



ARCS DRT is on site of disaster for support in search and rescue. Source: ARCS.

Appeal: MDRAM015	Country: Armenia	Hazard: Other	Type of DREF: Response
Crisis Category: Yellow	Event Onset: Sudden	DREF Allocation: CHF 84,039	
Glide Number: OT-2025-000082-ARM	People Affected: 850 people	People Targeted: 850 people	
Operation Start Date: 23-06-2025	Operation Timeframe: 3 months	Operation End Date: 30-09-2025	DREF Published: 25-06-2025
Targeted Regions: Gegharkunik			

# Description of the Event

## Date of event

06-11-2025

## What happened, where and when?

What happened:

On the morning of 11 June 2025, a powerful gas explosion struck a multi-story residential apartment building in the town of Chambarak, located in Gegharkunik province, Armenia. According to preliminary information, the explosion was most likely caused by a gas leak, though investigations are still ongoing to confirm the exact circumstances. The force of the blast caused a significant structural collapse, resulting in the complete destruction of the building. In addition to the direct collapse, the explosion caused substantial damage to nearby residential buildings, expanding the scale of the emergency and the number of affected residents.

The sudden and violent nature of the incident has had a severe humanitarian impact, causing not only physical injuries and loss of life but also significant emotional and psychological trauma for survivors, affected families, and the broader community.

Where:

The incident took place in Chambarak, a town situated in the Gegharkunik province of Armenia, with an estimated population of around 6,000 residents. The town is considered socially and economically vulnerable, with many households relying on seasonal work, agriculture, or remittances. The region has limited local infrastructure and services, and faces additional strain due to past population movements, including displaced families from Karabakh. Its remote location, harsh winters, and limited emergency resources further increase its vulnerability to disasters. The explosion has placed a heavy burden on a town already facing significant socio-economic challenges, highlighting the need for targeted humanitarian support.

When:

The explosion occurred in the early morning hours of 11 June 2025. Search and rescue operations have now been finalized. According to official reports, a total of six fatalities have been confirmed. Eighty-six people were injured as a result of the explosion, with 40 people requiring hospitalization, including 20 children. In total, 126 people have lost their homes due to the destruction of the building. Including those affected by damage to adjacent buildings, approximately 500 people have been directly impacted and are receiving assistance coordinated by local authorities, the Armenian Red Cross Society, and other responding agencies.





ARCS is conducting the Rapid Need Assessment in hospital.  
Photo: ARCS.



ARCS is providing in kind support on the next day after disaster.  
Photo ARCS.

## Scope and Scale

The gas explosion in Chambarak has had a serious impact on many people in the town. Six people lost their lives, and 86 were injured, including 40 who were taken to hospital and 20 children. One apartment building was completely destroyed, leaving 126 people without homes. Another 500 people from nearby buildings were also directly affected due to damage to their homes or being temporarily evacuated. While this DREF operation will focus only on the immediate needs of those who were directly affected—those who lost their homes, were injured, or lost loved ones—the explosion also caused stress and fear in the wider community. Many residents saw the destruction and emergency response up close, which caused shock, anxiety, and emotional trauma, especially for families with children and older people. The explosion also damaged nearby buildings, with broken windows, cracked walls, and heating and water systems not working properly. These conditions have made daily life harder for many families.

Under this IFRC Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF) operation, the Armenian Red Cross Society (ARCS) will provide emergency shelter items, food, basic household items, psychosocial support for a total 850 people, with 200 people also receiving cash assistance to meet their urgent needs. While authorities have responded, they do not have enough resources to meet all immediate needs. Repairs and long-term recovery efforts are not part of this DREF operation and will need to be addressed separately by government agencies and other partners. This DREF is focused only on helping affected people meet their most urgent needs in the first weeks after the explosion.

Source Name	Source Link
1. ARCS post	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/DKwktNRt-h-/?igsh=bXo5bTM5MWFxcWlu">https://www.instagram.com/p/DKwktNRt-h-/?igsh=bXo5bTM5MWFxcWlu</a>
2. ARCS post about response	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/DKzU9FUt3ze/?igsh=MXhzcDFkYXVtZjZuNw%3D%3D">https://www.instagram.com/p/DKzU9FUt3ze/?igsh=MXhzcDFkYXVtZjZuNw%3D%3D</a>
3. 5 TV channel Gas explosion	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j5M5nUSCS0c">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j5M5nUSCS0c</a>
4. 1Lurer.am Gas explosion	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j5M5nUSCS0c">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j5M5nUSCS0c</a>



# About Support Services

## How many staff and volunteers will be involved in this operation. Briefly describe their role.

The operation will involve around 40 ARCS volunteers, who will mainly help with activities in the child-friendly space, working in shifts to make sure children have ongoing support. In addition, five ARCS staff members from the headquarters and regional branch will manage coordination, planning, logistics, and reporting.

To provide emotional and psychological support, five professional consultants will offer MHPSS to people affected by the explosion.

