



World Food Programme

Decision Memorandum

To:	Mr. Jim Harvey Date: 20 April 2016 Chief of Staff, OED
Through:	Mr. Ramiro Lopes da Silva Assistant Executive Director, OS

Subject:	Regional Bureau for Middle East, North Africa, Eastern Europe and Central Asia requests fund allocation from Immediate Response Account (IRA) for Specific Preparedness Activities in Armenia regarding Armenia/Nagorno-Karabagh/ Azerbaijan conflict
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Issue

The purpose of this memorandum is to request your approval for an allocation of US\$ 280,347 to support specific preparedness activities in Armenia.

Background

Since 1988, there has been tensions between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the Nagorno-Karabagh region of Azerbaijan, a self-declared republic populated primarily by ethnic Armenians. Tensions have risen significantly over repeated cease-fire violations since 2014. Since then, the escalation of security incidents has been cyclical with apparent ceasations being systematically interrupted by new waves of fighting in the border areas between Armenia and Azerbaijan (particularly in the Tavush Province) and between Nagorno Karabagh and Azerbaijan.

Heavy fighting erupted again between Armenian and Azerbaijani forces on 2nd April 2016 along the southern, south-eastern and north-eastern parts of the Line of Contact in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone.

UNHCR, WFP and Armenian Red Cross Society (ARC) deployed a two-day assessment mission on April 4-5, 2016 to the conflict affected areas. The joint UNHCR-WFP-ARC assessment revealed no major population displacement or humanitarian crisis for the time being. However, according to the NGOs working in the area, several hundreds of people have already been displaced, and are mostly concentrated in the vicinity of the town of Goris, in the Syunik Province. In addition, the State Migration Service Deputy Head indicated that some of these displaced people may move in towns near or close to Yerevan. Most displacement occurred in 2-3 April and displaced people in Armenia come from villages in Talish and Hadrout areas. As of 9th April, UNHCR estimated 550 displaced persons already identified. This initial number has already increased in a week-time to over a 1,000 displaced persons currently hosted by relative and friends in Syunik, Kotayk, Ararat, Gegharkunik and Yerevan.



Depending on the results of negotiations, the situation might quickly deteriorate again, as witnessed previously due the cyclicity of the conflict. In case of the re-escalation of the conflict, it is anticipated that a massive displacement of civilians living in Nagorno-Karabagh from the frontline area will occur, resulting in a humanitarian situation requiring humanitarian assistance, in particular the support of WFP for immediate food needs.

To strengthen the preparedness and readiness of WFP, to improve coordination, and to initiate and ensure effective and efficient response to the displaced in this crisis, WFP Armenia intends to bring in expertise to assist in accomplishing the following activities:

1. To review the current emergency operating context and strengthen linkages and coordination mechanisms with Government, UN agencies and NGOs; this will include all assessments;
2. To explore potential funding, coordination and partnership arrangements to implement an immediate and full-scale emergency responses;
3. To conduct assessments and identify the most appropriate transfer modality for a food assistance intervention as well as all features necessary for a potential use of Cash-based Transfers (CBT) modality;
4. To position WFP in the multiple donor/Government emergency response coordination platforms and mainstream the role of WFP in the Inter-Agency Contingency Planning/response plan; prepare WFP to lead the Logistics and ICT clusters, and co-lead the Food Security cluster in case of activation.

The duration of this project will be 3 months (25 April – 25 July 2016). The detailed request and the budget for preparedness activities are attached.

Recommendation

In view of the above, having verified that the request conforms to relevant rules, it is recommended that an allocation of US\$ 280,347, including ISC, be approved to support these specific preparedness activities. Currently there is a balance of US\$ 550,870 in the IRA account for Specific Disaster Preparedness Activities.

Decision by the Chief of Staff, OED:

Approve: _____

Disapprove: _____

Discuss with me: _____

Date: _____