

DREF OPERATION FINAL REPORT

Armenia, South Caucasus | Massive Explosion in Yerevan



ARCS staff and volunteers helping the official rescue forces in the first response activities, Yerevan, 2022, © ARCS.

Appeal №: MDRAM009	DREF allocated: CHF 183, 766	Date of Issue: 13/04/2023
Glide №: OT-2022-000296-ARM	People affected: Approx. 5,000 people	People assisted: 4,695 People <i>with rehabilitation, PSS, CVA, First Aid and health promotion</i>
DREF launched: 30/08/2022	DREF ends: 30/11/2022	Operation timeframe: 3 months
Disaster Category: Yellow	Hazard: Other	Disaster Onset: Sudden
Affected areas: Yerevan, Armenia		

DESCRIPTION OF THE EVENT

What happened, where and when?

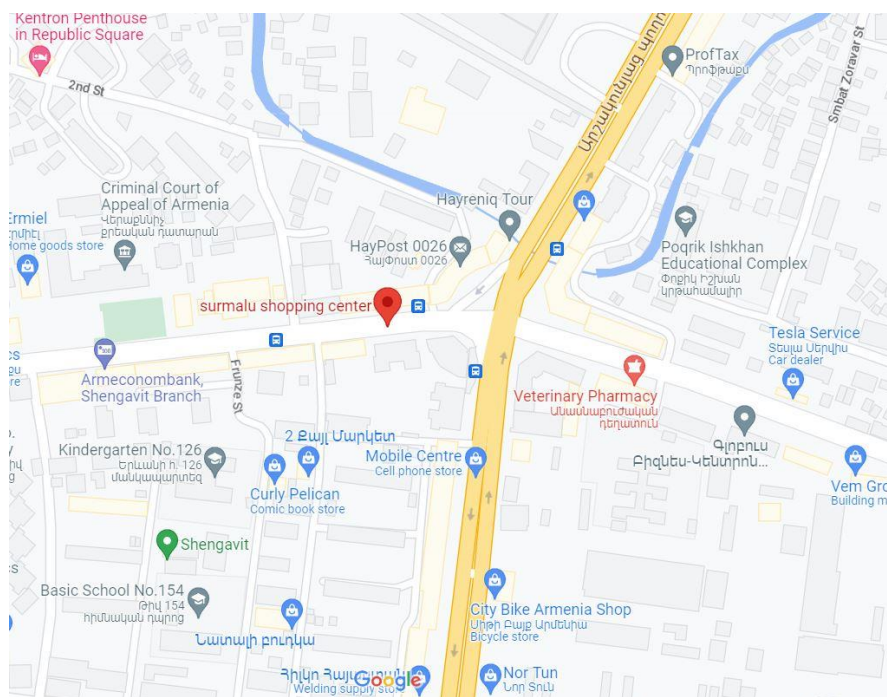
Scope and Scale

On August 14 at 1:23 PM, a massive explosion occurred in one of the largest markets of Yerevan called Surmalu, about two kilometers south of the center of the capital.

The explosion occurred in the basement of a three-floor shopping building, destroying it completely, and causing infrastructure damages over an area of about 9,000 square meters comprising abundance of buildings used by local shop owners at the Surmalu market. A massive fire tore through the area with a plume of smoke spreading quickly following the blast.

The explosion was confirmed to have caused 1 death and 20 injuries within the first hour, while in the morning of August 21, the number of injured increased to 62 and the death toll reached 16.

The explosion is believed to have been triggered by a fire in the fireworks warehouse that started several minutes before; the Government of Armenia has indicated violation of norms and standards in the fireworks depot of the building as a possible cause of the explosion; By the time of the report submission, the authorities have not yet published the results of the investigation. Emergency teams of the firefighting unit under the State Rescue Service of the Ministry of Emergency Situations of Armenia were dispatched immediately to extinguish the fire; however, the explosion occurred before their arrival on site. The explosion caused widespread fear and panic among the population of Armenia due to the nature of explosive disasters being associated with terrorist attacks. The disaster was followed by subsequent recurring bomb alerts in the public spaces of Yerevan, such as metro and bus stations, which contributed to the increased fear and panic. It is also worth noting that the Armenian public was particularly sensitive toward the disaster due to the fresh memories of the conflict escalation in September 2020 and the current political tensions in the region.