## Does your volunteer team reflect the gender, age, and cultural diversity of the people you're helping? What gaps exist in your volunteer team's gender, age, or cultural diversity, and how are you addressing them to ensure inclusive and appropriate support?

The ARCS volunteer team in Chambarak includes both women and men of different ages and backgrounds. Many volunteers are from the local area, which helps them speak the same language and understand the culture of the people affected. This makes it easier to build trust and provide support in a respectful and comfortable way. However, we have seen that more female volunteers are needed, especially to support women and children who feel more comfortable speaking to other women. ARCS is working to involve more women and young people in the volunteer team to make sure everyone affected feels safe, heard, and supported.

## If there is procurement, will it be done by National Society or IFRC?

The IFRC in-country team is leading the procurement process for the operation, utilizing its logistics and procurement expertise to efficiently manage both small- and large-scale procurements. The primary focus will be on the replenishment of relief supplies to maintain the continuous availability of essential items for affected populations. This approach ensures streamlined operations, compliance with procurement standards, and timely delivery of necessary resources. The IFRC Regional Office for Europe Procurement and Logistics team remains on standby to support the in-country team if needed.

## How will this operation be monitored?

Monitoring of this DREF operation will be conducted in full adherence to IFRC standards to ensure efficient and effective implementation. A dedicated Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting (PMER) officer will oversee the monitoring process, ensuring that data collected is timely, accurate, complete, and disaggregated by key factors such as gender, age, and specific vulnerabilities, including internally displaced persons (IDPs), individuals with disabilities, pregnant and lactating women, and children.

The IFRC Country Cluster Delegation and Country Office have experienced PMER personnel who have implemented robust monitoring systems. These include the use of an indicator tracking table stored in the cloud to compile and manage field data, allowing for real-time updates and streamlined reporting. A detailed calendar of scheduled field visits has also been developed to facilitate on-the-ground monitoring of activities.

To further enhance monitoring capacities, the Information Management (IM) Coordinator will integrate collected data into dynamic visualization tools, such as dashboards, enabling continuous remote monitoring and real-time access to operational progress and impact. This comprehensive approach ensures accountability, informed decision-making, and the effective delivery of humanitarian services.

In parallel, a dedicated monitoring mechanism will be established within ARCS headquarters and branches for this operation, building on its experience from previous population movement responses. This mechanism will apply standardized tools and best practices to ensure efficient, accurate, and internationally compliant data collection, management, and protection.

Within the three-month timeframe of the DREF operation, a lessons learned workshop will be held with relevant staff, volunteers, and key partners to identify gaps in response capacities to inform future operational as well as long-term strategic planning.

In line with the DREF procedures, a Final Report with both narrative and financial component will be published 90 days after the operational end date.





## Please briefly explain the National Societies communication strategy for this operation

The ARCS will utilize existing communication channels and contacts to ensure the effective dissemination of information while highlighting the visibility of both the ARCS and IFRC in providing support to those in need.

## Previous Operations

Has a similar event affected the same area(s) in the last 3 years?	Yes
Did it affect the same population group?	No
Did the National Society respond?	-
Did the National Society request funding form DREF for that event(s)	-
If yes, please specify which operation	-

**If you have answered yes to all questions above, justify why the use of DREF for a recurrent event, or how this event should not be considered recurrent:**

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**Lessons learned:**

The implementation of cash assistance during the massive explosion in Yerevan in 2022 (MDRAM009 DREF Operation) demonstrated its immediate effectiveness in alleviating short-term distress among the affected population. However, feedback revealed that the cash distributed was insufficient for long-term needs, as people reported depleting the funds rapidly, averaging only 9.38 days of support. This highlights the critical need to reassess cash transfer values to ensure they adequately cover basic living expenses and contribute to sustainable recovery.

In particular, previous operations demonstrated the critical need for early deployment of MHPSS services, especially in emotionally traumatic events. In this operation, ARCS activated MHPSS support from the first hours, including hospital outreach and support to families of deceased and missing persons. Child-focused interventions, such as the establishment of child-friendly spaces and planned summer activities, are also based on prior experience responding to child protection needs in emergencies.

Stock management and replenishment systems have also been adapted. Lessons from prior DREF operations (MDRAM014 Armenia Population Movement) emphasized the need for clear tracking of pre-positioned supplies. In this operation, all essential household items distributed to affected households are being documented for timely replenishment through the DREF.

Additionally, community feedback mechanisms have been strengthened based on gaps identified in previous operations. The ARCS helpline was activated early in the response to ensure affected populations can share feedback, access information, and report unmet needs.

Lastly, joint planning with the IFRC and ARCS has integrated real-time monitoring tools, dashboard-based visualization, and structured field visit schedules, in line with improvements identified during after-action reviews of earlier responses.

