

## ***LIMITED EMERGENCY OPERATION (LEO) FOR THE CONFLICT AFFECTED POPULATION IN AZERBAIJAN***

<b>Limited Emergency Operation (XS01)</b>	
<b>Number of beneficiaries</b>	30,000
<b>Duration (starting date – end date)</b>	1 December 2020 – 31 May 2021
<b>Cost to WFP</b>	USD 6,132,046

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

High intensity fighting across the Nagorno-Karabakh region of the Republic of Azerbaijan since 27 September 2020 resulted in unconfirmed reports of more than a thousand civilian and military fatalities, with indications that most of the area's inhabitants fled the region. Fighting reportedly left extensive damage to infrastructure, roads and housing and caused complications in food delivery in the area.

As of end November, following the signing of a Tripartite Statement which halted hostilities, the security situation shows some stabilization. Some return is reported, though the timeframe for safe and large-scale return and recovery is still to be seen given the high level of infrastructure damage, ongoing de-mining actions, the upcoming winter season, and capacity to meet needs of the returnees in the territory.

Currently, the UN does not have a mandate in the concerned region, but is coordinating with humanitarian partners to assess needs and support delivery of assistance for any voluntary return to the affected area. WFP has also deployed emergency coordination support to the Office of the Resident Coordinator in Azerbaijan, where WFP does not have a presence, to work alongside UN partners to assess needs and reinforce food security coordination.

The Limited Emergency Operation (LEO) provides a vehicle to channel WFP's support to affected populations in the Nagorno-Karabakh region of the Republic of Azerbaijan to ensure access to basic food needs for civilians affected by the fighting. WFP's Strategic Outcome 1, aligned with WFP Strategic Result 1, will focus on safeguarding access to food needs of affected populations not assisted under existing WFP or partner food security programmes through provision of food assistance and coordination for an effective response. It will be delivered through two outputs:

- Affected populations receive food assistance to meet basic food needs; and
- Affected populations benefit from coordination and assessment to meet their basic food needs.

Based on the findings of assessments and the evolving situation, WFP will review planning assumptions and adjust as required.

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## **1. HUMANITARIAN SITUATION**

### **1.1. EMERGENCY CONTEXT & RESPONSE**

1. High intensity fighting across the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan since September 27 resulted in unconfirmed reports of more than a thousand fatalities; by early November, indications suggest more than half of the area's inhabitants had fled. High level of destruction is reported for infrastructure, roads and housing – including houses, water tanks and other basic infrastructure; schools and other services were halted.

2. On 10 November, Armenia, Azerbaijan and the Russian Federation signed a Tripartite Statement, brokered by the Russian Federation, which halted hostilities and has created a ground for putting an end to the almost three decades long armed conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan.
3. As of end November, the security situation shows some stabilization – however the timeframe for safe and large-scale voluntary return and recovery is still unclear, given the high level of infrastructure damage, ongoing de-mining actions, and the upcoming winter season.

## **1.2 FOOD SECURITY AND NEEDS ASSESSMENTS**

4. There is no available recent needs assessment for the concerned region and its surrounding areas. Currently, access to electricity, water, and supplies is not yet fully restored. Concerns around lack of availability of food in those areas are high. There are varying reports as to the number of returnees, with estimates of 15,000-25,000 people in need of food assistance as of end November. On 15 December the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) wrote a Note Verbale to the Republic of Azerbaijan Permanent Representative to the United Nations, requesting access to Nagorno Karabakh for a UN assessment of the affected area. WFP deployed an Emergency Coordinator to Baku to work with UN partners to support the roll out of a needs assessment and establish (if needed) food security coordination mechanisms.
5. The crisis has unfolded amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, which has brought socio-economic consequences and restrictions that have had important implications.

