

LESSONS LEARNED REPORT FINAL REPORT

Armenia | IFRC-DREF – Population Movement (MDRAM014)



This report presents key reflections and lessons learned from the Armenia Population Movement Imminent DREF Operation, implemented under the IFRC-DREF. The power shift in Syria in December 2024 created uncertainty in the country, where approximately 12,000 Syrian-Armenians continue to reside. Additionally, given the situation in Lebanon, an influx of ethnic Armenians from both Syria and Lebanon was anticipated. Although the expected escalation did not materialize, and the stop mechanism was implemented, a Lessons Learned Workshop was conducted with key stakeholders to capture best practices and identify challenges faced during the operation. The workshop was guided by the Preparedness for Effective Response methodology. This report outlines the outcomes of the workshop and provides recommendations for future similar operations.

Information about the operation is available at:

- [Armenia Population Movement 2024 DREF Operation](#)
- [Armenia Population Movement 2024 DREF Operational Update](#)
- [IFRC Platform](#)

Contents

Contents	2
Glossary of Abbreviations	3
A. Context	4
B. Methodology	6
C. Lessons Learned	9
D. Recommendations	22
E. General Assessment of the Operation	28
F. Annexes	30

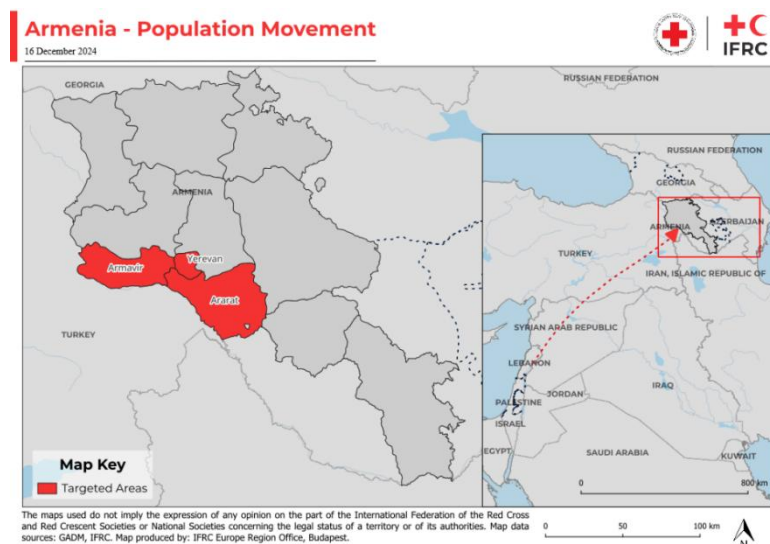
Glossary of Abbreviations

ARCS	Armenian Red Cross Society
CO	Country Office
CVA	Cash and Voucher Assistance
DM	Disaster Management
DREF	Disaster Response Emergency Fund
DRM	Disaster Response Management
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction (corrected spelling)
EA	Emergency Appeal
EAP	Early Action Protocols
EHI	Essential Household Items
HR	Human Resources
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
LLW	Lessons Learned Workshop
MCA	Movement Coordination Agreements
MCP	Movement Contingency Planning
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MHPSS	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
MIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
MoLSA	RA Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs
NS	National Society
PFA	Psychological First Aid
PER	Preparedness for Effective Response
PGI	Protection, Gender and Inclusion
PM	Population Movement
PMER	Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting
PNS	Partner National Societies
POA	Plan of Action
PSEA	Prevention, Protection and Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
RC	Red Cross
RCRC	International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement
ROE	Regional Office for Europe
SARC	The Syrian Arab Red Crescent Society
SEAP	simplified Early Action Protocols
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

A. Context

20 February 2025¹ has been identified as a trigger date for upscaling the operation to respond to the needs of vulnerable people by Armenian Red Cross Society (ARCS) as the expected arrival of approximately 560 individuals from Syria was set as the trigger to activate the response. It was anticipated that, beginning from 6 December 2024, approximately 80 individuals would arrive in Armenia each Sunday. This scenario was based on in-depth consultations with government representatives, who expected an increase in arrivals following the reactivation of air connections between Syria and Armenia.

The anticipated arrivals were triggered by a shift in power in Syria, which created turbulence within the country and across the region. This development contributed to increased migration flows, with 55 Syrian-Armenians arriving in Armenia from Syria, reflecting the rapidly evolving security and humanitarian situation, as approximately 12,000 Syrian-Armenians remain in Syria. The Armenian government maintained close oversight and monitoring of the situation, coordinating with international partners to facilitate the safe passage of those fleeing hostilities. With diplomatic missions in Aleppo and Damascus closed, alternative communication channels were established to assist individuals seeking safety.



In addition, developments in Lebanon further increased the likelihood of migration, resulting in the arrival of approximately 1,600 Lebanese-Armenians in Armenia since October 2024. This situation created dual challenges for the Armenian government and humanitarian organizations, necessitating response efforts tailored to the distinct needs of people affected by two crises. Both groups require support in areas such as housing, healthcare, and legal assistance to facilitate their integration into Armenian society.

On 14 December 2024, a flight from Beirut to Yerevan arrived with 115 passengers, primarily of Armenian nationality, including 19 individuals from Syria. ARCS interviewed 13 passengers of Syrian origin, some of whom also held dual Lebanese nationality. While many declined to participate, those who were interviewed shared concerns about employment prospects and highlighted the urgent need to relocate due to the escalating humanitarian crisis. Several expressed fear over ongoing hostilities in Syria and Lebanon, citing the direct risks these posed to their families. The interviews also revealed uncertainty about their future in Armenia, underscoring the fluid nature of the crisis and their ongoing search for safety and stability.

As an auxiliary to the Government of Armenia, ARCS plays an essential role in addressing the crises that affect vulnerable populations. Additionally, in response to the to a request from the Office of the High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs ARCS initiated a collaboration with governmental and non-governmental agencies to ensure timely and effective response to the needs of people arriving from Syria and Lebanon. For better coordination, ARCS has initiated a preparatory meeting on 18 December 2024 to jointly develop response scenarios, clarify roles, and align efforts with ARCS's contingency plan and mandate. The Government of Armenia has been in

¹ The ARCS identified 20 February 2025 as the trigger date, with approximately 560 people expected to arrive from Syria. Around 80 people were anticipated to arrive each Sunday starting from 6 December 2024. This scenario was based on indepth discussions with government representatives, who expected an increase in arrivals following the reactivation of air connections between Syria and Armenia. However, as of 20 February, this has not been met, and trigger was not activated.

active contact with Armenia's Embassy in Damascus and the Consul General in Aleppo in Syria to facilitate the resumption of flights from Syria to Armenia which was expected to begin around 20 December.

ARCS ensured key preparedness measures were available including detailed risk assessment to determine potential scale of arrivals, refining contingency plans and strengthening coordination with government bodies such as MFA and Migration Services. ARCS also ensured rapid response capacity via leveraging its extensive network of staff and volunteers.

To respond to the possible crisis, ARCS has launched the **Armenia Population Movement imminent DREF Operation (MDRAM014)** on 19 December 2024, with the objective to ensure that the basic needs of the 2,000 persons arriving to Armenia were met through well-prepared and coordinated response. This included providing essential health services, such as medical care and psychosocial support, facilitating migration assistance through registration and legal guidance, and ensuring effective communication so people on the move are informed about available services and their rights.