Did you complete the Child Safeguarding Risk Analysis in previous operations, what was risk level?	Yes
What was the risk level for Child Safeguarding Risk Analysis?:	The Child Safeguarding Risk Analysis was conducted as part of the Armenia: Population Movement (MDRAM014) imminent DREF Operation, with a result of "Low Risk".



# Current National Society Actions

## Start date of National Society actions

06-11-2025

<b>Shelter, Housing And Settlements</b>	<p>The Armenian Red Cross Society has provided immediate shelter support to cover the needs of 125 people who were directly displaced. Assistance included distribution of essential shelter items such as sleeping sets (bedding, blankets, mattresses), items were procured and distributed through the imminent DREF operation for Population Movement MDRAM014, to ensure safe and dignified temporary living conditions. In addition, targeted support was provided for individuals with limitations in self-care and mobility, assisting them with safe relocation to temporary shelters and ensuring that vulnerable groups were not exposed to additional risks during displacement. Despite these initial interventions, further shelter assistance remains critical to cover, including winterization, safe accommodation, and basic household items for all displaced and affected families.</p>
<b>Livelihoods And Basic Needs</b>	<p>To address immediate basic needs and reduce secondary risks, the ARCS has provided essential household items (blankets, sleeping sets) to affected households which was procured in the frame of the MDRAM014 Armenia Population Movement imminent operation. The stock was available as the imminent DREF operation did not trigger and escalate into a response operation. This assistance included the distribution of heaters, boilers, and other critical non-food items to ensure minimum living standards, support safe household environments, and mitigate exposure to cold temperatures, especially for groups in vulnerable situations.</p>
<b>Health</b>	<p>Following an official request from authorities, the Armenian Red Cross Society immediately deployed ARCS MHPSS teams consisted of five staff members to the site to provide critical psychosocial support. During the first 24 hours, the teams prioritized urgent needs of hospitalized individuals, offering emotional stabilization and basic psychosocial first aid. They supported 50 people in the hospital and onsite.</p> <p>In the immediate aftermath of the explosion, the ARCS deployed its First Aid (FA) team which consisting of five people to provide FA to the injured. The team supported 10 people with FA, in addition, one dead case management support was provided.</p> <p>After the initial emergency phase, support was extended to the relatives and family members of those who lost loved ones in the explosion, many of whom were experiencing acute psychological distress.</p> <p>The ARCS MHPSS teams remain active onsite, continuing to provide psychological first aid, individual and group counselling, and ongoing psychosocial support to affected individuals and families. Considering the scale of emotional and psychological impact on both directly affected households and the wider community, sustained MHPSS interventions remain a critical component of the response, with expanded services planned to cover needs.</p>
<b>Water, Sanitation And Hygiene</b>	<p>As part of its immediate response, the ARCS distributed 125 hygiene kits to affected individuals and families. These items were procured and distributed through the imminent DREF operation for Population Movement MDRAM014. The kits helped support basic hygiene needs and reduce health risks in temporary shelter settings. While no major damage to water or sanitation infrastructure has been reported, continued monitoring is planned to identify and respond to any emerging WASH needs.</p>
<b>Coordination</b>	<p>Due to the scale of the explosion and its serious impact on a small town like Chambarak, coordination has been organized at both local and national levels. The ARCS is working closely with the municipality, the national rescue service, and government authorities to support the response. While local authorities are leading the response in Chambarak, national-level coordination meetings have also been held to ensure proper planning and</p>



	<p>resource allocation. ARCS participates in these meetings, sharing information from its needs assessments, field operations, and sector activities to help guide decision-making. At the operational level, ARCS maintains daily coordination with the municipality and EMS teams on-site to plan relief distributions, identify remaining needs, and ensure assistance is provided efficiently and fairly. The involvement of national authorities helps to bring additional resources and support, as the needs go beyond the capacity of the local municipality alone.</p>
<b>Assessment</b>	<p>The ARCS, in coordination with national and local authorities, carried out a rapid multi-sectoral needs assessment immediately after the explosion in Chambarak. The assessment used KOBO Toolbox for digital data collection and included 10 household interviews, on-site observations, and discussions with affected residents. The households surveyed represent an estimated 38 individuals when considering full family sizes.</p> <p>The assessment confirmed urgent needs across multiple sectors, especially cash assistance, food and clothing, winterization items, shelter, and mental health and psychosocial support. Over 80 per cent of households reported needing cash, and 50 per cent indicated their homes were destroyed. Additionally, 80 per cent of families interviewed lacked winter items, and 40 per cent expressed a need for psychological support. Groups in vulnerable situations, such as children, older people, and those living with disabilities, were given special attention. The findings show not only the immediate needs of displaced families, but also the emotional and social impact on the broader Chambarak community, many of whom experienced fear, anxiety, and distress due to the scale and suddenness of the incident.</p>
<b>Activation Of Contingency Plans</b>	<p>The ARCS has contingency plans in place at the branch level for small-scale emergencies in the Chambarak area. While the existing contingency plan was not designed for an event of this scale, ARCS used the available plan as a foundation for the immediate response. Based on this framework, ARCS was able to quickly mobilize its trained 20 volunteers and 10 ARCS staff, activate its response mechanisms, and coordinate closely with local authorities.</p>