Location of the explosion. Source: Google Maps

NATIONAL SOCIETY ACTION

Assessments	Within the initial response to the disaster, the ARCS staff and volunteers started collecting information and data for a needs assessment to understand the scope of the disaster. This included consultations with the affected population and on-site observations. The initial observations gathered during August 14-21, 2022 suggested the following: • 3000 people called the ARCS MHPSS hotline seeking assistance (500 per day the first few days), and approximately 200 calls per day were being attended. • 35 shops / small business owners within the building of explosions have suffered damage, and approximately more than 100 shops within the vicinity of the blast area were also affected severely. • 80 families were confirmed to have family members either injured, dead or missing. During October 1-18, the ARCS carried out a detailed needs assessment of the small business owners and registered employees of the affected enterprises, to identify their priority needs and preferred modalities of assistance. The findings of the assistance are presented under the Needs (Gaps) Identified.
Livelihoods and Basic Needs	The ARCS launched a DREF Operation with the support of the IFRC to address the livelihoods and basic needs of the underserved community affected by the explosion: the owners and registered employees of small enterprises whose properties were fully or completely damaged by the disaster. The vulnerability and needs assessment carried out by ARCS with the support of the IFRC confirmed that the owners and registered employees of the small enterprises had lost their main sources of livelihoods as a result of the explosion and were struggling to meet their basic needs. The assessment also confirmed that they had not received any compensation or assistance from state or non-state bodies. The details of the assessment are presented under <i>Achievements</i> section. Consequently, ARCS supported the 393 persons (185 men, 208 women) (79 households) with the multi-purpose cash assistance in the amount of CHF 100 per person.
Health	During the initial search and rescue operation, the ARCS distributed water, face masks and basic food supplies to the public servants working in the affected area and citizens who remained at the border of the restricted area with the hope of finding their relatives and friends alive. In total, 142 volunteers (114 men, 28 women) were involved in Search and Rescue and provided First Aid in the most affected areas focusing on identifying casualties and cleaning the affected area. Injured individuals were evacuated to emergency medical vehicles. ARCS' trained volunteers were supporting with the management of the dead. ARCS staff and volunteers also ensured the evacuation of injured people to emergency medical vehicles. PSS stations and a Relief Hub was established next to the border of the government-identified sites focusing on the provision of First Aid, and Psychological First Aid to the general public affected by the disaster as well as the public servants engaged in response. 220 relatives and 30 rescuers were assisted in the Hub; around 200 people received First Aid, 150 rescuers were assisted on a daily basis (from 14 to 21 August), and more than 2,200 items (food and water) were distributed. The ARCS MHPSS Hotline was activated and operated in parallel with the national emergency hotline (911) to complement the crisis communication and to address the increasing panic and fear among the public. An average of 500 calls were received and responded to daily during the initial two weeks of the disaster, mainly tied to requests for information about the causes and consequences of the explosion, general information about the search and rescue operation, and PFA.

MOVEMENT PARTNERS ACTIONS

IFRC	IFRC has been present in the South Caucasus region, including through a Country Delegation in Armenia since 1992 with large-scale humanitarian assistance. Currently, IFRC has a regional Country Cluster Delegation for South Caucasus based in Tbilisi, Georgia, to support the three Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies in Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia. In addition, an operational presence was kept in Armenia, which has been expanded into a full-fledged IFRC country office. IFRC provides direct support to the Armenia Red Cross Society through DREF allocations, COVID-19 Emergency Appeal, and the resources generated through the 2022 IFRC Country Operational Plan for Armenia. The IFRC Country Cluster Delegation for South Caucasus and the Country Office in Yerevan have such expertise as Operations Manager, Logistics expert, Communications, Community Engagement and Accountability, Health Experts, and Information Management to support capturing and analysing the situation and needs on a continuous basis.
ICRC	ICRC supports the National Society in its institutional and organizational development, mainly strengthening the capacities of the regional and community branches in four IB areas exposed to conflict. ICRC was not involved in the response to the disaster.
Partner National Societies	Partner National Societies including the Swiss Red Cross, German Red Cross, and Austrian Red Cross are present in Armenia, and ICRC has a Country Delegation based on Yerevan. Italian Red Cross has a delegation based in Tbilisi, Georgia, covering both Armenia and Georgia, and Danish Red Cross provides technical support and guidance to Armenia Red Cross from its headquarters and frequent visits to the country. Monaco Red Cross provides its support via the Swiss Red Cross. All Movement partners in South Caucasus have agreed to work together in the spirit and mindset of the Strengthening Movement Coordination and Cooperation (SMCC) agreement, with the Council of Delegates Resolution (CD/17/R1, Antalya 2017) as a core guiding document.