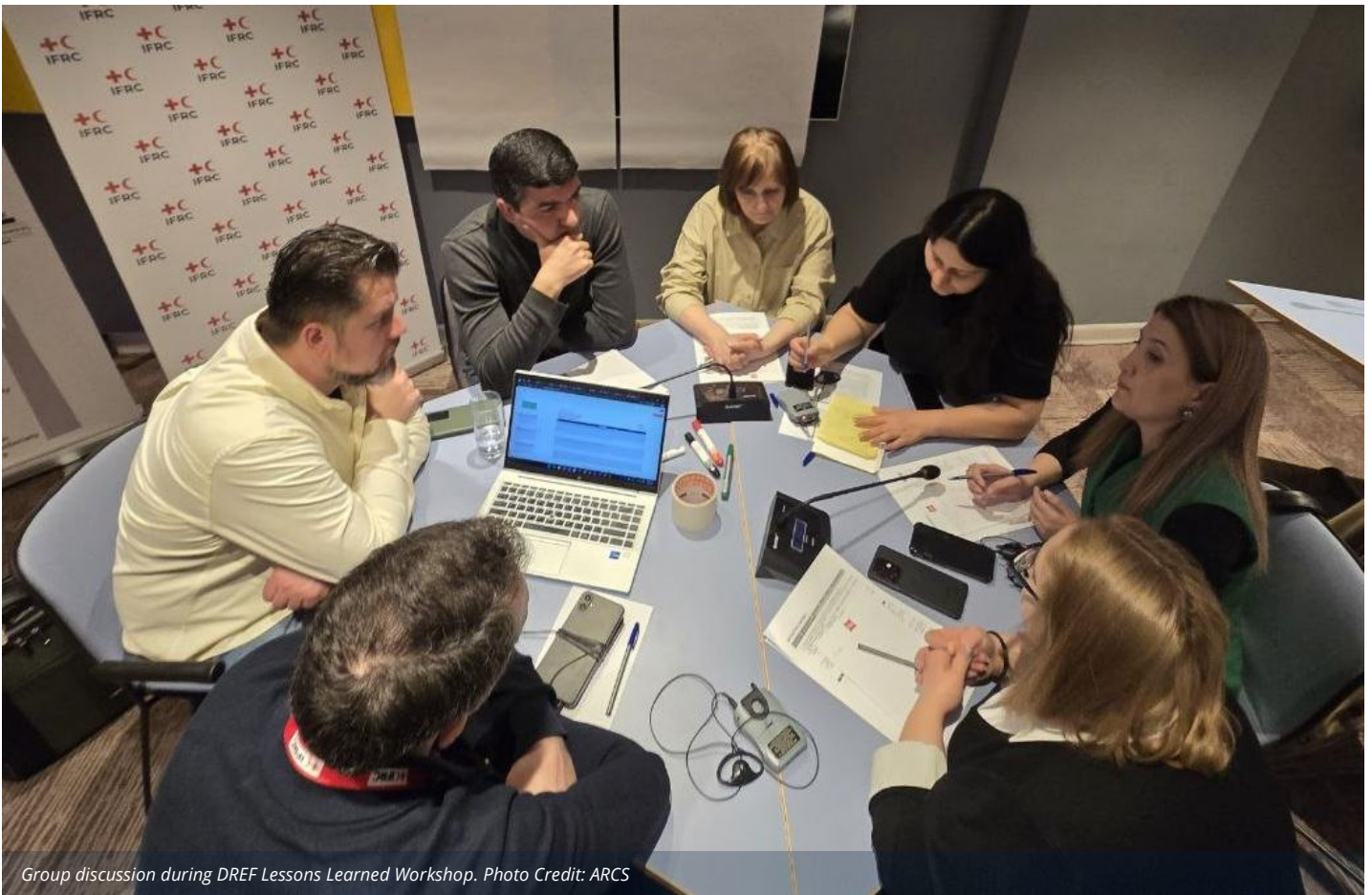
The Armenian Red Cross Society (ARCS) staff conducting rapid needs assessments at Zvartnots Airport with people arriving from Syria on 17 December 2024. Photo: ARCS

The key actions of the operation were to mobilise resources from ARCS headquarters in Yerevan, the Yerevan regional branch and two neighbouring branches in Armavir and Ararat to ensure strategic deployment of staff and volunteers. Additionally, ARCS's available emergency stock was planned to be utilized once the trigger for a response operation was met. Additionally, it was planned to hire legal advisors to provide consultations on asylum-seeking and integration, assisting persons arriving from Syria and Lebanon with residency, work permits, and access to essential services.

Extensive training was planned for first responders on First Aid, protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA), community engagement and accountability (CEA), mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), protection, gender and inclusion (PGI) and migration. Multimedia campaigns were planned to inform people about the move about available services and opportunities. Additionally, it was envisaged to establish a mechanism for media report

analysis and government updates to ensure timely and aligned responses. Additionally, it was planned to strengthen the logistics and supply chain and to preposition essential items. This approach would have allowed comprehensive support for the displaced population.

Furthermore, as one of the key objectives of the DREF Operation, a LLW was conducted on 20–21 March 2025, ahead of the operation's closure on 31 March 2025 to take stock of achievements, lessons learned, and challenges to inform future emergency response along with the areas of ARCS's efforts which require further strengthening to enable timely and efficient response by the National Society to address the anticipated and immediate needs of affected populations. Key stakeholders of the operation, such as ARCS, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent societies (IFRC), International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), representatives of Migration Service as well as representative from Office of the High Commissioner of Diaspora and Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) participated in two-day workshop.



Group discussion during DREF Lessons Learned Workshop. Photo Credit: ARCS

B. Methodology

OVERVIEW OF THE OPERATION

To effectively respond to the basic needs of the displaced people from Syria and Lebanon, the following specific interventions have been planned:



Shelter Housing and Settlement

It was planned to procure and distribute 200 blankets and 200 bed linen sets. Since the response has not been activated, procured items have been stored in the ARCS warehouse for future potential DREF operations. Additionally, the cost variations between the initial planned budget and actual market prices, being lower than expected, allowed for the procurement of 250 items instead of 200, maximizing resources without exceeding the allocated budget.



Health

As envisioned during the planning phase, 50 First Aid kits and 50 Psychological First Aid (PFA) kits were procured as part of anticipation efforts. However, since the operation was not activated, the distribution of these items did not take place. The kits will be stored in the ARCS warehouse for use in future DREF operations.

Additionally, to enhance the capacity of staff and volunteers, a total of four First Aid and PFA trainings were organized reaching 100 participants. Initially trained volunteers were supposed to provide first aid to newly arrived people and in case of critical need to refer them to a medical institution. Nevertheless, due to the activation of the stop mechanism, the need for referrals did not arise. However, ARCS maintained the referral systems in place in case of any changes in the situation.



Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Under this sector, ARCS procured 200 hygiene kits through an agreement with IFRC in Spain as the items were more expensive in the local market. These items will be stored in the ARCS warehouse for use in future DREF operations.



Protection, Gender and Inclusion

ARCS legal advisor provided support to 30 individuals seeking assistance upon arrival at the airport. However, since the trigger event did not happen the planned needs, assessments have been cancelled.



Community engagement and accountability

ARCS developed information materials in coordination with the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs of Armenia. The developed information materials have been actively distributed at Zvartnots Airport by ARCS volunteers to ensure people arriving from Syria and Lebanon are aware of available services and support.



Secretariat Services

Due to the probability of the trigger being activated, ARCS has kept a low-profile approach in case of surge personnel to be deployed and did not activate surge deployment before activation of the trigger. ARCS prioritized developing (ongoing) internal standard operating procedures for migration crises, utilizing its internal capacity. The initially allocated surge funds have been reallocated, with ARCS agreement, to cover the costs of IFRC staff who assisted in monitoring the operation and facilitating the LLW.



National Society Strengthening

Over 150 volunteers were actively engaged in the operation, working in shifts at Zvartnots Airport to provide relevant information to those arriving. Additionally, volunteers were mobilized across Yerevan, Armavir and Ararat to prepare services, ensuring new arrivals received necessary information. To accommodate increased participation and the expanding scope of support, an adjustment in the number of volunteer insurance coverages was requested from 150 to 562 to ensure comprehensive protection for all engaged and incoming volunteers. ARCS was providing support with food and transportation expenses.