## IFRC Network Actions Related To The Current Event

<b>Secretariat</b>	<p>The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) maintains a Country Cluster Delegation for the South Caucasus, based in Tbilisi, Georgia, which provides coordination and technical support to the National Societies in Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan. The IFRC does not have a permanent in-country delegation in Armenia for this response but remains actively engaged through its Cluster Delegation.</p> <p>For this operation, the IFRC Country Cluster Delegation has provided technical support remotely, mainly focusing on coordination, guiding needs assessment processes, and providing assistance in the preparation and review of operational plans, including DREF procedures.</p>
<b>Participating National Societies</b>	<p>Partner National Societies, including the Austrian Red Cross and Swiss Red Cross, have a presence in Armenia, with offices based in Yerevan. The Italian Red Cross operates a delegation based in Tbilisi, Georgia, covering both Armenia and Georgia. The Swiss Red Cross has confirmed their interest in supporting ARCS's response efforts if needed with technical support via a delegate.</p>

## ICRC Actions Related To The Current Event

<p>The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has been consistently partnering with the ARCS since 1992. Since 2020, it has further enhanced its support in the areas of communication, restoring family links (RFL), disaster management (DM), dead body management, first aid, preparedness for emergency response, access to education, weapon contamination, and significantly</p>
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strengthening the capacities of the regional and community branches in four international border (IB) areas exposed to conflict. Currently, the ICRC is not involved in the operation.

## Other Actors Actions Related To The Current Event

Government has requested international assistance	Yes
National authorities	<p>Immediately following the incident, national and municipal authorities activated emergency response mechanisms under the leadership of the EMS. Search and rescue operations were launched at the site, with specialized teams deployed to locate and assist victims trapped under the debris. The EMS coordinated medical evacuations, ensuring that injured individuals were transported to medical facilities for treatment.</p> <p>The municipality of Chambarak, with support from national authorities, coordinated the relocation of displaced families into temporary shelter arrangements. Public services, including utilities, health facilities, and emergency services, were mobilized to stabilize the situation on the ground.</p> <p>The Ministry of Health provided medical care for the injured, while the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure facilitated coordination of early recovery measures. Given the scale of the disaster for a small town, national-level coordination mechanisms were activated to oversee planning, resource allocation, and prioritization of assistance.</p> <p>Municipal authorities are leading the local emergency committee, where the Armenian Red Cross Society actively participates alongside government agencies. Despite these efforts, national authorities have formally acknowledged that available domestic resources are insufficient to fully meet the scale of humanitarian needs, and additional support from national and international actors has been requested.</p>
UN or other actors	No UN agencies or other international actors are involved in the response. The operation is led by national authorities, with humanitarian support provided by the Armenian Red Cross Society.

Are there major coordination mechanism in place? -

## Needs (Gaps) Identified



### Shelter Housing And Settlements

The explosion caused full destruction of one apartment building and damage to nearby structures, leaving many families without safe shelter. The most urgent needs include immediate access to safe temporary accommodation, essential household items (such as sleeping sets, heaters, and basic essential household items), and assistance for vulnerable individuals during relocation. While ARCS has provided initial support to 125 people, including sleeping sets and assistance for those with limited mobility, additional support is urgently needed to cover remaining emergency shelter needs, particularly for displaced households unable to secure adequate housing on their own.



### Livelihoods And Basic Needs

In addition to urgent shelter needs, many affected households are struggling to meet their most basic daily needs. Families have lost essential household items, personal belongings, and basic necessities such as food, drinking water, clothing, and hygiene items. While the ARCS has provided initial support with household equipment such as heaters and boilers, further assistance is still required. Many households also face income loss as small businesses, services, and farming activities have been disrupted following the explosion. Additional support is urgently needed to help families meet their immediate survival needs.







## Multi purpose cash grants

The needs assessment indicates that many affected households face a variety of urgent needs, including food, shelter, household items, clothing, winterization, and healthcare. Cash assistance has been identified as an effective and preferred modality to allow households to cover their most urgent and diverse needs based on individual household priorities. According to assessment data, 80 per cent of respondents from 10 households (38 people) reported cash assistance as their preferred form of support, and 70 per cent indicated they feel comfortable receiving and using cash assistance.

At the same time, some households may face minor barriers to accessing cash assistance (such as security, financial literacy, or technical issues). These will be addressed through proper targeting, information sharing, and technical support where needed. Cash assistance will help prevent negative coping mechanisms, ensure flexibility for affected households, and complement in-kind assistance provided during the initial response phase.



