



JOINT STATEMENT
by
The Armenian Red Cross Society (ARCS)
and
The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)
and
The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)
on
The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement's (Movement's)
humanitarian response to the needs of people affected by the escalation of
hostilities on 19 September 2023

BACKGROUND

The ARCS, the ICRC and the IFRC are extremely concerned about the humanitarian impact on civilians following the escalation of hostilities on 19 September 2023. There are particular concerns around the protection and needs of the civilian population that left for Armenia and of those who remain in the affected communities.

Armenia is experiencing a major influx of people which as of today reached 100,417 individuals seeking a place of refuge be that at their relatives' place in Armenia, with other host families across the country or in other temporary accommodation. Movement contingency planning anticipates acute needs among these groups, and a collective Movement response is being designed.

MOVEMENT COORDINATION

On 19 September 2023, the ARCS, the ICRC and the IFRC met to update each other on the evolving situation and potential humanitarian needs in Armenia. Since then, there have been almost daily coordination meetings.

On 20 September, the Movement partners participated in a Mini Summit during which it was confirmed that in line with the Movement Coordination for Collective Impact Agreement (MCCIA, Seville Agreement 2.0), the ARCS assumes the role of Convener, and the ICRC has the role of Co-convener in support of the collective Movement response.

The ARCS, the ICRC and the IFRC are committed to joining forces, with creativity, flexibility and reliability, to leverage their complementary strengths, and to do better and more together for people in need of neutral, impartial, and independent humanitarian protection and assistance.

Movement strategic, operational and technical coordination meetings are held regularly and as required, as the situation evolves.

As foreseen in such a situation, the ICRC has defined with the ARCS a security framework for all the Movement components' activities carried out in Armenia in response to the escalation of hostilities. All the Movement components will be offered



the opportunity to endorse and avail themselves of the framework should they choose to do so.

ANTICIPATED MOVEMENT RESPONSE

The ICRC and the ARCS are in regular contact with the relevant government bodies – ministries, governors offices and local authorities as well as with other humanitarian organizations and donors to discuss the Movement's support for the anticipated humanitarian response to the needs of affected communities.

The ARCS, ICRC and IFRC continue to assess the needs of the affected population in Armenia to inform strategic Movement coordination meetings and to refine the Movement's collective response. In particular, the information gathered will allow the formulation of an ARCS response plan, to which Movement and external partners can contribute and in which they can cooperate.

The ARCS, as an auxiliary organization to its government in the humanitarian field, and in cooperation and coordination with the government of the Republic of Armenia (RA), notably relevant ministries and local self-government bodies, is expected to provide humanitarian assistance based on acute needs in the form of psychosocial support, food, clothing, hygiene, basic necessities, bedding, first aid kits and cash assistance where and when appropriate, to people on the move and other affected.

The ARCS and the ICRC jointly with local authorities are supporting reception posts located along the routes used by people on the move, offering Protection of Family Links (PFL) service. The ARCS staff and trained volunteers provide information, first aid, psychosocial support, basic assistance, and relief. They are using their interaction with people they encounter to better understand people's most pressing needs. All of these activities are conducted in line with the IFRC's Protection, Gender and Inclusion (PGI) standards.

The ARCS has pre-arranged framework agreements with UNHCR and UNICEF, which to be activated as required to allow the ARCS to support the affected population with cash assistance, food and non-food items, shelter support, child protection and case management, psychosocial support, protection and monitoring, establishment of child friendly spaces, etc. The Agreement with the UNICEF has been already activated. The ARCS discusses with other UN agencies the possibility of receiving additional support.

Discussions are ongoing with other potential partners to secure additional resources to allow the ARCS to scale up its operation and have a more significant impact on the affected population by delivering various humanitarian services.

The ICRC helped organize life-saving medical evacuations, including of war-wounded patients and those affected by the recent fuel depot explosion as well as facilitates the transfer to Armenia and dignified management of human remains. The ICRC teams register people who are looking for unaccompanied children or who otherwise lost contact with loved ones. A hotline has been launched to support the work on the issue. The ICRC has augmented its set-up with deployment of Security Advisor, Movement Cooperation Specialist, Protection Coordinator as well as delegates specializing in protection of family links, protection of civilian population and public communication, it will deploy additional human resources as required.



The IFRC has released CHF 500,000 from its Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to enable the rapid replenishment of the ARCS emergency stocks, and has upon request by the ARCS and in consultation with the established Movement coordination platform, launched an Emergency Appeal allowing, rapid scaling-up of the provision of non-food items, cash and psychosocial support. The IFRC has already augmented its set-up with the deployment of an Operations Coordinator courtesy of the Austrian Red Cross, and will deploy additional human resources as required. The IFRC is offering member National Societies the opportunity to support the ARCS with an in-country presence by affording them the necessary legal status afforded by an integration agreement.

WAY FORWARD

The Movement partners are monitoring developments closely and will continue to refine their approach to addressing the humanitarian needs of the affected population in the short, medium and long-term as the situation evolves.

We ask the Movement partners to ensure alignment on public communication around this crisis, given the sensitivities and in order to project a coherent Movement narrative. Movement public communication guidelines and key messages have been shared with other Movement partners and will be updated on a regular basis.

Movement partners must avoid sending unsolicited goods and/or personnel until we are able to identify clearly what is required and unless expressly agreed by the ARCS in consultation with the ICRC and the IFRC. The ARCS will advise on the support it requires in order to meet acute needs, including in the medium and long-term.

Representing the Movement, we express our concern and solidarity with the affected population and commit to do our level best to answer their needs.

We would like also to thank all the Movement partners for their support and solidarity.

Yerevan, Armenia, 2 October 2023