OTHER ACTORS

The Government has requested international assistance?	Yes
National Authorities	The State Rescue Service under the Ministry of Emergency Situations led the rescue operation on the site. Law enforcement agencies of the Republic of Armenia were responsible for the security matters. Emergency Medical Care of Yerevan Municipality was responsible for the transportation of injured to medical facilities of Yerevan city. No other response actors actively responded to the disaster.
UN and other actors	Besides the state bodies of Armenia, no other actors actively responded to the disaster.
List of major coordination mechanisms in place	Coordination for this type of Hazards was directed by Ministry of Emergency Situation, during the onset response , and for the recovery event's needs, in which ARCS has been capturing and adapting interventions accordingly.

NEEDS (GAPS) IDENTIFIED



Livelihoods

One of the major activities that took place in October 2022, was the in-depth needs assessment of families who lost their main source of income as a result of the explosion. The assessment examined the vulnerabilities and needs of two groups: registered small enterprise owners and registered workers at the affected enterprises who lost their job and whose families do not have other sources of income thus far. To this end, from September 30 to October 13, 2022, the ARCS conducted a needs assessment of the affected population through the Vulnerability Assessment Mechanism. Based on the secondary data analysis and communication with the governmental partner agencies with an aim to eliminate possible overlap with the governmental assistance programs, the list of the beneficiaries/respondents was validated and finalized. Taking into account the distinct parameters of the target population, two separate assessments were conducted through direct interviews using the structured questionnaires. In total, 44 affected enterprises (represented by 31 men and 13 women) and 44 public workers (23 men, 21 women) were assessed. As part of the assessment, ARCS followed up on the accuracy of their revised targeting strategy that aimed at reaching the affected group that were not covered by the state-provided assistance. 100% of surveyed individuals noted that they had not received assistance or compensation from the state and non-state structures.

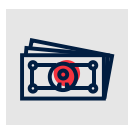
Among enterprise owners, the survey revealed that 95% of the enterprises sustained damages as a result of the explosion (56% were fully destroyed and 31% were significantly damaged); moreover. 92% of enterprise owners reported no business property insurance and 31% stated they had loan obligations. 92% of affected business owners identified money/cash as a priority need of their households, 43% stated they property support (productive assets).

Among enterprise employees, up to 85% of registered employees reported losing their jobs. None of them reported having their health or property covered by the insurance prior the accident. 100% of affected employees identified money/cash as a priority need of their households.



Health & Care

The Needs Assessment found that 16% of enterprise employees stated they required hygiene items and 14% noted MHPSS needs. Among enterprise owners, 15% identified MHPSS as a key need. The explosion has caused a widespread fear and panic among the population of Armenia due to the nature of explosive disasters being associated with terrorist attacks. The need for Psychological First Aid, and longer-term Mental Health and Psychosocial Support became of a great importance due to the widespread fear and panic that the disaster has triggered. The ARCS dedicated its MHPSS hotline as a response to the disaster with an average of 500 daily calls being received, as well as a team of psychologists and volunteers trained in PSS and PFA, to work directly with the families affected.



Multi-purpose Cash

As identified in the Livelihood section above, needs related to Multi-purpose cash were predominantly tied to sudden and dramatic loss of income, with the 100% of the surveyed people indicating cash as their households' priority need.

TARGETING STRATEGY

Which groups of people were assisted through this operation?

The intervention targeted the families of owners and registered employees of small enterprises affected by disaster. All family members of the SME owners and employees were provided cash assistance.

What selection criteria has been used for targeting affected?

The selection criteria were as follows: proven damage to the business property or being a registered employee of the enterprise affected by the explosion, registration in the government's list of affected individuals. Their vulnerability was afterward confirmed by the needs assessment conducted by the ARCS.

How have, community engagement Protection, Gender and Inclusion been considered in planning this operation?

Protection, Gender, and Inclusion were cross-cutting across the entire operation. The PGI aspects were mainstreamed in the PDM to confirm the relevance of assistance to the different vulnerable groups within the target community. The response took account of accessibility to ensure the inclusiveness of the response at all stages. The IFRC Child Safeguarding Risk Analysis was undertaken within the response, and full compliance will be ensured with the safeguarding protocols.