## Health

The explosion resulted in serious physical injuries and widespread psychological trauma. A total of 86 people were injured, including 40 people hospitalized, among them 20 children. National health services provided immediate medical care; however, some patients continue to require follow-up treatment and longer-term rehabilitation. Beyond physical injuries, the explosion has had a major psychological impact across the entire community, not only among directly injured and displaced persons, but also among families who lost relatives and the broader population of Chambarak.

At the time of the incident, there were no existing MHPSS services available locally to meet such large-scale needs. Following a request from national authorities, the Armenian Red Cross Society rapidly deployed its MHPSS teams to provide immediate psychological first aid to hospitalized individuals and families of the deceased. These services continue on-site, covering both individual and group support.

Due to the scale and nature of the event, extensive MHPSS needs are expected to continue for several months. Many affected families are experiencing acute distress, anxiety, grief, and trauma reactions. Sustained MHPSS interventions will be critical to stabilize the mental health of affected individuals, particularly vulnerable groups such as children, elderly people, and relatives of those who lost their lives. Additional support is needed to ensure continuity of care and community-based MHPSS services throughout the recovery phase.



## Protection, Gender And Inclusion

The explosion has had a significant impact on groups in vulnerable situations within the affected population. The needs assessment shows that 50 per cent of assessed households include persons with disabilities and 50% include people with chronic illnesses. Unaccompanied minors were also identified in some households. Older people, pregnant and lactating women, and households with limited financial resources are among those facing additional protection risks due to displacement, loss of livelihoods, limited mobility, and emotional distress. Many affected people require targeted support to ensure safe shelter, access to services, and psychosocial care. People with disabilities and older adults have needed assistance for evacuation, relocation, and daily care. The risk of neglect, isolation, and unmet protection needs remains elevated as families continue to cope with displacement and emotional trauma. All response activities continue to apply a protection, gender, and inclusion lens to ensure that vulnerable groups are reached and supported according to their specific needs.



## Community Engagement And Accountability

The needs assessment indicates that while most affected households (90 per cent) have access to information about available assistance, some gaps remain, particularly regarding safety concerns, housing conditions, and future recovery plans. Several families expressed a need for more frequent updates and clear information about the safety of their residences. To support two-way communication, the ARCS has activated its hotline to provide affected people with a direct channel for information and inquiries. However, additional efforts are still needed to strengthen structured feedback mechanisms, particularly for groups in vulnerable situations such as older people, persons with disabilities, and those with limited mobility. Improving transparency, participation, and accountability will help ensure that assistance remains relevant, needs-based, and responsive to the evolving situation.



## Any identified gaps/limitations in the assessment

Despite initial response efforts, significant unmet needs remain across several sectors. Immediate shelter support has been provided to some displaced families, but additional emergency shelter, household items, and winterization assistance are still required for others. Many households continue to lack sufficient winter items (80 per cent report need for warm clothing and heating appliances) and struggle to meet basic needs such as food, hygiene items, and cash for essential expenses. MHPSS needs remain extensive for both directly affected individuals and the broader community, with services required for several months. Resource limitations exist in terms of available funding, technical staff, and local service capacities to fully meet healthcare, psychosocial, and protection needs. Operational challenges include limited accommodation options for the displaced, physical access barriers for some households (30 per cent), and continuing safety concerns (50 per cent report feeling unsafe). While coordination between national authorities and ARCS is ongoing, there are limited actors involved in the response, and gaps remain in structured feedback mechanisms to fully capture evolving needs, particularly for vulnerable groups such as elderly people, persons with disabilities, and families with limited income.

[Assessment Report](#)

## Operational Strategy

### Overall objective of the operation

The overall objective of the operation is to ensure that the urgent humanitarian needs of 850 people affected by the explosion in Chambarak are effectively addressed through a well-coordinated response by the ARCS. This includes providing emergency shelter support, essential household items, and multipurpose cash assistance for approximately 200 people to cover basic needs and support their recovery. Comprehensive health services will be provided, with a particular focus on mental health and psychosocial support. The MHPSS intervention will include continuous psychological first aid and individual counseling, and the deployment of professional MHPSS consultants to address ongoing psychological needs across different groups. ARCS will strengthen volunteer engagement by mobilizing and training volunteers to deliver relief and psychosocial services, while community engagement and accountability mechanisms will ensure that affected people receive accurate information, can share feedback, and actively participate in shaping the response. Altogether, the operation aims to address immediate needs, reduce vulnerabilities of the affected community.

### Operation strategy rationale

The ARCS has developed a comprehensive response plan to address the most urgent humanitarian needs resulting from the gas explosion in Chambarak. This strategy is based on findings from the rapid needs assessment, which identified significant gaps across multiple sectors including shelter, livelihoods, health, mental health and psychosocial support, protection, cash assistance, and community engagement.

ARCS mobilized staff and trained volunteers from Chambarak branch, headquarters, and nearby branches to initiate immediate assistance. Emergency stocks prepositioned through the Armenia: Population Movement 2024 (MDRAM014) DREF operation were released and used in the first days to cover part of the immediate needs for shelter and essential household items, such as sleeping sets, heaters, and boilers.

