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for every child

Humanitarian Action for Children

A child waits at the Asylum Center Krnjaca, in Serbia, where UNICEF is supporting a distribution of clothes and essential supplies for refugee and migrant children.

Europe and Central Asia Region

HIGHLIGHTS

- Children and families across Europe and Central Asia face multiple risks, including earthquakes, floods, extreme weather, disease outbreaks, conflict and mixed migration movements. As of October 2024, floods, landslides and mudflows had affected around 148,779 people,¹ and more than 95,204 measles cases² had been registered as of early September. These conditions necessitate continued preparedness, response and disaster risk reduction efforts.
- Following the 2023 earthquakes in Türkiye, around 732,000 people still live in temporary settlements.³ Armenia hosts more than 142,000 refugees,⁴ including at least 36,000 children who fled their homes following the escalation of hostilities in 2020 and 2023.
- Mixed migration along the Mediterranean and Balkan routes continues to overwhelm services. More than 123,878 refugees and migrants had arrived in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Greece, Italy and Serbia as of September 2024,⁵ including increased numbers of unaccompanied children and survivors of gender-based violence.
- UNICEF requires \$80.8 million to deliver critical humanitarian support for people in need in Armenia and Türkiye, support refugee and migrant children and address emerging crises; and invest in emergency preparedness and ensure disaster risk reduction capacities of governments and partners.

IN NEED



732,000
people living in
temporary settlements
in Türkiye⁶



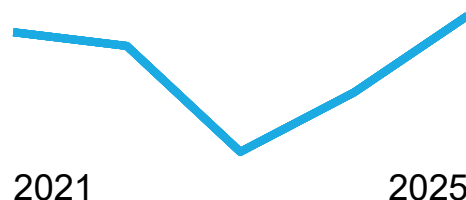
236,900
people in need in
Armenia⁷



497,906
people of concern⁸

FUNDING REQUIREMENTS

US\$80.8
million



This map does not reflect a position by UNICEF on the legal status of any country or territory or the delimitation of any frontiers. The countries in light blue are embedded in this regional appeal; those in dark blue are covered under a multi-country appeal.

HUMANITARIAN SITUATION

Children and families in Europe and Central Asia face multiple crises, including earthquakes, floods, disease outbreaks, conflict and extreme weather. Around 160 million children in the region are vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, including extreme temperatures, air pollution, water scarcity and floods.⁹ Three out of five child health risks are linked to climate change, and one in two children are exposed to heatwaves, compared to the global average of one in four.¹⁰ As of October 2024, floods, landslides and mudflows had affected around 148,779 people in Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Romania and Tajikistan, causing casualties, displacement and infrastructure damage. The ongoing war in Ukraine continues to have economic, political and social impacts in surrounding countries.

By September 2024, more than 95,204 measles cases, including deaths, had been registered in the region during the year, representing 35 percent of global cases; 5 of the global top 10 countries with the highest incidence of measles are in the region.¹¹

In Türkiye, the February 2023 earthquakes had devastating impacts on the lives of 15.6 million people, including 1.8 million refugees, in 11 affected provinces.¹² One and a half years after, around 732,000 people, including 210,000 children, are still living in temporary settlements. Adequate shelter, access to water and sanitation facilities (especially hygiene items for women and girls), as well as essential health, nutrition and child development services remain major needs in the affected provinces.

Continued mixed migration, driven by political instability and conflict, has overwhelmed services along the Mediterranean and Balkan routes with more than 123,878 refugees and migrants arriving in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Greece, Italy and Serbia between January and September 2024. In addition, the number of children entering Spain through southern borders – especially children who are unaccompanied – continued to rise, with around 37,970 refugee and migrant arrivals by September, including 27,758 in the Canary Islands.¹³ Many unaccompanied children lack adequate care and accommodation, and the risks of violence, xenophobia and gender-based violence persist. Instability and conflict in the Middle East could potentially further increase the arrivals of vulnerable populations. In addition, the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan continues to pose a risk of large refugee movements into neighbouring Central Asian countries and beyond.

Armenia hosts more than 142,000 refugees, including at least 36,000 children who fled their home following escalations of hostilities in 2020 and in September 2023. Given the country's large refugee population compared with the national population (62 refugee children per 1,000 local children), such key services as education, social services, health and psychological support remain overstretched. Demand for mental health support and cash assistance remains high.