TARGETED POPULATION – CASH AND VOUCHER ASSISTANCE

Targeted population – for CVA support	Women	208	Men	185
	Girls	-	Boys	-
	Total	393		
Estimates	Percentage People with Disability (%)	8%	Urban/Rural ration (%)	100% urban
	Estimated Number of displaced people	7		

PLEASE SEE PEOPLE REACHED PER SECTOR BELOW

OVERALL OBJECTIVE OF THE OPERATION

The overall objective of the operation was to reduce the vulnerability of the affected population and to support them in coping with the aftermath of the disaster that may have contributed to their increased vulnerabilities as a consequence of the explosion.

RESPONSE STRATEGY SUMMARY

The overall objective of the operation was to reduce the vulnerability of the affected population and to support them in coping with the aftermath of the disaster that might have contributed to their increased vulnerabilities as a consequence of the explosion. This was done by targeting the most underserved group of the affected population, the owners and employees of the small enterprises that had their assets completely or partially destroyed as a result of the disaster, with the unconditional cash assistance in the amount of CHF100 per person. In total, 4,695 people have been assisted, with rehabilitation, PSS, CVA, First Aid and health promotion.

ABOUT SUPPORT SERVICES

How many volunteers and staff involved in the response? How many were covered through this operation?

142 volunteers were involved in the initial search and rescue operation and 55 – in the risk communication activities for health promotion.

Was surge personnel deployed?

No

What is the logistics capacity of the National Society? If there is procurement, was it done by the NS or by the IFRC?

Procurements were done by the NS, in accordance with the procurements procedures of ARCS, as well as the restricted procedures of IFRC.

Were there any safety/security concerns which may impact the implementation of this operation? How did the National Society ensure the safety of the staff, volunteers and community?

The ARCS continuously monitored the risks associated with implementation of the operation and, whenever necessary, revised the respective mitigation strategies. No major risks were observed during the implementation of the DREF operation.

Does the NS have PMER capacity? How will monitoring of the operation be organised by both NS and IFRC? If any monitoring trips are planned, clarify purpose and role to be deployed

The PMER framework and tools were developed at the beginning of the operation. The frequency of monitoring data collection was defined and persons responsible were designated. The IFRC PMER Officer and PMER Consultant for Armenia supported the NS with monitoring and evaluation of the DREF operation, including the implementation of post-distribution monitoring survey.

Does the NS have Communications capacity? How will communication on the operation be organised by both NS and IFRC? If any Commissions are planned, clarify purpose and role to be deployed

The NS ensured all relevant communication via already established channels and contacts, assuring the appropriate levels of visibility of both the ARCS and IFRC

ACHIEVEMENTS

	Livelihoods	Persons reached:	Male	185	
		393	Female	208	
Indicators			Target	Actual	
% of assisted persons reporting meeting their immediate needs through cash assistance provided by the ARCS (target: 80% of the people covered by PDM)			80%	34%	
# of Needs Assessment conducted			1	1	
# of people who successfully received cash for immediate needs after being identified and processed for transfer			400	393	
# of PDM conducted			1	1	
# people covered by the PDM			66	68	
# of channels of community feedback collection and proactive information distribution are established			2	3	

Narrative description of achievements

- Information on the cash distributions was proactively shared through the public television announcement by the Secretary General of the ARCS, confirming that the small-business owners and registered employees, not covered by the state assistance programs, would be provided cash assistance by the NS.
- Tendering process for FSP was carried out. After signing of Agreement with FSP CVA focal point of ARCS received all information regarding the list of beneficiaries, documentation of beneficiaries and other supportive information.
- From September 30 to October 13, the ARCS conducted a needs assessment of the affected population through the Vulnerability Assessment Mechanism. In total, 44 affected enterprises (represented by 31 men and 13 women) and 44 public workers (23 men, 21 women) were assessed. The Enterprise Vulnerability Assessment data and dashboard can be assessed [here](#). The Employee Vulnerability Assessment data and dashboard can be accessed [here](#).
- The list of cash assistance beneficiaries was finalized comprising 42 small enterprise owners and 37 registered employees. In total, 393 persons (185 men, 208 women) (79 households) were provided cash assistance in the amount of CHF 100 per person. Upon the cash transfer to the beneficiaries, a text message was sent to their telephone numbers, informing them of the amount of the cash transferred, and providing the telephone number for submitting feedback and complaints.
- The methodology and instruments for the PDM were developed by ARCS with the support from the IFRC IM Delegate and PMER Consultant for Armenia. The PDM data collection, analysis and reporting was carried out in November - December 2022. Within the PDM, 68 individuals (49 men and 19 women) were surveyed by ARCS volunteers using a structured survey questionnaire. PDM Report¹ was prepared and shared with the ARCS management and relevant focal points of the IFRC. The PDM exercise confirmed the relevance, appropriateness, and effectiveness of the intervention. The interpretation of the data analysis suggests that this affirmation is based on the following reasons: (1) The assistance helped the target population improve their living conditions by meeting their immediate needs after the disaster, including the basic food and hygiene needs, utility bills and debt repayment, and their psychosocial needs; Almost 50% of respondents answered that the assistance made them feel better when asked how cash assistance helped them. 34% responded that it helped them meet their basic needs while around 16% said it helped with paying debts. (2) The assistance helped the respondents cope with stress caused by the disaster – above and beyond the figures listed above, 30% noted that it reduced their levels of stress; (3) Based on the opinions of the respondents, the distribution was well organized and implemented in a transparent manner. 99% of the interviewed individuals found the cash distribution process very satisfactory or satisfactory; (4) The fact that no conflicts, tensions, and disagreements were reported within the disaster-affected community about the cash assistance, suggests that the ARCS clearly communicated the selection criteria to the relevant target audiences. The data analysis also suggests that ARCS was proactive in informing the target population about its feedback and complaints mechanism.