Given the available resources, this operation focuses on covering the most critical priority needs; however, not all urgent needs can be fully addressed at this stage. Multipurpose cash assistance will be provided to approximately 200 people in vulnerable situations, enabling them to cover basic needs such as food, clothing, utilities, and temporary housing. This cash intervention complements the in-kind assistance already provided. Cash will be provided on an individual basis rather than by household, as household sizes vary greatly and this approach ensures fairer support to those most in need.

Mental health and psychosocial support remains a key priority due to the widespread emotional impact of the explosion. ARCS MHPSS teams were deployed within the first 24 hours, and ongoing support includes psychological first aid, group and individual MHPSS for approximately 300 people, specialized consultations for at least 150 people. These interventions aim to address both immediate distress and longer-term psychosocial needs within the community.

Volunteer capacity continues to be strengthened through targeted trainings to ensure quality service delivery. ARCS has also activated its hotline to facilitate two-way communication, provide information, and collect feedback from affected households.

All activities are being implemented in coordination with municipal and national authorities. The national Rescue Service remains responsible for search and rescue operations, site management, debris removal, and technical safety inspections. ARCS ensures its humanitarian response is aligned with government actions and complements the ongoing work of rescue on the ground.

# Targeting Strategy

## Who will be targeted through this operation?

The operation will target approximately 850 individuals directly affected by the gas explosion in Chambarak, Gegharkunik province. Priority will be given to those whose homes were destroyed or severely damaged, particularly the 126 people from the collapsed building and residents of nearby structures also affected by the blast. Special attention will be given to vulnerable groups, including children, older people, people with disabilities, pregnant and lactating women, and people with low-income, many of whom had already been displaced as a result of the Karabakh conflict in 2023 and are now experiencing additional difficulties.

The response will include MHPSS services for up to 550 people, including those hospitalized, grieving families, and children showing signs of distress. Direct cash assistance will be provided to 200 (126 people from destroyed building and 74 from affected buildings around) people in vulnerable situations to help meet urgent needs such as food, shelter, and hygiene items, based on a rapid needs assessment and coordination with municipal authorities.

People to be assisted will be selected using transparent, needs-based criteria. The ARCS, in coordination with the local emergency committee and its branch in Chambarak, will ensure fair and inclusive targeting. Volunteers involved in the process will apply PGI principles during registration and service delivery. Additionally, CEA tools such as the ARCS helpline and feedback mechanisms will support communication with affected populations and help identify additional unmet needs.

## Explain the selection criteria for the targeted population

The selection of people supported through this operation is based on a needs-based and vulnerability-focused approach, using data from the rapid needs assessment conducted by the ARCS in Chambarak.

Priority is given to people whose homes were destroyed or severely damaged in the explosion, particularly those without access to safe or alternative shelter. The targeting focuses on people with limited capacity to recover without assistance, including older adults, persons with disabilities, single-headed households, pregnant and lactating women, children, and individuals with chronic health conditions. Special consideration is also given to those previously displaced from Karabakh, who are now facing a second crisis and are at even higher risk of exclusion. Individuals experiencing psychological distress due to the incident, such as hospitalization, bereavement, or loss of property - are also prioritized for psychosocial support.

The rationale for this approach is to reach the most vulnerable people who face the highest barriers to recovery and are least likely to access assistance independently. The decision to provide cash assistance directly to 200 people, rather than households, ensures greater flexibility and inclusiveness, particularly for those living alone or with specific needs.

## Total Targeted Population

Women	319	Rural	100%
Girls (under 18)	150	Urban	-
Men	257	People with disabilities (estimated)	10%
Boys (under 18)	124		
Total targeted population	850		

## Risk and Security Considerations (including "management")

Does your National Society have anti-fraud and corruption policy?	Yes
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Does your National Society have prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse policy?	Yes
Does your National Society have child protection/child safeguarding policy?	Yes
Does your National Society have whistleblower protection policy?	Yes
Does your National Society have anti-sexual harassment policy?	Yes