Within a context of increased exposure to risks and hazards, resultant emergencies and growing fragility in the region, there is an urgent need for continued and strengthened investment in emergency preparedness, response and risk mitigation to protect children, their families and their communities.

HUMANITARIAN STRATEGY^{14,15}

In 2025, UNICEF will continue engaging with national and local governments and other partners in Europe and Central Asia to strengthen emergency preparedness, response, disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation.¹⁶ Guided by the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action,¹⁷ UNICEF will continue delivering humanitarian assistance, including technical assistance, in response to ongoing and emerging crises, addressing critical service gaps for affected children, families and host communities. Response interventions will focus on providing essential services and supporting national and local systems, ensuring children and families have adequate access to health and nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene, child protection, gender-based violence mitigation, mental health and psychosocial support, education and social protection services. In particular, in responding to mixed migration movements, UNICEF will engage with national and regional entities, working closely with the European Union, and advocate for children's rights through alignment of national policies with international standards. Key actions will include improving procedures to safeguard children's best interests, advocating for an end to child immigration detention and improving protection of unaccompanied and separated children through capacity building of national authorities.¹⁸

To scale up preparedness, response and disaster risk reduction action, UNICEF will adopt a multi-hazard approach and capitalize on subregional mechanisms. The focus will be on three key areas: The first area is enhancing UNICEF's internal capacity for emergency preparedness and response. This includes strengthening regional and cross-border risk monitoring, delivering trainings, simulations, strengthening surge capacity, enhancing supply/logistic capacity, maintaining partnerships and ensuring sectoral/cross-sectoral preparedness. The second focus area is strengthening systems for emergency response, preparedness and disaster risk reduction through enhanced engagement with disaster management authorities/civil protection agencies, relevant line ministries and other regional entities. Work includes delivering joint trainings; providing technical support; and developing and supporting implementation of national contingency plans, policies, frameworks for inclusive, gender-responsive, child-sensitive humanitarian action. Efforts also focus on conducting and influencing national risk assessments, enhancing early warning systems and anticipatory actions. Furthermore, initiatives will advance shock-responsive social protection, ensure the safety of children and education staff in schools, and empower youth to promote disaster risk reduction and climate change agenda. The third area of focus is leveraging and/or strengthening national, regional and subregional systems, structures and entities to enhance child-centred emergency disaster risk reduction, preparedness and response at scale. This includes scaling up partnerships with the Center for Emergency Situations and Disaster Risk Reduction, the Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Initiative for South Eastern Europe, the European Union, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, international financial institutions, the private sector, United Nations agencies and others for joint advocacy and shared resources, commitments and accountabilities.

This appeal is aligned with the revised Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action, which are based on global standards and norms for humanitarian action.

STORY FROM THE FIELD



Elanur (5) - terrified after the earthquake, asking "When are we going home? Are my friends dead?" Despite her fears she comforted her mother showing remarkable resilience. In Türkiye, UNICEF is on the ground providing critical support to children and families.

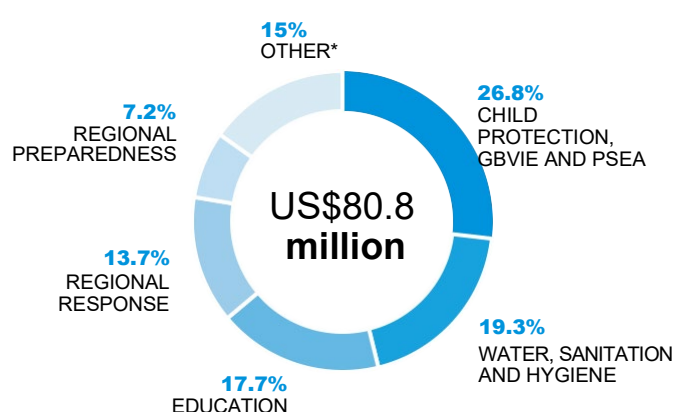
Elanur, 5, joins a psychosocial support activity at a UNICEF-supported child-friendly space in Kahramanmaraş, Türkiye.