Challenges:

- A PDM report conducted by the NS confirmed the relevance and appropriateness of the action, with 99% of the interviewed individuals finding the cash distribution process very satisfactory or satisfactory. However, when the ARCS inquired how specifically the cash assistance helped them, the response division showed that the cash helped the majority of the recipients to feel better (49%) and only 34 % were able to cover their basic needs with the cash received. In addition, the targeted households reported having spent it entirely within 9.38 days on average, and the half of them spent it in 2 days. This indicates the need to re-examine future operational strategies for similar interventions and revise the transfer value as appropriate to ensure that operations fulfil the objectives and expected results.

¹ PDM Report Attached

Lessons Learnt:

PDM exercise revealed a few important learnings to be taken into account while planning future interventions. It is worth mentioning, that while all respondents were very satisfied or satisfied with the amount of cash assistance received, they also claimed that the assistance did not improve their living conditions in the long run, as it ran out too quickly (81%) and was not enough (10%). It is also noteworthy, that in contrast to the intervention design envisioning the cash transfer value to cover one month of basic needs of the targeted households, the targeted households reported having spent it entirely within 9.38 days on average, and the half of them spent it in 2 days. This indicated the need to re-examine future operational strategies for similar interventions and revise the transfer value as appropriate to ensure that operations fulfil the objectives and expected results. Furthermore, the PDM suggested that while the cash assistance was timely and effective in relieving the after the explosion stress and partially meeting the short-term needs of the population in concern, it did not contribute to the financial stability of the targeted households and does not replace the longer-term livelihood recovery interventions.

	Health & Care	Persons reached:	Male	2336	
		4967	Female	2631	
Indicators			Target		Actual
# of the affected population provided with access to medical assistance and health promotion (including PSS, PFA, and risk communication)			5000		3900
# people receiving first aid on site			200		200
# of First Aid Kits purchased			24		24
# of ARCS volunteers engaged in the search and rescue operation			142		142
# of volunteers involved in risk communication activities for health promotion			75		55
# of people reached with relevant health promotion activities			1000		5300
# of NS staff engaged in PSS			TBD		30 (6 psychologists and 24 staff)
# of volunteers engaged in PSS			30		80 (PSS volunteers from different regions)
# of staff and volunteers receiving PSS (SADD)			128		128
# of DRT volunteers and rescue servants receiving rehabilitation support			75		74
Narrative description of achievements					