**Please analyse and indicate potential risks for this operation, its root causes and mitigation actions.**

Risk	Mitigation action
Severe winter conditions may affect displaced and vulnerable households. Chambarak is located in a mountainous region where winter brings freezing temperatures, snowfall, and strong winds. Displaced households, particularly those living in temporary shelters or damaged homes, face serious risks to their health and safety without adequate winterization.	Winter items (heaters, boilers, warm clothing, bedding) will be distributed in advance of the winter season. ARCS will pre-position stocks, monitor weather forecasts, and ensure vulnerable groups are prioritized for timely assistance. Community awareness will be strengthened on winter safety.
Increased security risks due to potential escalation of regional tensions. The wider South Caucasus context remains fragile, with ongoing tensions and border incidents between Armenia and Azerbaijan posing a risk of sudden escalation. Any deterioration may create new humanitarian needs or complicate response operations.	ARCS and IFRC will closely monitor the security situation, maintain contact with government and Movement partners, and ensure contingency plans are in place to adapt operational activities if security conditions change.
High pre-existing vulnerability due to poverty and previous displacement. Chambarak is among the most economically vulnerable regions in Armenia, with limited employment opportunities and high poverty levels even before the explosion. The area is also hosting displaced persons from Karabakh, adding additional strain on already limited resources.	The response is designed to prioritize the most vulnerable groups through needs-based targeting, combining cash assistance, MHPSS, and in-kind support to stabilize affected households and reduce the risk of adopting negative coping strategies.
Logistical challenges due to remote location. Chambarak's geographic location may create transport delays for supplies, staff, and specialized personnel, especially during winter.	Relief items will be pre-positioned at local level; local suppliers will be used where possible; transport and logistics plans will remain flexible to adapt to changing conditions.
Exposure to natural hazards (earthquakes, landslides, and floods). Chambarak and the wider Gegharkunik region are prone to natural disasters, including seismic activity, landslides, and seasonal floods, which may cause further damage or complicate response and recovery operations.	ARCS will monitor evolving risks, coordinate with national disaster management authorities, and ensure contingency stocks and preparedness plans are updated to address potential secondary hazards.

**Please indicate any security and safety concerns for this operation:**

The operation is taking place in a generally stable area, but several security and safety risks remain present and require continuous monitoring. Chambarak is located near the eastern border of Armenia, a region historically sensitive to tensions related to the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict. Although no active conflict is ongoing in Chambarak itself, any escalation of regional tensions could indirectly affect the security situation or restrict access for response teams.

The affected area includes mountainous and remote terrain, which poses physical safety risks for staff, volunteers, and affected populations, especially during winter months when road conditions may deteriorate due to snow, ice, or landslides. Heavy winter weather may also create additional safety concerns during the transportation of goods or delivery of services.

Operational health and safety risks for staff and volunteers may arise while working in damaged structures or unstable buildings during relief distributions or needs assessments. There is also a need to ensure proper mental health support for staff and volunteers involved in the response, given the emotionally distressing nature of the incident.

The Armenian Red Cross Society applies standard security protocols for all field activities. Staff and volunteers will receive regular safety briefings, follow safety and access guidelines, and coordinate movements with local authorities. ARCS will continue to monitor the security situation in close coordination with the national Emergency Management Service and local authorities. IFRC security protocols will also be applied, and contingency plans will be maintained in case the security situation deteriorates.

Has the child safeguarding risk analysis assessment been completed?

Yes

## Planned Intervention



### Shelter Housing And Settlements

**Budget:** CHF 10,650

**Targeted Persons:** 1,000

#### Indicators

Title	Target
ARCS has procured and pre-positioned essential household items for 200 households, which were stocked.	200

#### Priority Actions

Replenishment of essential households items (sleeping sets) that were distributed during the response to support 200 households. The stocks were available from the MDRAM014 Armenia Population Movement imminent DREF operation, which did not scale up for a response, and, therefore, distribution did not occur.



### Multi Purpose Cash

**Budget:** CHF 22,685

**Targeted Persons:** 200

#### Indicators

Title	Target
Percentage of people surveyed by PDM who report being able to meet the basic needs of their households, according to their priorities	85
Percentage of surveyed people who feel treated with respect by ARCS staff and volunteers	85
Number of people provided with unconditional cash assistance	200

#### Priority Actions

Verification of Beneficiary Lists:

Conduct verification and validation of the list of 200 individuals to ensure eligibility, vulnerability, and proper targeting for cash assistance.

Distribution of Multipurpose Cash Assistance:



Provide cash assistance to 200 eligible individuals to enable them to meet their most urgent basic needs based on individual household priorities. This includes 126 people who lived in the building that was completely destroyed, and an additional 74 individuals will be selected from families who lost relatives or were affected by the explosion in nearby buildings. Special focus will be given to vulnerable groups such as people with disabilities and displaced persons from Karabakh. Cash will be provided on an individual basis rather than by household, as household sizes vary greatly and this approach ensures fairer support to those most in need.

Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM):

Conduct post-distribution monitoring with the 200 assisted individuals to assess the effectiveness, use of cash assistance, satisfaction levels, and any issues encountered.



**Budget:** CHF 18,638

**Targeted Persons:** 550

## Indicators

Title	Target
Number of (temporary) safe spaces established or operated by the National Society for the purpose of learning, psychosocial support or recreation.	1
Number of people reached with mental health and psychosocial activities (MHPSS) from the National Society.	550
Number of participants of MHPSS trainings	60
Number of people receiving PFA and basic support by trained staff/volunteers	200
Total number of individualized MHPSS sessions delivered	120

## Priority Actions

Under the Health and Care sector, the planned community activities will include simple and helpful sessions on how to cope with grief, manage stress, support children emotionally, and handle parenting challenges after the explosion. These areas of intervention are similar to those used in past ARCS responses and will be done through the child-friendly space, schools, and small group meetings to help affected families feel more supported and safe.

