Imminent DREF Final Report

Imminent DREF operation, Armenia / Population movement



Border monitoring and capacity-building activities. Photo credits: ARCS/IFRC

Appeal: **MDRAM016**	Total DREF Allocation: **CHF 80,000**	Hazard: **Population Movement**	Country: **Armenia**
People at Risk: -	People Targeted: -	People Assisted: -	Event Onset: **Sudden**
Operation Start Date: **04-03-2026**	Operational End Date: **30-04-2026**	Total Operating Timeframe: **45 days**	Publication Date: -

Targeted Regions: **Syunik, Vayots Dzor, Yerevan**

Event development

Update regarding the event's development

The regional escalation of conflict in the Middle East in early 2026 heightened regional tensions and disrupted air travel and regional connectivity. The escalation affected commercial air traffic, and several countries issued advisories recommending alternative evacuation routes for their citizens, indicating potential risks of restricted mobility and increased reliance on land corridors. Armenia was identified as one of the accessible transit routes, particularly through its border with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The imminent DREF operation in Armenia was therefore triggered by a potential sudden cross-border population movement into Armenia, particularly through the Syunik region and the Nurduz–Agarak border crossing point, linked to the regional escalation and continued disruption of airspace in the region. The projected movement was expected to follow a transit corridor from Meghri to Goris in Syunik region and onward to Yerevan, with Yerevan serving as a logistical hub and onward travel point.

Based on scenario analysis, it was anticipated that Armenia could become one of the viable evacuation routes for Armenians living in Iran (estimated at 60,000–80,000 people), as well as foreign nationals, including students, business travellers, and diplomatic staff. It was estimated that approximately 70–80 per cent of arrivals would travel independently or with embassy support, while 20–30 per cent could require short-term humanitarian assistance, particularly vulnerable individuals such as older persons, families with children, and those lacking sufficient financial means or onward travel arrangements.

The activation timeframe was projected at 0–4 weeks, with the situation remaining dynamic depending on the evolution of regional hostilities and transportation disruptions. Potential humanitarian concerns included congestion at border crossing points and extended travel times; fatigue, dehydration, and psychosocial stress following prolonged journeys; temporary strain on local services and infrastructure, particularly in Meghri; protection risks related to lack of documentation, language barriers, and misinformation; and family separation or communication breakdowns generating Restoring Family Links (RFL) needs.

Overall, the anticipated situation was characterized as a rapid-onset, short-duration, transit-focused population movement that could create localized humanitarian pressure at entry points, even if it did not evolve into large-scale displacement within the country.

During the operational period, some cross-border movements into Armenia were recorded; however, the number of arrivals remained limited and did not reach the predefined trigger thresholds for activating a large-scale humanitarian response.
Available data indicates that between 28 February and 15 April 2026, approximately 18,300 entries into Armenia and 17,500 exits from Armenia of Iranian nationals were recorded through the Agarak border crossing point. These figures reflect continued regular two-way cross-border movements rather than a significant influx associated with the regional escalation.

At the same time, according to official information from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Armenia facilitated the transit of foreign nationals from a significant number of countries, initially reported as 41 and subsequently increasing to up to 60 countries over time. These movements included foreign citizens, diplomats, and other individuals exiting the region through Armenia. Overall, movements remained predominantly transit-oriented, with most individuals continuing onward travel through existing arrangements or embassy-supported evacuation mechanisms, resulting in limited humanitarian needs.

As a result, the anticipated escalation scenario did not materialize. The number of people requiring humanitarian assistance remained limited and did not place additional pressure on national response capacities. Therefore, while preparedness measures were justified and necessary, the predefined trigger thresholds for activating a large-scale response were not reached.

Consequently, the situation remained stable throughout the operational period, and no large-scale humanitarian needs requiring activation of response activities were observed.

Source Information

Source Name	Source Link
1. Iranians crossing into neighbouring countries	https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/middle_eastern
2. Citizens of 60 countries evacuated via Armenia from Iran	https://www.panarmenian.net/eng/news/332115/