ARCS procured essential communication equipment to enhance coordination and risk communication efforts. Additionally, ARCS central warehouse's capacity was enhanced by installing a pallet storage system, a new main gate, and heating cannons, improving working conditions for staff and volunteers in line with minimum standards during cold weather and heatwaves. These upgrades ensured ARCS was ready for any future humanitarian response.

Moreover, a two-day DREF LLW, aligned to the imminent DREF modality was organized within the timeframe of the operation, on 20-21 March 2025. The workshop was held in Yerevan in person with participation of key stakeholders of the operation, including ARCS, the IFRC Armenia Country Office, IFRC Country Cluster Delegation for South Caucasus, IFRC Regional Office for Europe, and ICRC. Representatives of MoLSA, Migration Service and from the Office of the High Commissioner of Diaspora were also present at the workshop.

OBJECTIVE AND METHODOLOGY

The objective of the LLW was to review key lessons learned, best practices, and challenges encountered during the Armenia population movement imminent DREF operation and to inform future operational planning of the ARCS.

Additionally, the two-day workshop aimed at

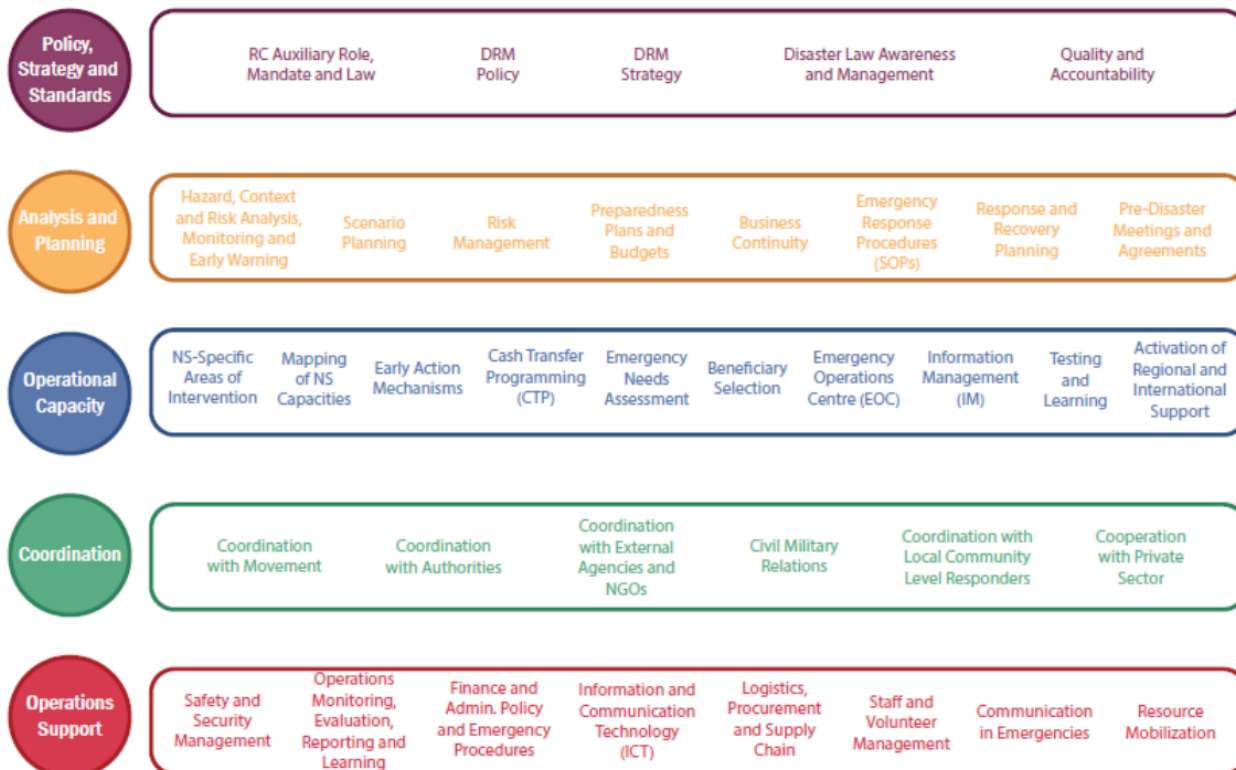
- assessing ARCS's current capacity and identify areas that required strengthening; as well as
- guiding ARCS in enhancing its ability to prepare for and respond to imminent disasters and emergencies, incorporating lessons learned into future operational planning.

Specifically, the workshop aimed at:

- Identifying priority actions to address gaps and improve ARCS's emergency response systems.
- Based on the LLW results, initiating further revision of ARCS Population Movement and Conflict Scenario Movement Contingency Plans.

The methodology of the workshop was structured by the PER approach, designed to strengthen National Societies' capacity to prepare for and respond to disasters and crises. This approach applies a cyclical process of measuring, analysing, and developing action plans to improve response mechanisms. The PER framework consists of 37 components across five areas, ensuring that all necessary systems are in place for effective emergency response. The PER's objectives include supporting National Societies in assessing, planning, implementing, and monitoring their preparedness for response actions.

Short summary of the PER mechanism is as follows:



The two-day LLW followed the below schedule:

- Day 1:** The first day of the workshop was dedicated to a brief overview of the main components of the DREF and its overall purpose, with a focus on anticipatory action and the imminent DREF modality. Additionally, the National Society's response mechanism was discussed in relation to the five areas and 37 components of the PER framework. This session focused on the ARCS's experience applying the PER framework within the context of the 2024–2025 Population Movement DREF operation. Presented during the LLW, the session highlighted how PER tools supported ARCS in activating and revising its contingency plan, establishing an EOC, coordinating with Movement and government partners, and enhancing operational readiness despite the migration influx trigger not being met. It served as a practical case study of how PER contributes to structured preparedness, adaptive response planning, and institutional strengthening.

ARCS staff also presented an overview of the operation, including the context, operational strategy (target population, services, operational locations, etc.), key achievements, and other relevant aspects. Additionally, the meeting provided a valuable opportunity to reflect on ARCS's overall PER assessment and results, and to discuss the progress made, since the DREF Armenia Floods operation (MDRAM013). To facilitate deeper engagement, participants were divided into three groups based on the PER structure and based on the profiles of participants.
- Day 2:** The day began with a recap of Day 1, followed by group presentations of their discussion findings. Participants then revisited key learnings in groups and collaboratively worked on developing recommendations. One of the key highlights of the day was a prioritization exercise, to select key priority actions and steps, as well as to assign responsible focal points and decide on the implementation timeline.

Please refer to the "Annexes" section for the detailed agenda of the workshop.

C. Lessons Learned

The discussion of the key lessons learned of the operation has been organized in groups. As mentioned, the methodology of the workshop was based on the PER approach, with discussions on its five components: Policy, Strategy and Standards; Analysis and Planning; Operational Capacity; Operations Support; Coordination.

Considering that 26 participants were present at the workshop three groups were organized to discuss the following themes:

- **Group 1: Policy, Strategy and Standards** and **Analysis and Planning.**
- **Group 2: Operational Capacity** and **Operations Support.**
- **Group 3: Coordination.**

Based on the results of the group discussions, it is evident that ARCS has achieved significant progress, while also identifying areas that require further improvement. Under the area of **Policy, Strategy, and Standards**, one key achievement was the alignment of the operation with ARCS's mandate and its auxiliary role. ARCS continues to train its volunteers and staff to ensure awareness of existing SOPs, and to act in accordance with the seven principles of RCRC, the Code of Conduct, and the "Do No Harm" principle. In parallel, ARCS has drafted a DRM policy, which still requires finalization. The good practice of providing ongoing training for volunteers will be sustained. Furthermore, it is important to enhance certain procedures and MoUs by clearly defining roles and responsibilities.