- During the initial search and rescue operation, the ARCS distributed water, face masks and basic food supplies to the public servants working in the affected area and the citizens who were not leaving the border of the restricted area with the hope of finding their relatives and friends alive.
- Injured individuals were evacuated to emergency medical vehicles. ARCS trained volunteers were supporting with the management of the dead.
- PSS and Relief Hub was established next to the border of the identified and restricted sites focusing on the provision of First Aid, and Psychological First Aid to the public affected by the disaster as well as the public servants engaged in response. 220 relatives and 30 rescuers were assisted in the Hub; around 200 people received First Aid, 150 rescuers were assisted daily (from 14 to 21 August), and more than 2,200 items (food and water) were distributed.
- Volunteers were involved in Search and Rescue and provided First Aid in the most affected areas focusing on identifying casualties and cleaning the affected area.
- MHPSS Hotline was activated operating in parallel with the national emergency hotline (911) to complement the crisis communication and to address the increasing panic and fear among the public. An average of 500 calls related to the disaster were being received daily (in total, around 3,500) during the week after the explosion.
- PSS and Relief Hub was established next to the border of the identified and restricted sites focusing on the provision of First Aid, and Psychological First Aid to the general public affected by the disaster as well as the public servants engaged in response. 220 relatives and 30 rescuers were assisted in the Hub; around 200 people received First Aid, 150 rescuers were assisted daily (from 14 to 21 August), and more than 2,200 items (food and water) were distributed.
- The psychological service of ARCS organized weekly sessions for ARCS staff and volunteers. Throughout the operation, 31 staff members and 97 volunteers participated in psychological support sessions.
- On 18-20 October 18-20, 2022, Training of Trainers for Volunteers – DREF operations on “Community Engagement and Accountability” and “Education in Emergencies” was conducted by the Armenian Red Cross Society (ARCS). The ToT, covering the key principles of CEA and Education in Emergencies was carried out jointly by IFRC and ARCS Experts. In total, 33 people attended the training. The participants unanimously evaluated the workshop as useful and relevant.
- Short information materials such as Stress guide and PFA guide (Do-Don’t) and Wellbeing guide were developed, printed and disseminated.
- To assess the relevance, appropriateness and effectiveness of the PFA provided by ARCS within the intervention, a satisfaction survey was conducted interviewing 49 volunteers and public servants involved in the massive explosion search and rescue operation. 31 respondents (around 64%) indicated that the mental health and psychosocial support received from the ARCS was for immediate basic needs that included water, food, blankets and other relevant items. 10 respondents (around 20%) received emotional support and 5 respondents (around 10%) received information about the search and rescue activities. 61% noted that the person who provided them with support listened to their concerns carefully while 6% somewhat agreed. The majority of respondents who received MHPSS (57%), strongly agreed and somewhat agreed that the support provided helped them come up with ways to cope with stress.

Challenges: -

Lessons Learnt:

The PFA survey administered at the end of the operation revealed a few important learnings to be taken into account while planning future interventions. After the explosion in *Surmalu*, only 3 respondents reported having sought mental health and psychosocial support with 46 respondents not seeking any help. From the 46 respondents who did not seek any support, almost 78% did not think they needed it. This suggests that more robust data and deeper analysis is required to make conclusions on the possible reasons behind this, to devise effective strategies toward addressing the MHPSS needs of the communities affected by disasters and crises.

National Society Strengthening	Persons reached:	Male	N/A
		Female	N/A
Indicators		Target	Actual
% of DRT volunteers who are mobilized and involved in the response activities		50%	57%
% of volunteers properly trained for the implemented field activities		100%	100%
% of volunteers receive per diem for their volunteering work		100%	100%
% of mobilized and damaged DRT equipment replenished		100%	100%
# of IFRC monitoring visits conducted		1	1
Operational review is conducted		1	
% of people who report during the satisfaction survey that they were aware of how to provide feedback to ARCS		80%	98%
# of community engagement activities conducted to help promote healthy and safe behaviour in relation to the identified risks		1	1
Narrative description of achievements			
- All volunteers involved in the operation were insured via IFRC global volunteer accident insurance scheme. - The operation engaged mainly the DRTs, who passed the whole cycle of relevant trainings' multiple times prior to the disaster. 57% of the DRT volunteers were mobilized and engaged in the support operation. The Project Coordinator of the DM department of ARCS, responsible for the establishment and further development of DRTs in the branches of ARCS, briefed and guided all engaged volunteers throughout the operation. All volunteers involved signed the agreements with clear description of their roles and responsibilities. Transportation, food, and other costs incurred by the volunteers were reimbursed as per the ARCS Volunteer Management Guidelines. - The ARCS DRT's equipment that was mobilized throughout the response, as well as the high priority equipment which ARCS will need for future responses (uniforms and FA and PFA kits, helmets, light lamps, glasses, snap fits for joints, masks with filters to prevent dust, and other means and tools which were required during the operation such as covers, mats, sleeping bags, tents, thermoses, bag refrigerators, shovels) were procured. - The IFRC IM Delegate and PMER Consultant for Armenia supported the NS with the data collection and analysis of the Enterprise and Employee Vulnerability assessment and Post-Distribution Monitoring. Efforts were put in strengthening the ARCS's institutional capacities in the areas of IM and PMER.			