Due to the lack of local professional personnel with MHPSS experience in the affected area, five consultants will be contracted who were previously involved in MDRAM012 Armenia Population Movement Emergency Appeal and have the proven capacity. They will work in rotation; each consultant will be on site for about three weeks. At any given time, only one consultant will be present to provide continuous support. This approach allows us to ensure consistent quality care while preventing burnout and managing the workload efficiently.

Specific activities under the DREF operation and their correlated costs include the following:

- MHPSS training for staff and volunteers.
- MHPSS training for local teachers in the affected region.
- Procurement of tablets to support MHPSS case management and interventions.
- Provision of furniture for child-friendly spaces.
- Procurement of IT equipment for child-friendly spaces.
- Deployment of external MHPSS consultants.
- Delivery of individual psychological consultations for affected people.

The basic training for staff and volunteers also includes a component of Psychological First Aid. Staff and volunteers involved in the response will have a debriefing session following the response.

Referral pathways to enable more targeted mental health support is currently being identified by ARCS, while CEA messaging will also include guidance on emotional well-being and stress management.



To move from child-friendly spaces and sustain activities outside of the DREF operation in the targeted area, intervention is planned to be moved to local schools where the trained local teachers will be able to provide the necessary mental health and psychosocial support for those in need.



## Water, Sanitation And Hygiene

**Budget:** CHF 5,325

**Targeted Persons:** 800

### Indicators

Title	Target
ARCS has procured and pre-positioned essential household items for 200 households, which were stocked.	200

### Priority Actions

Procurement and replenishment of hygiene kit for one family for 3 months for 200HHs (800 people). Pre-positioned items during the MDRAM014 Armenia Population Movement imminent DREF operation are used in the current intervention.



## Risk Reduction, Climate Adaptation And Recovery

**Budget:** CHF 2,663

**Targeted Persons:** 850

### Indicators

Title	Target
Number of people reached with disaster risk reduction and warning key messages	850

### Priority Actions

Conduct community awareness sessions on household gas safety, early detection of gas leaks, and safe use of gas appliances to reduce future risks



## Secretariat Services

**Budget:** CHF 3,195

**Targeted Persons:** -

### Indicators

Title	Target
Number of monitoring visits conducted	3

## Priority Actions

IFRC travel costs for coordination, technical assistance, and monitoring missions, including support in the delivery of the lessons learned workshop as required.



## National Society Strengthening

**Budget:** CHF 20,885

**Targeted Persons:** 50

## Indicators

Title	Target
Number of volunteers involved in the response operation that have increased their skills in response and management of operations	40
Number of lessons learned workshop conducted	1

## Priority Actions

To ensure the efficient and timely implementation of activities, the following personnel and activities will be included in the operation:

### Personnel:

- ARCS regional coordinator (Gegharkunik branch) coverage (30%) for coordination of implementation activities on local level.
- ARCS Disaster Management Head of Department coverage (30%) for overall coordination.
- ARCS MHPSS Head of Department coverage (10%) for coordination of MHPSS interventions.

### Other activities and correlated budgeted costs include:

- Organization of IFRC/ARCS lessons learned workshop in line with DREF requirements, which will take stock of achievements, lessons, and challenges to inform future operational and strategic longer-term planning.
- Payment of bank fees related to financial transactions for the operation.
- Production and distribution of ARCS visibility materials, including vests, banners, and stickers. Vest procured under the MDRAM014 Armenia Population Movement imminent DREF operation will be used in this current response.
- ARCS fixed-rate amount for administrative and indirect costs.
- ARCS staff travel and monitoring costs for field supervision and activity implementation.
- ARCS communication and information technology costs for operational coordination.
- Vehicle maintenance costs to ensure operational mobility during the response.
- National Society Development activities to strengthen ARCS institutional capacity.
- Reimbursement of ARCS volunteers' food and transportation costs for initial emergency response phase.
- Reimbursement of ARCS volunteers' food and transportation costs for ongoing activities during the operation.



# Budget Overview



## DREF OPERATION

### MDRAM015 - Armenian Red Cross Society Gas explosion in Chambarak, Armenia

#### Operating Budget

Planned Operations	59,960
Shelter and Basic Household Items	10,650
Livelihoods	0
Multi-purpose Cash	22,685
Health	18,638
Water, Sanitation & Hygiene	5,325
Protection, Gender and Inclusion	0
Education	0
Migration	0
Risk Reduction, Climate Adaptation and Recovery	2,663
Community Engagement and Accountability	0
Environmental Sustainability	0
Enabling Approaches	24,080
Coordination and Partnerships	0
Secretariat Services	3,195
National Society Strengthening	20,885
TOTAL BUDGET	84,039

all amounts in Swiss Francs (CHF)



# Contact Information

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