In relation to **Analysis and Planning**, the needs assessment was primarily based on secondary data, as conducting a comprehensive primary assessment was not feasible at the time. Nevertheless, ARCS

successfully gathered some primary data from a few individuals at the airport. The operation was informed by previous population movement experiences and guided by the existing PoA. A two-month lead time was planned, and the ARCS team was prepared to respond in case arrivals occurred in March. Financial, operational, and reputational risks in the operation were successfully mitigated through early planning, activation of the stop mechanism, and strong coordination with partners. However, more consistent documentation and follow-up of coordination meetings are needed. Integration of arriving individuals, particularly Syrian and Lebanese Armenians remains a challenge, especially due to language barriers in education settings such as kindergartens and schools.

In terms of **Operational Capacity**, the operation has been the first successful DREF operation under the readiness area. ARCS's timely decision-making enabled the implementation of anticipatory actions and readiness activities, ensuring that human resources and equipment were in place for the initial phase. However, in the event of further escalation, these capacities would have required scaling up to meet increased needs. ARCS applied a flexible readiness structure that enabled it to adapt swiftly to changing needs and evolving scenarios. Pre-positioned stock was available under the from ARCS emergency stock. stop mechanism was implemented which demonstrated ARCS's adaptability to forecast-based triggers. Additionally, as ARCS has a well-established beneficiary verification process for cash assistance, informed by its previous experience with population movements, the NS is well-positioned to implement this response modality to support those in need. Several challenges have also been identified. It was noted by workshop participants, that poor warehouse conditions created difficulties for storage and potential distribution of essential household items and as ARCS has limited prior experience with the IFRC GO Platform hosting the DREF application and reporting process, additional training would be required.

Regarding **Operations Support**, ARCS has safety and security regulations in place, though further enhancement is needed. It is important to note that no security incidents were reported, as the anticipated trigger did not occur. It is also worth highlighting that ARCS increased the number of volunteers covered by insurance to 562, which will allow the NS to mobilize capacities ensuring volunteer safety. The lack of centralized tools for volunteers and staff to update and track progress was a challenge. Coordination of data collection between ARCS headquarters, branches, and volunteers needs strengthening. Additionally, procurement processes require improvement to ensure greater responsiveness during emergency. The procurement of some relief items, including ARCS uniforms and visibility materials, was challenging, as ARCS relies on IFRC for international procurement. This approach can lead to higher costs and additional environmental considerations.

Furthermore, ARCS maintained strong internal and external **Coordination**, particularly between the DM and PM departments, as well as effective collaboration with government entities and international organizations. Notably, ARCS participated in the Migration Management Working Group, where the DREF Operation was presented. This proposal was considered relevant and timely by the government. For further improvement, ARCS should enhance coordination with some governmental entities such as repatriation and integration units. Additionally, ARCS should ensure that relevant information is communicated to all government departments, as the Asylum Provision Department had not been informed about the operation.

In addition to findings and discussions according to the PER approach it was discussed that implementing the operation without the DREF funds would have been challenging. It would have required reaching out to other resources and applying to additional partners, which would have made the application process longer and less effective.

The detailed results of the group discussions, organized according to the PER areas during the workshop and highlighting both achievements and areas for improvement, are presented in the tables below.

Disclaimer: Not all components under each PER area were discussed or deemed relevant, given that the situation did not escalate. Specifically, the following components were not covered:

- **Analysis and Planning:** Components: Preparedness plans and budgets; business continuity.
- **Operational Capacity:** Components: NS-Specific Areas of Intervention; Testing and Learning; Activation of Regional and International Support.
- **Operations Support:** Components: Information and Communication technology.

POLICY, STRATEGY & STANDARDS

Components that provides the foundational elements for National Societies' preparedness and response systems to meet their mandate as humanitarian organizations and provide quality emergency.



PER Component	Achievements	Areas of Improvement
RC Auxiliary role, Mandate and Law	<p>The response was aligned with the ARCS Mandate, as it focused on the readiness which eventually resulted in supporting the government's efforts to respond to emergencies.</p> <p>Additionally, the operation was aligned with ARCS auxiliary role, as it supported the government in areas where ARCS can support, such as CVA and MHPSS.</p> <p>Moreover, it has been discussed that the government is aware of ARCS areas of intervention.</p>	<p>Although the government is aware of ARCS Mandate, it is advised to continue conducting seminars and meetings to raise awareness about the ARCS areas of interventions/assistance.</p> <p>It would be beneficial to involve partners in the operation from the planning phase. However, due to IFRC-DREF procedure and the limited timeframe to submit and have the application approved, the operation was discussed with the relevant governmental entities.</p>
DRM Policy and Strategy	<p>DRM Policy is not finalized yet, however ARCS strategy for 2022-2026 includes disaster related sections and possible scenarios. Additionally, relevant DM related procedures are in place.</p> <p>ARCS has developed NS Contingency plan which is flexible and can be adjusted to various situations.</p>	<p>DRM policy needs to be finalized, and considerations should be taken to include anticipatory action in the policy.</p>
Disaster Law Awareness and Management	<p>ARCS has regularly trained volunteers and most of the staff and volunteers are familiar with the SOPs, therefore, they are well-equipped to act in accordance with the seven principles of RCRC.</p> <p>Additionally, SOPs include risk assessment and forecast methodologies.</p> <p>Additionally, as part of the National DRR platform (ARNAP), a thematic group was formed for early warning and</p>	<p>The regular training of volunteers is a good practice at ARCS and ensures that they remain well-equipped and aware to be able to support as required.</p> <p>While the thematic group as part of the National DRR platform is formed, it is not</p>

	forecasting, which is led by ARCS and IFRC.	fully established yet and needs to be finalized.
Quality and Accountability	Implementation of the “Do No Harm” principle was challenging since the response was not implemented. Nevertheless, related to the principle, ARCS ensured that volunteers received and are regularly briefed / trained on CEA and PGI.	<i>As per above on regular training/refreshers.</i>
Other	<p>MoUs: ARCS has an MoU signed with the MIA in 2023.</p> <p>Code of Conduct: Additionally, ARCS faced no challenges in implementing the RCRC Code of Conduct. Existing volunteers were aware of the Code of Conduct and newly recruited volunteers are trained and regularly briefed on the topic.</p> <p>Need for the response: These response levels were discussed and agreed with partners. For large-scale crises like population movement or conflict, ARCS follows Movement scenarios outlined in line with the Seville Agreement, MCA, and MCP. For medium-scale events, protocols are included in the national contingency plan, while small-scale situations involving up to 50 households are addressed at the regional level, with the ARCS Directorate able to declare an emergency and act as needed.</p>	<p>MoUs: The MoU signed with the Ministry of Internal Affairs is currently too general and would benefit from further refinement. Specifically, it should include clear data-sharing protocols, define the roles and responsibilities of ARCS before, during, and after population movement crises, and clarify the National Society's position within the broader coordination mechanism.</p> <p>Roles and Responsibilities: Roles and responsibilities between ARCS, Government and Partners are clearly defined, however they are not documented and could be improved. For example, it can be further clarified within the implementation plans and protocols between ARCS and relevant government actors.</p>

ANALYSIS & PLANNING

Components which enables National Societies to better understands and plan for the evolving risks and changing context.