3. Armenians living in Iran	http://diaspora.gov.am/en/pages/44/iran

Implementation

	Sector	Activities	Budget (CHF)	Expenditure
 Early Actions	CEA	• A total of 600 trilingual CBRN flyers and 500 trilingual information flyers in Armenian, English, and Farsi were developed, printed, and stored in advance to support risk communication efforts. The CBRN flyers provided guidance on self-protection measures during technological disasters, while the information flyers included the ARCS hotline and information on available services and support during emergencies. In addition, CBRN risk awareness and community engagement topics were incorporated into the Preparedness and Response to Forced Displacement training, strengthening volunteers' capacity to communicate risks and support affected populations in complex emergency contexts.	CHF 72,500	CHF 72,806
	Migration	• Through two three-day Preparedness and Response to Forced Displacement trainings conducted in March and April, ARCS strengthened the capacities of 43 participants (21 male and 22 female), including 35 volunteers and eight staff members from Syunik and Vayots Dzor regions. The trainings covered key topics such as protection, Psychosocial first aid, Restoring family links, Community engagement and accountability, CBRN risk awareness, Protection, gender and inclusion, and emergency response procedures, enhancing preparedness for potential cross-border population movements. • ARCS procured relief items to replenish emergency stock in the Kapan warehouse in Syunik region, while additional operational equipment was procured to strengthen response readiness and enable rapid deployment in the event of a population influx. A total of 600 hygiene kits, 600 blankets and bedding sets, 500 travel bags, 10,000 child diapers, and 100 PFA kits were procured, along with 600 trilingual CBRN flyers and 500 information flyers. Additional operational equipment, including a generator, power banks, and foldable stretchers for mobile support points, was also procured to strengthen response readiness.		
 Early Response	Migration	• As the anticipated population movement did not materialize and no humanitarian needs were identified, the Rapid Needs Assessment was not conducted.	CHF 2,500	CHF 0
		Sub-total	CHF 75,000	CHF 72,806
		Indirect Cost	CHF 5,000	CHF 4,732
		Total	CHF 80,000	CHF 77,539

Total Assisted Population

Assisted Women	-	Rural	-
Assisted Girls (under 18)	-	Urban	-
Assisted Men	-	People with disabilities (estimated)	-
Assisted Boys (under 18)	-		
Total Population Assisted	-		
Total Targeted Population	-		

Explain any variances or modifications to the implemented activities

The Early Response allocation (CHF 2,500) was not utilized, as the anticipated hazard did not materialize and no response actions were required. Early Action activities were fully implemented, with a slight over-expenditure (CHF 72,806 against CHF 72,500 budgeted) due to operational adjustments during implementation and unexpected costs. This variance was offset by the unspent Early Response balance, with no overall impact on the total DREF allocation. The remaining unspent balance (CHF 2,461) was returned, in line with the guidelines.

Mitigation efforts and achievements.

Volunteer Mobilization and Capacity Strengthening:

Following heightened regional tensions and transport disruptions, the imminent DREF operation was launched to strengthen preparedness and readiness for a potential sudden cross-border population movement into Armenia, primarily through the Nurduz–Agarak Border Crossing Point. The operation prioritized preparedness measures, including volunteer capacity strengthening and the procurement of relief items, to enable the timely provision of humanitarian assistance should influx thresholds be reached.

Although the anticipated population movement did not materialize during the 45-day operational period, the ARCS successfully implemented early actions to ensure operational readiness and mitigate potential humanitarian impacts. Throughout the operational period, ARCS continued to monitor the evolving situation through regular communication with its headquarters and regional branches, as well as through coordination meetings with relevant stakeholders and authorities.

Volunteer capacity strengthening was one of the key priorities of the operation, aimed at enhancing preparedness and ensuring an effective humanitarian response in the event of a sudden cross-border population movement. A total of 43 individuals (21 male and 22 female), including 35 Disaster Response Team (DRT) members and active volunteers from the Syunik and Vayots Dzor regions, as well as eight staff members, were trained through two three-day capacity-building trainings on preparedness and response to forced displacement. Selection of volunteers was based on their prior experience in emergency response, availability, and participation in recent capacity-building activities conducted under the operation.

As ARCS is implementing a mass displacement project with the support of UNHCR, it was decided to synchronize efforts and conduct joint comprehensive trainings for previously established displacement response teams from the Syunik and Vayots Dzor regions, specifically from the Meghri and Yeghegnadzor communities. Prior to the operation, these volunteers had already been mobilized for preparedness activities and had participated in information sessions and coordination meetings conducted in the region. They were also involved in municipal response planning activities and daily monitoring of border crossing points.

The first training session, conducted from 18–21 March, was facilitated by ARCS Heads of Departments and representatives of UNHCR. The second training session, held from 7–10 April, was facilitated by ARCS Heads of Departments. The sessions covered a broad range of topics relevant to preparedness and response in situations of forced displacement. Topics included understanding potential influx scenarios; the legal status of persons seeking international protection and national response arrangements; protection principles and community-based approaches; registration of border crossers during forced displacement; Country of Origin Information and protection context; addressing language barriers through interpretation tools and mobile applications; identification and referral of persons with specific needs; the ARCS Code of Conduct and Child Safeguarding Policy; and IFRC Protection, Gender and Inclusion (PGI) standards.