- IFRC continuously monitored the implementation of the DREF operation through regular coordination meetings with the respective ARCS staff. Monitoring observations were proactively communicated with the relevant focal points of ARCS.
- All volunteers involved in the operation were insured via IFRC global volunteer accident insurance scheme. The operation engaged mainly the DRTs, who passed the whole cycle of relevant trainings' multiple times prior to the disaster. 57% of the DRT volunteers were mobilized and engaged in the support operation. The Project Coordinator of the DM department of ARCS, responsible for the establishment and further development of DRTs in the branches of ARCS, briefed and guided all engaged volunteers throughout the operation. All volunteers involved signed the agreements with clear description of their roles and responsibilities. Transportation, food, and other costs incurred by the volunteers were reimbursed as per the ARCS Volunteer Management Guidelines. The ARCS DRT's equipment that was mobilized throughout the response, as well as the high priority equipment which ARCS will need for future responses (uniforms and FA and PFA kits, helmets, light lamps, glasses, snap fits for joints, masks with filters to prevent dust, and other means and tools which were required during the operation such as covers, mats, sleeping bags, tents, thermoses, bag refrigerators, shovels) were procured. The IFRC IM Delegate and PMER Consultant for Armenia supported the NS with the data collection and analysis of the Enterprise and Employee Vulnerability assessment² and Post-Distribution Monitoring. Efforts were put in strengthening the ARCS's institutional capacities in the areas of IM and PMER. IFRC continuously monitored the implementation of the DREF operation through regular coordination meetings with the respective ARCS staff. Monitoring observations were proactively communicated with the relevant focal points of ARCS.
- A lessons learned workshop was conducted on the 25th and 26th of January 2023, with the participants of 30 people from ARCS HQ, Branche's representatives, IFRC Secretariat Staff from the Country Cluster Delegation and Country Office Team, PNS in Country and ICRC reflecting on the last two DREF emergency operations, Massive explosion emergency response and Population movement operations, identifying the main challenges and lessons and how they are linked to the Armenian RC's response mechanism. The workshop was structured around five areas of the PER: (1) Policy, Strategy and Standards; (2) Operational Capacity; (3) Operational Support; (4) Analysis and Planning; and (5) Coordination, and the results will be used by the ARCS to revise its PER Plan of Action.

Challenges:

As the ARCS was in an active phase of implementation of the DREF explosion implementation, a coinciding escalation between Armenia and Azerbaijan in September 2022 caused a massive movement of more than 7,000 conflict affected people across Armenia, within a short period of time. Considering the imminent humanitarian needs of the affected people, ARCS had to mobilize an emergency response that required activating another complex DREF intervention. The objectives have been identified for the response operation to:

- meet immediate and mid-term food needs and restore/ protect the livelihoods of vulnerable and marginalized groups. improve the access to food for the displaced population, returnees and the population of the affected and vulnerable communities.
- contribute to decreasing the level of risks to prevent the spread of illness and diseases.
- support the displaced communities with ensuring safe and dignified living conditions.
- improve the access of children and youth affected by the conflict to appropriate education opportunities.
- provide MHPSS support to the displaced individuals.

This double burden of implementation created extra strain on NS staff and volunteer capacity and caused in a delay in distribution of the assistance within the initially planned timeframe. However, through enhanced mobilization efforts, ARCS was able to fully implement both interventions.

² From September 30 to October 13, the ARCS conducted a needs assessment of the affected population through the Vulnerability Assessment Mechanism. In total, 44 affected enterprises (represented by 31 men and 13 women) and 44 public workers (23 men, 21 women) were assessed. See more at p. 10.

Lessons Learnt:

Over the past three years, the Armenia Red Cross Society (ARCS) has carried out operations related to population movements from the conflict affected areas, providing support for basic needs such as shelter, winterization, and cash assistance. In addition to responding to the ongoing needs of the displaced population, the ARCS has implemented various parallel operations in response to natural disasters, the COVID-19 pandemic, and, most recently, an explosion in Yerevan. These experiences have reinforced the National Society's position as a key auxiliary to the government in all sorts of crises. They have led to significant capacity development in implementing new modalities such as cash assistance and community feedback mechanisms. ARCS has demonstrated proactive efforts to enhance coordination with the government. ARCS has implemented effective interventions, such as using cash and clarified its role and mandate in less traditional emergencies. The ARCS's developed roles and capacities further formalization through legal frameworks such as Red Cross law and Disaster Management policies will help to consolidate the organization's role and mandate in areas beyond the traditional emergencies and types of implementations.