PER Components	Achievements	Areas for Improvement
Hazards, Context and Risk Analysis, Monitoring and Early warning	The initial needs assessment was based on secondary sources from partners and the government. Later, volunteers gathered primary data in airport when people arrived at Armenia - using a pre-developed form, which was then analysed and compared with the secondary sources.	No pre-analysis was conducted and feasible to conduct; the main source of information came from media and based in information from IFRC and ICRC offices in Syria. A public article was published, which mentioned that 12,000 people are expected to arrive, but further information was lacking. https://zartokmedia.com/2024/12/05/first-

	<p>In-depth needs assessment was not feasible as people did not arrive and the primary information was gathered from very few people.</p> <p>The secondary sources were reliable as they were based on governmental information.</p>	<p>group-of-syrian-armenians-to-arrive-in-armenia-on-december-14-while-around-12000-armenians-remain-in-aleppo-amid-difficult-evacuation-conditions</p> <p>ARCS contacted the Ministry of External Affairs, but they did not respond with any information.</p>
<p>Scenario Planning</p>	<p>The operation was based on previous population movement experience: lessons learned from the previous operation Population Movement in 2020 and knowledge have been considered.</p> <p>ARCS has Contingency planning in place and the response was developed based on the plan.</p> <p>Anticipatory assessment was conducted, with two scenarios included.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.) In case of a large influx of arrivals, additional resources would be required to meet the needs. 2.) In case people do not arrive, the focus of the operation would shift to capacity enhancement. <p>The DREF plan of intervention was existing and flexible, and it outlines the steps to be taken with deadlines and responsible parties. The plan was effective in terms of facilitating the capacity development, enhancement of the stock and improvement of the warehouse conditions.</p> <p>A two-month lead time was planned. The ARCS team was prepared in case people arrive in March.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Risk Management</p>	<p>Estimated financial risks were about the procedures between ARCS and IFRC limiting procurement to CHF 5,000, which was more of a challenge than a risk.</p> <p>Operational risks included people avoiding contact and refusing to provide information and to speak, as well as the lack of perceived support. However, most people provided information, with more</p>	<p>N/A</p>

	<p>than 50 per cent agreeing to speak with volunteers.</p> <p>Reputational risks were related to the volunteers working in accordance with the Code of Conduct, which were mitigated through training and awareness raising. Volunteers wore uniforms or badges showing the ARCS emblem to ensure their proper identification.</p> <p>Before going to the field, various briefings were held on Safety and Security, the Code of Conduct, communication with people to be assisted, partners, and the use of various tools.</p> <p>Psychologists were involved in providing staff and volunteers with training, as well as briefing and debriefing sessions to support their well-being and preparedness.</p>	
Emergency Response Procedures (SOPs)	<p>SOPs are available such as CVA, EOP SOP. Additionally, they have been updated to adapt to anticipatory action in line with contingency scenario.</p>	Better define roles and responsibilities within the SOPs and MoUs.
Response and Recovery planning	<p>Similar scenarios have been included in the plan and actions were effective and Operational strategy remained unchanged.</p>	N/A
Pre-Disaster Meetings and Agreements	<p>Due to the limited timeframe of the operation, it was not possible to organize full-scale pre-disaster meetings and agreements with all relevant partners. While initial coordination was initiated and some preparatory discussions took place, the short lead time prevented a more structured and formalized engagement process ahead of the anticipated arrivals.</p>	Pay more attention to coordination and documentation of the meetings.
Other	<p>No significant challenges related to cultural aspects were observed during the operation. Armenia has a long-standing tradition of welcoming diverse populations, and the community is generally accustomed to cultural differences. There were no reports of separation or exclusion, and the overall environment has remained inclusive and respectful toward people arriving from Syria and Lebanon.</p>	Integration remains a challenge due to language and dialect differences, particularly in schools and kindergartens; it is important to pay attention in terms of planning.

OPERATIONAL CAPACITY

Components which facilitates National Societies' response actions, operational coordination, sector-specific needs and actions and methods of support.



PER Component	Achievements	Areas for Improvement
<p>Mapping of NS Capacities</p>	<p>First successful DREF completed under the IFRC-DREF Anticipatory Pillar.</p> <p>ARCS speedy decision-making process ensured timely readiness.</p> <p>HR and equipment were sufficient to manage the response at the initial stage.</p> <p>Existing experienced teams played a critical role in response efficiency.</p> <p>Volunteers and staff received specific training to strengthen response capacity (CEA, PGI, and MHPSS).</p> <p>Knowledge of DREF processes has improved, enhancing ARCS's overall preparedness for future responses. This progress is the result of IFRC-led trainings on emergency tools and practical exercises conducted during the development of EOC Standard Operating Procedures and Movement Contingency Plan scenario planning.</p> <p>ARCS demonstrated strong flexibility in its operational structure to adapt to changing needs throughout the operation. All relevant units were actively engaged, with clear tasks and responsibilities coordinated through the ARCS headquarters and its regional branches. This structured approach enabled efficient information flow, timely adjustments, and alignment across departments. Notably, volunteers played a significantly larger role during the readiness phase compared to previous operations, contributing to preparatory activities, awareness raising, and support at key entry points. This inclusive and</p>	<p>Poor warehouse conditions affected storage and distribution efficiency.</p> <p>In the event of response activation, the lack of available transportation resources, such as trucks, could lead to delays in the timely delivery of aid and essential items.</p> <p>While HR capacity was initially sufficient, escalation of the situation could have overwhelmed response efforts, requiring further human resources to directly support the operation.</p>

	<p>well-coordinated structure strengthened ARCS's ability to respond effectively despite evolving circumstances. I</p> <p>Lessons learned from the PER self-assessment of October 2024 and previous DREF processes were documented for future improvement.</p>	
Early Action mechanisms	<p>Pre-positioned relief items were ready for distribution from other sources (DREF 2023, USAID, and EA).</p> <p>ARCS effectively used internal coordination and contingency planning mechanisms.</p> <p>Movement Contingency Plan was in place.</p> <p>Stop mechanism was implemented, demonstrating adaptability to forecast-based triggers.</p>	N/A
Cash Transfer Programming (CTP)	N/A	EHIs were not the right modality to address the needs of affected populations, as many requested cash assistances upon arrival at the airport. Cash assistance can be considered.
Emergency Needs Assessment		Conducting needs assessments was challenging due to the unpredictable and dispersed nature of arrivals from abroad. To address this, ARCS combined several data sources to map out potential needs. These included coordination with the Government of Armenia, airport interviews with arriving individuals, and close monitoring of regional developments in Syria and Lebanon. Additionally, ARCS drew on its extensive experience from previous population movement operations, including the Karabakh crises in 2020 and 2023, to anticipate likely needs such as shelter, health services, and legal assistance. This multi-source approach helped guide preparedness measures despite the limited opportunity for on-site assessments.
Beneficiary Selection	ARCS has a verification procedure based on previous experience related to cash assistance provided in previous operations earlier, such as DREF Armenia Floods (MDRAM013) where people	N/A

	<p>affected by floods and Emergency Appeal (MDRAM012) where displaced people were supported through cash assistance. All lists associated with any type of assistance go through verification. Since the provision of cash assistance is typically carried out in close collaboration with government entities, the ministries share lists of affected individuals. Before transferring the cash assistance, ARCS conducts random verification calls to people on the list, asking several questions related to vulnerability, household size, and other relevant factors.</p>	
Emergency Operations Centre (EOC)	<p>The EOC was not activated during this operation, as the situation did not escalate to the level requiring a full response. However, the EOC structure remains in place and ready for activation if needed, drawing on lessons from previous operations. As part of the preparedness efforts, ARCS reviewed and updated the EOC-related scenarios in its contingency plans to better reflect the dynamics of population movement, ensuring improved coordination and readiness for future emergencies.</p>	N/A
Information Management (IM)	<p>GO Platform was utilized for structured response planning and information sharing.</p> <p>Wider media outreach (ARCS staff and volunteers in the Zvartnots airport).</p>	Limited experience in using the GO Platform for joint work, requiring additional training and familiarization.

OPERATIONS SUPPORT

Components that allows National Societies to maintain the basic functions required during an emergency to be able to operate.