FUNDING REQUIREMENTS IN 2025

In 2025, UNICEF is appealing for \$80.8 million to invest in disaster risk reduction and preparedness and address ongoing and emerging humanitarian needs in 21 countries in Central Asia, South Caucasus and Europe.^{19,20} This includes \$18.3 million to assist refugee and migrant children and families traveling along the Mediterranean and Balkan routes²¹; \$5.8 million for the refugee response in Armenia; \$39.8 million to address persistent needs of those affected by the earthquakes in Türkiye²²; and \$16.9 million for preparedness and emergency response throughout the region. Regional funding will also enhance disaster preparedness, helping to build resilience in vulnerable communities through disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation efforts at local, national and regional levels. This includes preparations for potential arrivals from Afghanistan into Central Asia, as well as addressing the evolving needs of Afghan refugees and host communities in Albania.

The appeal prioritizes risk-informed programming, partnerships and the integration of humanitarian and development efforts. Timely funding is essential to respond effectively to both ongoing and emerging crises; close gaps in such essential services as health and nutrition, education, water, sanitation and hygiene and child protection; and work to prevent and respond to gender-based violence. It will also enable anticipatory action and swift responses to sudden-onset emergencies not covered by other appeals.

Without sufficient resources, children will face increased risks and reduced access to vital services, leading to long-term negative impacts on their physical and psychological well-being. UNICEF emphasizes the need for flexible funding to uphold the Convention on the Rights of the Child and ensure that all children, regardless of their origin or background, have access to safety, healthy development and future opportunities.



Sector	2025 requirements (US\$)
Health and nutrition	3,117,900
Child protection, GBViE and PSEA	21,672,870
Education	14,317,010
Water, sanitation and hygiene	15,625,000
Social protection (including HCT)	1,690,000
SBC and AAP	2,376,220
ADAP	5,081,130
Regional Response	11,083,600
Regional Preparedness	5,839,000
Total	80,802,730

*This includes costs from other sectors/interventions : ADAP (6.3%), Health and nutrition (3.9%), SBC and AAP (2.9%), Social protection (including HCT) (2.1%).

Sectors	Refugee and Migrant	Türkiye	Armenia	Regional	Total
Health & Nutrition	357,900	2,000,000	760,000	-	3,117,900
WASH	30,000	15,550,000	45,000	-	15,625,000
CP, GBViE & PSEA	11,300,870	8,982,000	1,390,000	-	21,672,870
Education	3,712,010	9,335,000	1,270,000	-	14,317,010
ADAP	2,241,130	2,200,000	640,000	-	5,081,130
SBC, Community Engagement, A	661,220	1,500,000	215,000	-	2,376,220
Social Protection	-	250,000	1,440,000	-	1,690,000
Regional Preparedness	-	-	-	5,839,000	5,839,000
Regional Response	-	-	-	11,083,600	11,083,600
Total	18,303,130	39,817,000	5,760,000	16,922,600	80,802,730

