provided by REACH initiative HH surveys. REACH initiative under the support of USAID, EU, and UNHCR conducted two rounds of HH surveys to firstly, identify priority humanitarian needs faced by people in a refugee-like situation from Artsakh and their host communities in Armenia and secondly, to evaluate how core humanitarian needs have changed after the winter and what are the intentions of people in a refugee-like situation in terms of durable solutions.⁸¹ The first round of data collection took place from November-December 2020 in Yerevan and Ararat, Armavir, Kotayk, Vayots Dzor, Syunik and Geghargunik regions of Armenia and the second round – from March-April 2021 in all regions of Armenia.

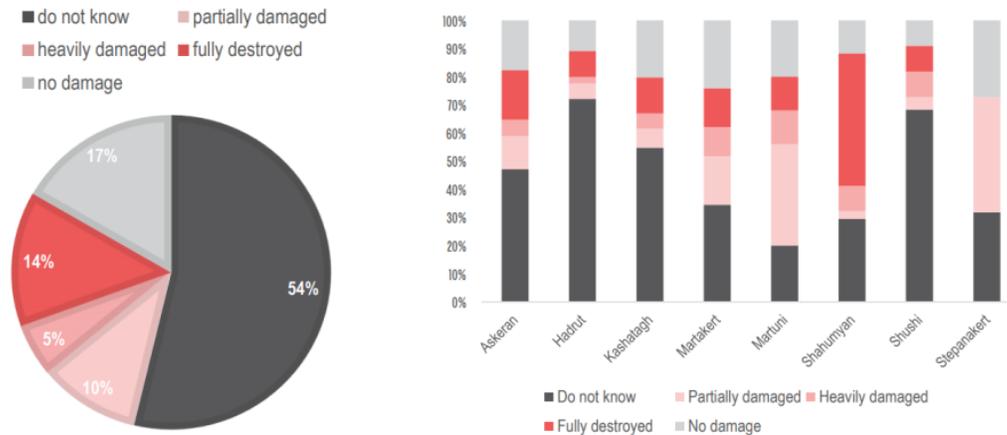
Findings of HH survey suggest that shelter, cash, and food, are the main priority needs among the displaced HHs:

HHs in a refugee-like situation

	top 1	top 2	top 3
baby items	1%	3%	4%
cash	26%	25%	22%
clothes	2%	8%	10%
cooking materials	1%	4%	6%
don't know/refuse to answer	0%	1%	2%
food	8%	25%	18%
medicines	4%	5%	3%
no needs	1%	5%	15%
sanitation and hygiene products	2%	3%	3%
shelter	48%	7%	5%
sleeping materials	3%	5%	6%
support with livelihoods	4%	7%	6%
support with childcare / education	0%	1%	1%

⁸¹ Source: <https://reliefweb.int/report/armenia/reach-armenia-msna-presentation-findings-22-january-2021>

% of HHs in a refugee-like situation reporting any degree of damage to their shelter in their area of origin as a result of conflict



Among the 41% of HHs in a refugee-like situation reporting shelter damage, only 27% reported having the capacity to repair it with their own resources.

Only 17% of displaced HHs indicated that shelter in their area of origin sustained no damage.

39% of displaced HHs mentioned that their house in Artsakh fully, heavily or partial is destroyed.

54% of displaced households do not know if their houses are destroyed or no.

Recommendations

- Finding:** Data related to the number of displaced persons (who moved to Armenia, returned to Artsakh and decided or have to stay in Armenia) are controversial. Government does not have a unified database and tracking system. Estimated 20,000-25,000 displaced persons will continue to live in Armenian communities for indefinite period of time thus adding the burden on local governments as a vulnerable group.

Recommendations:

- Developing employment, entrepreneurship, and shelter projects by central government.
- Helping local governments in raising funds for implementation of the project.
- Building local governments' capacity in managing such projects.
- Assisting the government in developing unified database for displaced persons.

- Finding:** Local Governments in Armenia do not have broad mandate to provide rapid response during emergency situations. Nor they have funds to duely carry out their delegated responsibilities regarding emergencies. In the meantime, the experience showed that regardless of the mandate, human and financial capacities, the local governments are in the forefront of providing assistance in emergency situations.

Recommendations:

- Ensuring funding by central government to local governments implementation of delegated responsibilities during emergency situations.
- Budgeting funds by local governments for emergency situations.
- Legislative amendments should be made to allow local governments to use funds rapidly and flexibly in case of emergency situations.

- Training local governments' staff, especially social workers, to respond adequately to the emergency situations.

3. Finding: The Government's first priority remains to encourage displaced HHs to return to Artsakh, to the localities which are under the control of Artsakh authorities. In the meantime, the Government understands that for indefinite period of time thousands of displaced persons have to stay in Armenia and need assistance. For instance, MLSA initiates some procedural changes to enable displaced persons to be eligible for different housing solutions: social housing, housing purchase certificates, and social mortgage.

Recommendations:

- Assisting the Government in developing a comprehensive strategy suggesting multiples shelter solutions combined with economic development opportunities.
- Assisting MLSA in developing models and procedures for social mortgage, social housing and housing purchase certificates.
- Assisting MLSA in implementation of housing models for displaced households.

4. Finding: The highest priority for displaced persons from Artsakh is housing issue.

Recommendations:

- There are several options for addressing housing issues apart from construction. Alternative housing solutions could be housing purchase certificates, housing improvement grants for single family houses and apartment buildings, renovation of community buildings and providing them as social housing, etc.,
- Housing should be linked to economic development and income generating opportunities. For example, displaced families that wish to cultivate land, engage in farming can be made eligible for a reconstructed house nearby and some production means.