 Safety and Security Management	 Operations Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Learning	 Finance and Admin Policy and Emergency Procedures	 Information and Communication Technology	 Logistics, Procurement and Supply Chain	 Staff and Volunteer Management	 Communication in Emergencies	 Resource Mobilisation
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PER Component	Achievements	Areas for Improvement
Safety, Security and Management	<p>ARCS has a Safety and Security Regulation in place, currently being finalized.</p> <p>No reported security incidents, because the response did not take place.</p>	N/A

	<p>Volunteers (562) have insurance, but staff do not.</p>	<p>Improving staff insurance is an important area to address in future operations. Ensuring comprehensive coverage would enhance staff safety and well-being, support duty of care obligations, and strengthen ARCS's overall readiness and operational sustainability during emergencies.</p>
<p>Operations, Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Learning</p>	<p>Reporting systems exist following IFRC requirements of reporting in the GO Platform.</p> <p>ARCS updated the existing information after each weekly flight from Syria and Lebanon. ARCS also developed a template for the data collection.</p> <p>Screening of needs conducted with limited number of people arriving at the airport and SADD data was available.</p> <p>Staff and volunteers were permanently stationed at the airport, monitoring the situation and updating information on a daily basis.</p>	<p>Lack of a centralized tool for all departments and volunteers to share updates and track progress.</p> <p>Data collection coordination between HQ, branches, and volunteers could be improved.</p> <p>Needs assessment was done however with limited people at the airport. This created constraints for the operation planning.</p> <p>New EspoCRM system introduced for better tracking; however, further cascading training is needed.</p>
<p>Finance and Admin, Policy and Emergency Procedures</p>	<p>ARCS has pre-positioned emergency stocks from previous operations and other fundings sources to be used.</p> <p><i>Please see further details above at the relevant section.</i></p>	<p>ARCS lacks internal funds that can be used before DREF funds are secured and transferred.</p> <p>Procurement processes are required to be more flexible to ensure timely and efficient emergency response. The experience within the previous DREF Armenia floods showed that procured protective items were delivered 7 months later. As for the current DREF hygiene items that have been procedures have not been received yet (<i>This point was discussed in the Policy, Strategy and Standards group</i>).</p> <p>Larger operations require stricter adherence to IFRC procedures to ensure compliance, accountability, and transparency. While considerations and discussions are ongoing on the development of (Simplified) Early Action Protocols for Heatwave or Population Movement scenarios, this requires substantial effort and funding support.</p>

		<p>Financial procedures: The financial agreement between ARCS and IFRC created a challenge for the procurement processes as it was limited to CHF 5,000 and it slowed down the procurement processes. <i>(This point was discussed in the Policy, Strategy and Standards group)</i></p>
<p>Logistics, Procurement and Supply Chain</p>	<p>The pre-positioned items were not distributed however remain available for future DREF Operations.</p>	<p>Challenges in vehicle availability for transportation and distribution. A truck is a priority need.</p> <p>Procurement challenges with some relief items (e.g., first aid kits, rescue bags) since ARCS is not allowed to do international procurement. It is difficult to find a supplier providing all required items in one package/kit.</p> <p>A framework agreement with suppliers is recommended to streamline procurement, however, in case of certain items, there is a lack of national suppliers which requires international procurement.</p> <p>Warehouse improvements are needed, namely better shelving, heating/cooling systems needed.</p> <p>Despite the improved conditions, it would be beneficial for ARCS to maintain a pre-positioned stock of essential items to enable a timely response to disasters or crises, even before additional funding is secured.</p>
<p>Staff and Volunteers Management</p>	<p>Strong volunteer base (1,400 volunteers trained, 500 on standby for emergencies).</p> <p>The number of staff and volunteers was proportionate to the scale of the operation.</p> <p>Motivation & support provided both to staff and volunteers, namely psychological well-being sessions, First Aid, PGI, and CEA trainings.</p>	<p>High turnover, particularly at the regional level.</p> <p>Lack of automated volunteer management system. MOTI which is an IFRC online tool to assist supervisors assess the level of volunteer motivation and well-being.</p> <p>SalesForce tool (another software to assess and monitor the involvement of volunteers) is in the progress of being used.</p>
<p>Communication in Emergencies</p>	<p>To enhance communication, relevant equipment was provided, and activities were carried out according to the plan.</p>	<p>Enhance internal communication; better coordinate the flow of the information by</p>

		HQ and branches, as well as departments and teams.
Resource Mobilization	DREF funds were secured to be able to implement readiness activities in anticipation of the escalation of the event.	Implementing the operation without the DREF funds would have been challenging, requiring seeking funding from other resources and engaging with partners and donors. This would have made the readiness efforts prolonged and less effective in case of the escalation of the situation.

COORDINATION

Components that describe ways National Societies can coordinate and collaborate with communities, public authorities, humanitarian actors and RCRC Movement actors.

PER Components	Achievements	Areas for Improvement
Coordination with Movement	<p>Good internal ARCS coordination between departments, mainly between DM and PM departments.</p> <p>Good coordination with IFRC and PNSs – Austrian RC, Swiss RC and Italian RC. PNSs were informed and were ready to assist if situation escalate.</p> <p>Good collaboration with IFRC CO, CCD, and ROE.</p> <p>The anticipatory action was also coordinated with the MIA, MoLSA and Migration Services obtain detailed data on the anticipated influx of people arriving from Syria and Lebanon.</p>	<p>Limited communication exchange has been with The Syrian Arab Red Crescent Society (SARC), as the team was busy anticipatory action, and it has been proposed to dedicate a focal point who could share some neutral information.</p>
Coordination with Authorities	<p>Although the Government of Armenia has established emergency response tools — including contingency plans, state reserves, and MES mechanisms — these were not activated in terms of fund allocation during the incident. In contrast, ARCS swiftly activated the DREF, which proved both timely and relevant. The DREF</p>	<p>Limitation of the Government to share the personal data of arrived individuals, based on the Republic of Armenia Law on the Protection of Personal Data.</p> <p>It has been advised to improve the coordination with repatriation and integration centres.</p>

	<p>operation addressed critical gaps by supporting readiness and enabling a rapid initial response. It complemented national systems by bridging operational and funding gaps at a time when government tools were not yet mobilized.</p> <p>There was good coordination with the Migration Service, particularly in setting up effective communication channels. This included the regular sharing of internal information, which facilitated a common understanding of the evolving situation, aligned response priorities, and supported timely decision-making across involved actors.</p> <p>A Migration Management Working Group, led by the Migration Service, was established to coordinate preparedness and response efforts related to potential population movements from Syria and Lebanon. The WG brought together key actors, including relevant authorities, UN agencies, NGOs, and INGOs. ARCS actively participated as a member and contributed to scenario-based planning. The WG developed a draft action plan for coordinated response; however, it remains pending formal endorsement by the Government. During WG discussions, Government representatives presented existing response mechanisms and tools, though no funds were allocated for implementation at that stage. ARCS also introduced the potential activation of the DREF, which was recognized by Government counterparts as a timely and relevant contribution to bridging readiness and early response gaps.</p>	<p>Only one meeting has happened with the Government and UN (interagency meeting).</p> <p>Asylum provision department of the Government was not fully informed about the ARCS response/activities. Not enough meetings have happened for the follow up.</p>
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Coordination with External Agencies and NGOs	There was good coordination and regular information exchange with UNHCR, particularly in the context of preparedness planning. Data available through UN agencies and the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement — including displacement trends, population estimates, and regional movement scenarios — were shared to support joint situational analysis and response planning	N/A
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D. Recommendations

After group discussions on the achievements and challenges, participants presented their findings. Subsequently, each group worked on formulating recommendations and identifying specific actions to be taken. Once the actions were defined, participants prioritized the recommendations using the following levels of priority:

Levels of Priority



As shown in the table below, several **high-priority** areas have been identified. It is recommended that a SOP be developed and approved by the ARCS Board to enable the immediate use of funds, which can later be reimbursed. In the area of Policies, Strategies, and Standards, key priorities for ARCS include the development and adjustment of procurement and logistics procedures to ensure responsiveness during emergencies (to be flexible), the enhancement of MOUs with governmental entities, and the finalization of a DRM policy/strategy. Additionally, insurance for ARCS staff members should be considered. High priority areas also include securing internal funding and develop resource mobilization strategy to respond to crises, including the prepositioning of relief stocks and readiness for CVA. Additionally, establishing a joint working group between ARCS and government stakeholders is recommended. The integration of psychosocial support into the consultation process and interviews with asylum seekers should also be considered.