ENDNOTES

1. Figures are based on government data and UNICEF estimates. This includes 1,000 people affected in Armenia; 3,000 people, including 1,500 children, in Bosnia and Herzegovina; 119,000 people, including more than 45,000 children, in Kazakhstan; 4,855 people, including 2,344 children, in Kyrgyzstan; 12,234 people, including 6,090 children, in Romania; and 8,690 people (4,843 female, 3,847 male), including 5,464 children, in Tajikistan.
2. World Health Organization, Measles and rubella monthly update – WHO European Region update, September 2024, data as of 5 September 2024, available at <https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/librariesprovider2/euro-health-topics/vaccines-and-immunization/eur_mr_monthly-_update_en_august-2024.pdf?sfvrsn=36799208_2&download=true>.
3. Figures based on data from the Government of Türkiye. It includes the number of residents in container sites in 11 affected provinces (drawn from the Kahramanmaraş and Hatay Earthquakes Rehabilitation and Development Report) and figures from the Presidency of Migration Management on residents in temporary accommodation centres, based on data retrieved in April 2024.
4. This includes 115,358 newly registered refugees and 26,700 already present in the country. Statistics are compiled from data provided by the Government of Armenia. Since registration is ongoing, amendments to figures may occur, including retroactively. Available at <<https://data.unhcr.org/en/country/arm/58>; https://www.unhcr.org/am/wp-content/uploads/sites/123/2022/09/IARP-Report_FINAL_Digital.pdf>.
5. Data sources: Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), International Organization for Migration (IOM), Ministry of Interior (Italy), Ministry of Security (Bosnia and Herzegovina), State Agency for Refugees (Bulgaria) and Ministry of Interior (Bulgaria) and Commissariat for Refugees and Migration (Serbia).
6. This includes 210,000 children; figures based on government data.
7. This includes refugees and vulnerable host communities, including 66,800 children. Figures are based on data from the State Migration Service and the 2024 Inter-Agency Response Plan.
8. For refugee and migrant arrivals, this includes 106,183 children, including 50,666 unaccompanied and separated children. Numbers are based on arrivals in 2024 and projected arrivals for October–December 2024 and for 2025 in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Greece, Italy and Serbia.
9. UNICEF, The Climate Crisis is a Child Rights Crisis: Introducing the Children's Climate Risk Index, UNICEF, New York, 2021, available at <www.unicef.org/reports/climate-crisis-child-rights-crisis>.
10. Ibid. Based on 2021 data provided by the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation.
11. Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Romania. Source: Vaccine-preventable disease surveillance data, available at https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fimmunizationdata.who.int%2Fdocs%2Flibrariesprovider21%2Fmeasles-and-rubella%2Fglobal-mr-update.pptx%3Fsfvrsn%3D3547ebab_9&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK
12. Kahramanmaraş, Hatay, Gaziantep, Kilis, Osmaniye, Malatya, Adıyaman, Diyarbakır, Şanlıurfa, Adana and Elazığ.
13. Figures based on data from the Government of Spain.
14. This Europe and Central Asia Region Humanitarian Action for Children appeal covers preparedness, disaster risk reduction and critical humanitarian response for mixed migration movements across the Mediterranean and Balkan routes, in Armenia, in Albania, earthquake response in Türkiye, and initial emergency response to sudden-onset crises, in countries without a standalone appeal. Countries supported under this appeal include Armenia, Albania, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Belarus, Bulgaria, Croatia, Georgia, Greece, Italy (refugee and migrant response), Kazakhstan, Kosovo*, Kyrgyzstan, Montenegro, the Republic of Moldova, North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Tajikistan, Türkiye, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan and any other emerging crises in the region. *All references to Kosovo in this appeal should be understood to be in the context of United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).
15. Policy advocacy is a crucial element of preparedness and response. It involves engagement with governments, civil society organizations and the European Union to support policies that ensure inclusive and equitable support for vulnerable children and families affected by crisis.
16. This includes strong collaboration with inter-agency mechanisms, UNHCR and IOM on the refugee and migrant response, the EU Civil Protection Mechanism and the Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Initiative in South Eastern Europe. It includes regional partnerships in Central Asia with the International Federation of Red Cross and Crescent Societies and the regional Capacity for Disaster Reduction Initiative (CADRI). CADRI is a global partnership that helps countries reduce disaster and climate risks by providing access to a unique pool of multidisciplinary expertise in various socioeconomic sectors to achieve the 2030 Agenda and its call to 'leave no one behind'. See <www.cadri.net>.
17. UNICEF, Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action, 2020, available at <www.unicef.org/emergencies/core-commitments-children>.
18. Support for Ukrainian refugees is covered under the 2025 Ukraine and Refugee Response appeal, which comprehensively addresses the overall impacts of the war on Ukrainian children and families living within and outside of the country.
19. Countries include: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Belarus, Croatia, Greece, Georgia, Italy (refugee and migrant response), Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Kosovo*, Montenegro, the Republic of Moldova, North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Türkiye and Uzbekistan. *All references to Kosovo in this appeal should be understood to be in the context of United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).
20. In 2025, the ECAR HAC increased from 39.6 million in 2024, to account for multiple crises in the region, which were part of individual country appeals.
21. The funding ask for the refugee and migrant response covers Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Greece, Italy and Serbia.
22. UNICEF's support to meet the ongoing needs of Syrian refugees in Türkiye is covered under the multi-country 2025 appeal for Syrian Refugees and Other Vulnerable Populations.