5. Finding: As a result of the war most of the displaced households lost their employments and sources of income. Large number of displaced HHs now are dependent on aid or remittances. Agriculture, education, and manual construction were main professional sectors they were involved in Artsakh before the war.

Recommendation: Creating rural economic development opportunities combining it with the shelter solution. Such opportunity is recommended to suggest the displaced persons being engaged in agricultural activities in Artsakh before the war.

6. Finding: Social assistance departments of municipalities are very weak and understaffed. In general, social assistance is a centralized competence provided through territorial divisions of the MLSA. However, they deal only with services that are commissioned from the 'center'. The everyday groundwork is done by municipalities with their weak capacities. In communities where the number of displaced persons is big, have problem with work efficiency, coordination, outreach, data management.

Recommendation: Municipalities should be assisted to develop or improve capacities for emergency preparedness and provision of social assistance. Multi-settlement communities shall employ a second social worker. Municipalities should be supported in putting in place effective data management systems, improving capacities in outreach and case management, coordination with the state agencies (MLSA). Municipalities should have necessary resources (such as transportation) for carrying out their duties. Physical and psychological rehabilitation centers should be created in the regions, accessibility of public spaces should be improved due to large number of disabled people.

7. Finding: Expert interviews with local governments and NGOs supporting disabled persons as a result of the war showed they need psychological support, an assistance in adaptation to life, need for prosthetics, since those most of them have now are of low quality. Adequate physical environment, building and transportation facilities are required to ensure minimum

mobility and integration of disabled war participants. An additional challenge for supporting of disabled residents is relatively long legal procedure for receiving a disability status⁸². Wives of killed, disappeared or disabled participants of war became as another socially vulnerable group. Many young women remaining without husbands became a breadwinner, which is not easy thing because many of them, not having work experience before, do not have necessary skills and profession to get quality jobs or start business to ensure decent income for the family.

Recommendations:

- Ensuring psychological support to disabled soldiers and wives of killed, missing and disabled participants of war to re-integrate them into society.
- Providing vocation training for the aforementioned vulnerable groups.
- Building capacities of vulnerable groups in creating and running small and medium business.
- Ensuring opportunities for vulnerable groups for launching own businesses and look for employment.

⁸² Source: Expert interviews with local governments and local NGOs.

Annex 1

List of Interviewees

	Region/community	Name	Position
1.	Gegharkunik, Vardenis	Aram Melkonyan	Mayor
2.	Gegharkunik, Geghamasar	Liana Tsaturyan	IDP
3.	Gegharkunik, Martuni	Naira Galstyan	Municipality social service department head
4.	Gegharkunik	Lyuba Manukyan	NGO
5.	Gegharkunik Governors office	Vahagn Dabaghyan	Assistant to the governor
6.	Gegharkunik, Sevan	Armine Ghukasyan	Municipality head of staff
7.	Syunik, Goris	Irina Yolyan	Deputy mayor
8.	Syunik, Goris	Nune Avagyan	Integrated social service manager
9.	Syunik, Goris	Liana Sahakyan	NGO
10.	Syunik, Goris		IDP
11.	Syunik, Goris	Susanna Shahnazaryan	NGO
12.	Vayots Dzor, Areni	Zemfira Harutyunyan	Municipality economic development officer
13.	Vayots Dzor, Areni		IDP
14.	Ararat, Vedi	Varuzhan Barseghyan	Mayor
15.	Ararat, Vedi	Mane Minasyan	NGO
16.	Kotayk, Charentsavan	Ashot Tserunyan	Municipality Economic Development and IT Department Head
17.	Kotayk, Charentsavan	Anahit Mamik	Municipality Economic Development and IT Senior Specialist
18.	Kotayk, Charentsavan	Satenik Balabekyan	PR Department Head
19.	Hayi Tun Charitable NGO	Armine Khanyan	NGO Head
20.	Hayi Tun Charitable NGO	Valeri Stepanyan	NGO representative
21.	CARITAS (in Gegharkunik)	Christine Mkhitaryan	Int. NGO
22.	International Labour organization	Never Sargsyan	ILO, Project Director, former UNHCR staff
23.	Committee of Urban Development	Armen Ghularyan	Head of Committee of Urban Development
24.	Committee of Urban Development	Nune Petrosyan	Deputy Head of Committee of Urban Development
25.	Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MLSA)	Tatevik Stepanyan	Deputy Minister
26.	MLSA	Astghik Minasyan	Advisor of Minister

27.	MTAI, Migration Service	Irina Davtyan	Deputy Head of MS
28.	Committee of Urban Development	Tanya Arzumanyan	Head of housing and communal department
29.	Artsakh refugee committee, MLSA	Armen Armos Martirosyan	Consultant of MLSA and former employee of MTAE
30.	Deputy Prime Minister office	Arsen Manukyan	Advisor of PM Mher Grigoryan
31.	MLSA	Mesrop Arakelyan	Former Minister
32.	Artsakh Ministry of Social Affairs and Migration	Mane Tandilyan	Minister Social Affairs and Migration
33.	Yerevan Local Government	Gayane Vardanyan	Council Member
34.	Yerevan Municipality	Lusine Hovhannisyan	Head of the Children and Social Department
35.	Mission Armenia,, Mission Armenia	Alla Harutyunyan	Chief of Legal Department