Medium priority actions include improving warehouse conditions, continuing collaboration with repatriation and integration centres, and developing MOUs to strengthen referral pathways. Additionally, it is recommended to consider the provision of MHPSS services for relevant government agencies.

Based on the discussion, low priority actions include developing interventions informed by needs assessments and increasing the number of trained staff and volunteers. Where feasible, providing online or recorded training sessions is recommended to support cascading of capacity enhancement. Additionally, it would be beneficial to establish centralized tools to facilitate information sharing and ensure that staff and volunteers across all branches and departments remain consistently informed and up to date.

Disclaimer: The prioritization exercise during the workshop followed a color-coded approach: red for high priority, green for medium priority, and yellow for low priority, which differs from the codes mentioned in the report template. As a result, there may appear to be discrepancies between the colours and the number of votes in the table below. This is because the colours align with the workshop methodology, but the voting remained the same as conducted during the workshop.

RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBLE FOCAL POINT	LEVEL OF PRIORITY <i>(Number of votes)</i>	TIMELINE / DEADLINE
Policy, Strategy, and Standards			
<p>Develop an SOP to allow the immediate use of funds, with reimbursement processes in place. This SOP should be approved by the ARCS board.</p> <p>Not only ARCS sources but other funding resources (including IFRC): HR, financial, logistic resources to owe until it is reimbursed).</p> <p>It is recommended to develop or refine scenario-specific Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for each key area of response, ensuring they cover all phases of the response cycle - preparedness, readiness, anticipatory action, response, and recovery. These SOPs should clearly outline roles, triggers, and coordination mechanisms to enable timely, predictable, and well-coordinated action across partners. Integrating forecast-based triggers, resource pre-positioning, and transition planning will strengthen the overall effectiveness and coherence of the response.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ARCS Finance • ARCS Lawyer 	6 RED	31 Dec 2025
Insurance for staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ARCS HR • IFRC 	5 RED	31 Dec 2025
Develop Procurement / Logistics Procedures in Emergencies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ARCS Proc • IFRC ROE 	3 RED	30 June 2026
The MoU between ARCS and MIA, and other Government Stakeholders needs to be improved and further specified.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ARCS Senior Leadership 	2 RED 1 YELLOW	Continuous
It is recommended to finalize and operationalize the ARCS Disaster Management (DM) Strategy as a priority,		1 RED	

ensuring it reflects current risks, capacities, and coordination mechanisms. Once finalized, the strategy should be formally shared with key partners to strengthen alignment, promote joint planning, and enhance overall coherence in preparedness and response efforts.			
Additional explanation and awareness-raising are needed regarding what ARCS can and cannot do, even though the response aligns with its auxiliary role.			
Have regular meetings with the government to raise awareness about the ARCS mandate. Share information through digital and social platforms, as well as communication tools.			
Continuing to train volunteers on the Code of Conduct has proven to be a positive and effective practice, which should be continued. The training should also include CEA, PGI, gender, and inclusion.			
It is recommended to include relevant partners in the trainings referenced above to foster joint preparedness, strengthen coordination, and promote shared understanding of roles and protocols. Key stakeholders to involve include representatives from government authorities (e.g. MES, Migration Service), UN agencies (such as UNHCR and IOM), local and international NGOs, and other Movement partners.			
Update the ARCS strategy to include readiness aspects.			
Activate partners and local organizations to be prepared for responses and to act in alignment with the updated ARCS strategy.			
Update the agreement/decision between ARCS and IFRC regarding procurement to speed up acquiring items and delivering them to the field.			
Analysis and Planning			

Some of the SOPs need enhancement, particularly those related to beneficiary registration and needs assessment.			
If a similar situation occurs in 2025, information should be received through the government and UNHCR as reliable sources.			
Analyse the gaps regarding implementation and considering other interventions and pre-positioning of cash assistance. This is because most newly arrived individuals requested cash assistance during the assessments conducted at the airport.			
Ensure that staff members have insurance, as volunteers do, since currently, staff do not have coverage.			
Receive support from partners to conduct a large-scale risk assessment. There is a need to improve contact with the government, partners, and information sharing.			
Operational Capacity			
Improve warehouse conditions, namely storage conditions (refrigerator for food items, medicaments).		2 YELLOW 3 GREEN	Continuous
Design intervention based on needs assessment (EHIs, cash...). Design a proper programme.		2 yellow	Continuous
To have more trained staff members and volunteers, have online/ recorded training for cascading.		2 YELLOW	Continuous
Get a truck It is recommended to improve ARCS logistics by acquiring 5–8 metric ton trucks to ensure timely aid delivery during crises and large-scale emergencies. Strengthening the fleet will reduce delays and enhance response capacity.			
Conduct a one-week Induction on the DREF training with country-specific scenarios and the use of the GO Platform			
Operations Support			

To have internal funds pre-positioned to respond, including stocks, CVA among others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IFRC/ARCS FP, included in the CVAP 	4 RED	24 months
It is recommended to develop and adopt emergency procurement procedures to ensure timely and flexible acquisition of goods and services during crises, enabling faster and more efficient response operations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ARCS Senior Management 	3 RED	6 - 12 months
To establish a centralized tool for shared updates and tracking process to keep all departments and branches updated.		1 YELLOW	Continuous
Develop fundraising strategy for funds to be kept to ARCS bank account.		1 GREEN	Continuous
To develop and enhance existing policies on a regular basis and develop new ones (audit recommendation).			
It is recommended to adopt and apply emergency procedures that are aligned with IFRC standards, ensuring ARCS operations in crisis settings follow recognized best practices for efficiency, accountability, and coordination.			
To add a part for emergency procurement in the existing guideline.			
Framework agreement practice to be implemented widely.			
Keep improving warehouse conditions improved, including heating and cooling systems.			
It is recommended to develop a pilot project for the leasing or procurement of a truck, with a business plan that enables its use for income-generating activities during non-emergency periods—such as sub-renting or providing delivery services to partner organizations—while ensuring its availability for rapid deployment during emergencies.			
Ensure the provision of Per diems, and incentives to volunteers to support their retention and motivation.			

Regular acknowledgment of their contributions should also be conducted			
Implement widely MOTI, sales force software that was launched.			
One week training on DREF by ROE for ARCS Heads of Departments, then cascade to other ARCS staff and volunteers.			
To keep working with IFRC FP to develop the EAP, sEAP.			
Have exchange of experience with other NS with DREF experience.			
Coordination			
Population Movement RC and Government working group		2 RED	Continuous
Psychosocial support included in consulting process and interviews with asylum seekers during applications	Ongoing	1 RED	
To plan coordination with NS, IFRC, ICRC in "country of departure".	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ARCS • MIA 	2 YELLOW 2 GREEN	
Explore MoU with Ministry of Internal Affairs to exchange information, and other stakeholders, MoUs to be updated with different agencies on different hazards/scenarios.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ARCS, • IFRC, • Government 	2 GREEN	
Continue collaboration regarding repatriation and integration center, as well as development of MoUs for referrals.		1 GREEN	
to provide MHPSS services for staff of government agencies involved in field response, whose mental well-being may be affected by the nature of their work. ARCS PSS practitioners can offer tailored support to help reduce stress, promote resilience, and strengthen the overall well-being of frontline responders.		1 GREEN	
To proactively provide the Government (different ministries) more information about tools and ARCS capacity in different scenarios, Round Tables with the Government.			

Include government agencies during the development of the DREF application to ensure aligned efforts while avoiding duplication.			
Referrals from the repatriation and integration center and people in refugee like status can be referred (Armenian citizens).			