There is a need to focus on developing and practically applying the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) concept in operations management. This should include providing better resources that will facilitate the implementation of emergency response procedures for all those involved.

The capacity of volunteers is crucial to the success of ARCS operations. Ensuring that volunteers receive adequate training and effectively implement plans and standard operating procedures (SOPs) is essential. However, it is equally important to prioritize the well-being of volunteers to prevent burnout and ensure the sustainability of ARCS operations. ARCS targeted resource allocation for PSS activities for the volunteers proved the feasibility of replicating the similar approach during the future operations.

Financial Report

The financial report is annexed to this document.

The budget for the DREF operation was CHF **183, 766**, of which CHF 177,569 was spent. The remaining balance of CHF 6,196 is returned to the DREF account as per standard IFRC regulations.

The major donors and partners of the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) include the Red Cross Societies and governments of Belgium, Britain, Canada, Denmark, German, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Norway, Republic of Korea, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland, as well as DG ECHO and Blizzard Entertainment, Mondelez International Foundation, and Fortive Corporation and other corporate and private donors. The IFRC, on behalf of the National Society, would like to extend thanks to all for their generous contributions.

Contact information

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- Programme and Operations focal point: **Antoine Belair**, Senior Officer, Ops Coordination, antoine.belair@ifrc.org
- DREF focal point: **Karla Morizzo**, Senior Officer, DREF – Disaster and Crisis Department; email: karla.morizzo@ifrc.org

For IFRC Resource Mobilization and Pledges support

- **Andrej Naricyn**, Head of Partnerships and Resource Development, email: andrej.naricyn@ifrc.org

For In-Kind donations and Mobilization table support

- **Matyas Daroczi**, Senior Officer, Global Operational Procurement, email: matyas.daroczi@ifrc.org

For Performance and Accountability support (planning, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting inquiries)

- **Lela Berdzuli**, South Caucasus Country Delegation Senior PMER Officer, lela.berdzuli@ifrc.org
- **David Kohlmann**, Regional Head of PMER a.i., david.kohlmann@ifrc.org

Reference



Click here for:

- [Link to IFRC Appeals](#)

DREF Operation

FINAL FINANCIAL REPORT

Selected Parameters			
Reporting Timeframe	2022/8-2023/2	Operation	MDRAM009
Budget Timeframe	2022/8-2022/11	Budget	APPROVED

Prepared on 06/Apr/2023
All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

MDRAM009 - Armenia - Massive Explosion in Yerevan

Operating Timeframe: 30 Aug 2022 to 30 Nov 2022

I. Summary

Opening Balance	0
Funds & Other Income	183,766
DREF Response Pillar	183,766
Expenditure	-177,569
Closing Balance	6,197

II. Expenditure by area of focus / strategies for implementation

Description	Budget	Expenditure	Variance
AOF1 - Disaster risk reduction			0
AOF2 - Shelter			0
AOF3 - Livelihoods and basic needs			0
AOF4 - Health			0
AOF5 - Water, sanitation and hygiene			0
AOF6 - Protection, Gender & Inclusion			0
AOF7 - Migration			0
Area of focus Total			0
SFI1 - Strengthen National Societies	183,766	177,569	6,196
SFI2 - Effective international disaster management			0
SFI3 - Influence others as leading strategic partners			0
SFI4 - Ensure a strong IFRC			0
Strategy for implementation Total	183,766	177,569	6,196
Grand Total	183,766	177,569	6,196

DREF Operation

FINAL FINANCIAL REPORT

Selected Parameters			
Reporting Timeframe	2022/8-2023/2	Operation	MDRAM009
Budget Timeframe	2022/8-2022/11	Budget	APPROVED

Prepared on 06/Apr/2023

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

MDRAM009 - Armenia - Massive Explosion in Yerevan

Operating Timeframe: 30 Aug 2022 to 30 Nov 2022

III. Expenditure by budget category & group

Description	Budget	Expenditure	Variance
Logistics, Transport & Storage		1,200	-1,200
Transport & Vehicles Costs		1,200	-1,200
Personnel	4,500		4,500
National Staff	4,500		4,500
General Expenditure	1,000	882	118
Travel		692	-692
Financial Charges	1,000	190	810
Contributions & Transfers	167,050	164,650	2,400
Cash Transfers National Societies	167,050	164,650	2,400
Indirect Costs	11,216	10,838	378
Programme & Services Support Recover	11,216	10,838	378
Grand Total	183,766	177,569	6,196