Additional modules covered Restoring Family Links (RFL) and tracing procedures, including practical exercises on working with affected families; Psychological First Aid (PFA), including stress reactions and the Look–Listen–Link approach; Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) and communication with affected populations; Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) risk awareness and volunteer safety in complex environments; the Safer Access Framework (SAF); safety and security procedures; and Standard Operating Procedures for emergency response.

In addition to capacity strengthening activities, DRTs, active volunteers, and staff in the Syunik and Vayots Dzor regions were mobilized and maintained on standby to support a potential response. On 25–26 March, additional briefing sessions were conducted by the Head of the Disaster Management Department with regional teams to share updates on the evolving border situation and ensure operational readiness. A total of 10 volunteers participated in these briefing sessions.

Syunik focal points, supported by trained volunteers, carried out regular border monitoring and provided situational updates to the central office throughout the operational period. In addition, 17 Farsi-speaking volunteers remained on standby to facilitate communication with potential incoming populations and support response activities, if required.

Risk Communication and Community Engagement:

Trilingual CBRN and information flyers in Armenian, English, and Farsi were developed, printed, and kept in emergency stocks to support timely risk communication. The CBRN flyer provided basic guidance on self-protection during technological disaster situations, including nuclear, chemical, biological, radiological, and explosive risks. It outlined the key characteristics of each disaster type, associated risks, and essential safety measures for affected populations. The information flyers also included the ARCS hotline, enabling affected populations to seek support during emergencies and access information on available programmes and services.

Replenishment of Relief Stocks:

As part of the preparedness measures under the operation, ARCS replenished relief stocks to ensure the immediate availability of essential assistance in the event of a sudden influx of people at border crossing and transit points, particularly in the Syunik region. Given the anticipated short-term and transit-oriented nature of the potential movement, the selected items were prioritized to address immediate needs related to hygiene, warmth, protection, and dignity.

The composition of the relief items was based on standard ARCS emergency response practices for population movement scenarios and tailored to the expected profile of arrivals. Hygiene kits, blankets, bedding sets, travel bags, child diapers, and Psychological First Aid (PFA) kits were procured to support immediate relief and psychosocial assistance. In addition, trilingual information materials, including CBRN and information flyers, were developed to provide affected populations with information on available services, access to the ARCS hotline, and self-protection measures in emergency situations.

Under the operation, ARCS procured 600 hygiene kits, 600 blankets, 600 bedding sets, 500 travel bags, 10,000 child diapers, 100 PFA kits, 600 trilingual CBRN flyers, and 500 trilingual information flyers for the emergency stocks. To support mobile and transit assistance points, ARCS also procured three folding table and chair sets, three 50-metre electrical extension cords, one 2.5 kW generator, 10 power banks (20,000 mAh), and three foldable stretchers.

All items were procured through established tender procedures and stored in the ARCS warehouse in Kapan, Syunik region, ensuring their immediate availability for rapid deployment to border crossing and transit points if required. Robust inventory tracking and warehouse management systems were maintained throughout the operational period to ensure accountability, efficient stock management, and operational readiness.

Overall, ARCS maintained readiness to establish temporary rest and support points at border crossing and transit locations, with relevant equipment, relief items, and trained personnel prepared to provide first aid, Psychological First Aid, Restoring Family Links (RFL) services, and relief distributions. Contingency arrangements for emergency cash assistance and short-term accommodation support were also established; however, these measures would have been activated should a population influx requiring humanitarian assistance be materialized.

Throughout the operational period, ARCS actively collaborated with local and national authorities. Coordination meetings were held with the Deputy Regional Administrator of Syunik responsible for international programme implementation, as well as with the Head of the Regional Office of the Rescue Service under the Ministry of Internal Affairs. These engagements supported the alignment of contingency plans, clarified roles and responsibilities, and strengthened regional coordination in the event of increased arrivals. This multi-stakeholder approach reinforced ARCS' auxiliary role to public authorities and ensured close cooperation in preparedness and response planning.

In addition, ARCS maintained communication with the Iranian Red Crescent Society within the framework of the existing Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the two National Societies. This cooperation reflects established partnership arrangements aimed at strengthening collaboration in humanitarian response, including population movement contexts. The engagement facilitated information exchange and reinforced regional coordination, further contributing to preparedness for potential cross-border humanitarian needs.

Lessons learnt and challenges

The implementation of the Imminent DREF operation, despite the anticipated population movement not materializing, presented several challenges that generated valuable lessons for future preparedness operations.