E. General Assessment of the Operation

Armenia Population Movement imminent DREF Operation (MDRAM014) has been proved to be one of the first DREFs successfully implemented under the Participatory pillar of the DREF Operations. Having followed the PER approach for the discussion workshop participants workshop participants discussed the operation tacking main component of five PER areas: Policy, Strategy and Standards, Analysis and Planning, Operational Capacity, Operations Support and Coordination. The discussions highlighted that ARCS has effectively aligned its operations with its auxiliary role and mandate. Although the Disaster Risk Management (DRM) Policy is yet to be finalized, other key strategies address potential scenarios and guide preparedness. ARCS has also done commendable work in ensuring that volunteers are well-trained and operate in accordance with the IFRC Code of Conduct and fundamental principles.

The ARCS response was informed by both secondary data from government and partners, and primary data gathered by volunteers at the airport using pre-developed forms, although comprehensive assessment was limited. The operation was informed by the lessons from 2020 Population Movement response and guided by existing contingency plans, anticipatory assessments, and a flexible DREF intervention plan. ARCS was prepared for two scenarios: for large influx and for limited arrivals, both with a two-month lead time. Staff and volunteer capacity was strengthened through trainings in First Aid and PFA. SOPs were updated to align with anticipatory actions and similar scenarios were planned which ensured the operational strategy remain unchanged.

Timely decision-making, sufficient human and material resources, and the engagement of experienced teams contributed to the efficient launch of the response. Volunteers and staff were equipped through targeted training in CEA, PGI, and MHPSS, while organizational preparedness was further enhanced through IFRC-led trainings and scenario-based exercises. ARCS showed operational flexibility, with active coordination between headquarters and branches, enabling clear roles, rapid information flow, and effective adjustments. Volunteers played an expanded role in the readiness phase, supporting key activities and entry points. Pre-positioned stock, contingency planning, and the Movement Contingency Plan all contributed to a structured and responsive approach. Lessons from previous DREFs and the 2024 PER self-assessment informed improvements, and the use of a stop mechanism illustrated ARCS’s capacity to act on forecast-based triggers.

ARCS applied a verification procedure for cash assistance grounded in lessons from previous operations, such as the DREF Armenia Floods (MDRAM013) and the Emergency Appeal (MDRAM012), ensuring that all beneficiary lists undergo verification. Although the EOC was not activated during this operation due to the non-escalation of the situation, its structure remains in place and was updated to reflect population movement dynamics. Preparedness efforts included reviewing EOC scenarios and utilizing the GO Platform for structured planning and coordination. Additionally, ARCS staff and volunteers carried out media outreach activities at Zvartnots Airport to raise awareness and support response efforts.

ARCS has a Safety and Security Regulation currently being finalized. No security incidents were reported, as the response did not escalate. While 562 volunteers were insured, staff members were not covered by insurance. ARCS maintained pre-positioned emergency stocks from previous operations and other funding sources, which were not distributed but remain available for future DREF Operations. The organization benefits from a strong volunteer base, with 1,400 trained volunteers and 500 on standby for emergencies. Staffing and volunteer numbers were appropriate for the operation's scale. Support for both staff and volunteers included psychological well-being sessions and training in First Aid, PGI, and CEA. Relevant communication equipment was provided, and activities were implemented according to plan. DREF funds were secured to support readiness activities in anticipation of potential escalation.

ARCS demonstrated strong internal coordination, especially between its departments and teams, as well as between IFRC, PNS, CCD and ROE. While the Government of Armenia had emergency response tools in place, including contingency plans and state reserves, these were not activated for funding during the incident. In contrast, ARCS promptly activated the DREF, addressing critical readiness and initial response gaps. Effective coordination was established with the Migration Service, fostering communication and aligned decision-making through regular information sharing. ARCS actively participated in the Migration Management Working Group, which included key government, UN, and NGOs, contributing to scenario planning and a draft action plan pending formal government endorsement.

Recommendations for future DREF operations include the development of SOPs that allow for the immediate use of funds with a reimbursement process in place. ARCS is also advised to create scenario-specific SOPs for key areas of the response, clearly outlining roles, triggers, and coordination mechanisms. In addition, it is important to develop emergency Procurement and Logistics procedures, improve existing MoUs, particularly those between ARCS and MIA and finalize the DM Strategy. Establishing a working group involving Government and Movement partners is also recommended, as is including the provision of psychosocial services for asylum seekers during the application process.

Additionally, as a medium to low priority, ARCS should work on improving warehouse conditions, continuing collaboration with repatriation and integration centres, and developing MoUs to strengthen referral pathways. It would also be beneficial to extend psychosocial support services to governmental agencies. Emphasizing the importance of needs assessments and ensuring that interventions are informed by those findings will enhance the relevance and impact of future responses. Moreover, ARCS should focus on continuous capacity development and establish centralized tools for information sharing to ensure that staff and volunteers across all branches and departments remain consistently informed and up to date.

F. Annexes

Annex A: LLW two-day Agenda

DREF LESSONS LEARNED WORKSHOP 20-21 March 2025, Yerevan, Armenia Workshop Moderator: Sergey Sahakyan		
Time	Day 1 - Thursday, 20 March 2025	Responsible
9.00 – 10:00 (1 hr)	Welcome & opening. Introductions. Objective and agenda	Sergey Sahakyan, ARCS IFRC Armenia Dóra Vető, IFRC
10:00 – 10:45	What is the IFRC-DREF?	Mahabat, Murzakanova, IFRC Dóra Vető, IFRC
10:45 – 11:15	Coffee Break	
11:15 – 12:00	National Society response mechanism overview	Dóra Vető, IFRC Gulzira Kamytzhanova, IFRC
12:00 – 13:00	Operations overview	ARCS
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch	
14:00 – 14:30	Progress on integration of Lessons Learned from previous DREF operations	ARCS
14:30 – 15:30	Group work: Lessons learned exercise	Group work
15:30 – 15:45	Coffee Break	
15:45 – 17:00	Group work: Lessons learned exercise	Group work
Time	Day 2 - Friday, 21 March 2025	Responsible
9.00- 10:00	Recap of Day 1	Dóra Vető, IFRC Gulzira Kamytzhanova, IFRC
10:00 – 11:00	Plenary discussion	Groups
11:00 – 11:30	Coffee Break	
11:30 – 13:00	Plenary discussion	Groups
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch	
14:00 – 15:00	Prioritisation and LL wrap up	Dóra Vető, IFRC Gulzira Kamytzhanova, IFRC
15:00 – 15:30	Coffee Break	
15:30- 16:00	Group work: Lessons learned exercise Recommendations and next steps	Dóra Vető, IFRC Gulzira Kamytzhanova, IFRC
16:00 – 16:20	Wrap up of LLW	Dóra Vető, IFRC Gulzira Kamytzhanova, IFRC ARCS IFRC Armenia

Annex B: List of Participants

Participants/Organization
ARMENIAN RED CROSS SOCIETY
Head of Disaster management department, ARCS
Head of Population movement department, ARCS
Head of MHPSS department, ARCS
Disaster management department staff member, ARCS
Disaster management department staff member, ARCS
Disaster management department staff member, ARCS
Community Engagement and Accountability Coordinator, ARCS
Population movement department staff member, ARCS
Head of Logistics department, ARCS
Head of First Aid department, ARCS
Head of Dissemination department, ARCS
MHPSS department staff member, ARCS
IFRC
DREF Senior Officer, IFRC ROE
PMER Senior Officer, IFRC ROE
DM Delegate, IFRC CCD
PDSE Delegate, IFRC Armenia
CVA Delegate, IFRC Armenia
PMER Officer, IFRC Armenia
STAKEHOLDERS
Diaspora Office Repatriation and Integration
Diaspora Office Repatriation and Integration
MIA Migration and Citizenship Center
MIA Migration and Citizenship Center
MIA Migration and Citizenship Center
MIA Migration and Citizenship Center
MIA Migration and Citizenship Center
MIA Migration and Citizenship Center

Facilitators:

- Dora Veto, DREF Senior Officer, IFRC ROE
- Gulzira Kamytzhanova, PMER Senior Officer, IFRC ROE

Photos



Photos: Lessons Learned Workop in Yerevan. Credit: ARCS