One of the key challenges was the limited availability of real-time and reliable data on potential influx levels, which complicated forecasting and planning efforts during the early phase of the operation. To address this, ARCS continuously monitored the situation and regularly collected information through its regional branches and relevant authorities. The operation demonstrated that preparedness planning should remain flexible and be continuously updated as new information becomes available. Continuous information gathering and close coordination with stakeholders are essential to support timely, evidence-based operational decision-making.

The operation also faced challenges related to the limited timeframe available to establish temporary rest and support centres at border crossing points. Given the sensitive geopolitical context and the evolving regional situation, the relevant government authorities

maintained a cautious approach while closely monitoring developments. As a result, the planned centres were not activated during the operational period. Nevertheless, ARCS maintained regular cross-border monitoring, coordinated closely with the relevant authorities, and remained prepared to rapidly establish the centres should the situation require.

Beyond these operational challenges, the operation provided several broader preparedness lessons. Maintaining adequate relief stocks and operational equipment in strategically located warehouses close to potential response areas significantly strengthened operational readiness and enabled the rapid deployment of assistance when required. The replenishment of relief items in the Kapan warehouse demonstrated the benefits of decentralized preparedness and reduced the time required to mobilize resources.

Procurement timelines and supplier coordination required close follow-up to ensure the timely delivery of high-volume relief items and avoid delays in preparedness activities. Close coordination between the procurement and logistics teams, together with proactive supplier engagement, helped minimize delays. The operation underscored the importance of early procurement planning, effective supplier coordination, and continuous monitoring of procurement progress to strengthen operational readiness.

In addition, the operation demonstrated the value of ARCS's robust inventory tracking and stock management systems. As relief items were procured, relocated, and managed across multiple warehouses, maintaining accurate and up-to-date inventory records proved essential for ensuring accountability, efficient resource management, and operational readiness.

The operation also demonstrated the value of investing in volunteer preparedness, including the training and mobilization of Farsi-speaking volunteers. Building specialized capacities, strengthens the ability to provide timely and appropriate assistance during cross-border population movement scenarios.

A key lesson learned was that effective communication and well-defined coordination mechanisms are fundamental to successful preparedness operations. Regular information sharing and coordination across departments and regional branches help maintain a common operational picture, support timely and informed decision-making, and enable a more coordinated and efficient response.

Overall, the operation demonstrated that, even when the anticipated emergency does not materialize, Imminent DREF operations play a critical role in strengthening preparedness, testing coordination mechanisms, and enhancing response capacities. The experience confirmed that investments in preparedness improve the ability to deliver timely, coordinated, and effective humanitarian assistance by ensuring that systems, resources, and staff and volunteers are ready to respond rapidly should an emergency occur.

IFRC **DREF Operation**
Final Report (CHF)

Date from: 1 Mar 2026 to 30 Jun 2026

MDRAM016 - Armenia - Population Movement -Imminent

Operating timeframe: *Start date: 04-Mar-2026 End date: 30-Apr-2026*

Appeal launch date: *06-Mar-2026*

I. Summary

	Actual (CHF)
Opening Balance	**0**
Funds & Other Income	**80,000**
DREF Response Pillar	
DREF Anticipatory Pillar	80,000
Expenditure	-77,539
Closing Balance	**2,461**

II. Expenditure by planned operations / enabling approaches

Description	Budget	Expenditure	Variance
PO01 - Shelter and Basic Household Items			
PO02 - Livelihoods			
PO03 - Multi-purpose Cash			
PO04 - Health			
PO05 - Water, Sanitation & Hygiene			
PO06 - Protection, Gender and Inclusion			
PO07 - Education			
PO08 - Migration	75,000	77,539	-2,539
PO09 - Risk Reduction, Climate Adaptation and Recovery	5,000		5,000
PO10 - Community Engagement and Accountability			
PO11 - Environmental Sustainability			
Planned Operations Total	**80,000**	**77,539**	**2,461**
EA01 - Coordination and Partnerships			
EA02 - Secretariat Services			
EA03 - National Society Strengthening			
Total	**80,000**	**77,539**	**2,461**

III. Expenditure by budget category & group

IFRC **DREF Operation**
Final Report (CHF)

Date from: 1 Mar 2026 to 30 Jun 2026

Description	Budget	Expenditure	Variance
Travel	117		117
Financial Charges		22	-22
General Expenditure	**117**	**22**	**95**
Cash Transfers National Societies	75,000	72,784	2,216
Contributions & Transfers	**75,000**	**72,784**	**2,216**
Programme & Services Support Recovery	4,883	4,732	151
Indirect Costs	**4,883**	**4,732**	**151**
Total	**80,000**	**77,539**	**2,462**

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