## **1.3 COORDINATION MECHANISMS**

6. The political context requires WFP to engage with inter-agency coordination structures in Azerbaijan. Coordination is complicated by differentiation of regional representation of agencies, with some covering the region from Geneva. WFP has reinforced its engagement in the different regional and national coordination bodies, including: the deployment of an Emergency Coordinator to Azerbaijan to contribute to preliminary coordination mechanisms being established; while at Regional and Global level WFP engages with inter-agency and international organizations based in Geneva.
7. WFP closely coordinates with international organizations accredited to the Government of Azerbaijan with a mandate to work in the Nagorno-Karabakh region.<sup>1</sup> If required, WFP may seek to coordinate delivery of assistance to ensure that food needs in the affected area are met in the interim until WFP is granted access to assess and deliver.

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## **2 WFP EMERGENCY RESPONSE**

### **2.1 DIRECTION, FOCUS AND INTENDED IMPACTS**

8. This LEO will ensure that inhabitants of the Nagorno-Karabakh region who are affected by the recent crisis will have access to essential food requirements, until a detailed food needs assessment is conducted.

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<sup>1</sup> All subsequent references to international organizations, humanitarian actors and partners refer to those accredited to the Government of Azerbaijan.

9. The LEO caters for an initial 6 month-duration to ensure the coordinated delivery of a needs-based food security response in areas where WFP does not have a pre-existing operational presence. To this end, WFP proposes a single overarching strategic outcome:
  - Strategic Outcome 1, aligned with WFP Strategic Result 1, will focus on safeguarding access to food needs of affected persons not assisted under WFP or partner food security programmes through provision of food assistance and coordination for an effective response.

## **2.2. STRATEGIC OUTCOMES, FOCUS AREAS, EXPECTED OUTPUTS AND KEY ACTIVITIES**

### **STRATEGIC OUTCOME 1: Crisis-affected populations are able to meet their basic food and nutrition needs during and in the aftermath of shocks.**

#### ***Outcome description***

10. WFP will deliver the outcome by providing in-kind food rations, supporting food security and multi-sector needs assessments, and reinforcing food security coordination to ensure an effective sectoral response. WFP will coordinate its activities with the Government of Azerbaijan. If and when the situation allows, WFP may leverage its expertise to support eventual recovery assessments and initiatives.

#### ***Focus Areas***

Crisis response.

#### ***Expected outputs***

- Affected populations receive food assistance to meet basic food needs (SR 1); and
- Affected populations benefit from coordination and assessment to meet their basic food needs (SR1).

#### **Key activities:**

*Activity 1: Provide emergency food assistance to crisis affected populations. (Act Category 1: URT)*

11. In this first phase, WFP will ensure the immediate basic food requirements of the affected population through in-kind food rations. To implement the response, WFP has to work through and with other humanitarian actors and with the Government of Azerbaijan to ensure that food assistance reaches those most in need– including those located in areas currently inaccessible to WFP. Programme design and targeting criteria will consider disparities between women, men, boys and girls and be implemented in a way that is conflict sensitive and does no harm. To the extent possible, WFP will seek to coordinate food assistance with complementary basic needs provided by other humanitarian actors – such as shelter, health, water/sanitation and hygiene. If and when the situation allows, WFP could consider shifting to market-based modalities and/or linking food assistance to recovery initiatives, while maintaining WFP’s core humanitarian principles and minimum requirements to do no harm.

## **2.3. Transition and exit strategies:**

12. During the initial phase of the operation, in close coordination with partners, WFP will review and monitor the needs and gaps and subsequently evaluate the need to extend, revise, or close the LEO after the initial 6 months. WFP will work together with the Government of Azerbaijan, and humanitarian partners to identify and implement an appropriate handover of food security assistance, coordination, and/or services if still required.
13. Once more robust food security and nutrition data is available, and depending on how the situation evolves, WFP may participate with the Government of Azerbaijan, UN sister agencies and relevant

humanitarian partners in the review of longer-term multi-sector needs and contribute to the development of reconstruction/ recovery plans for the affected area.

### 3 IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

14. While needs assessments are under development, WFP will immediately launch the procurement and strategic positioning of food commodities to assist up to 30,000 people -- this includes 15,000 people who are in immediate need of assistance. Further needs assessment will inform a budget revision to adjust for additional caseloads if required, including returnees, arrivals, and/or host populations in areas affected by the crisis where WFP does not have operational presence.

<b>TABLE 1: FOOD ASSISTANCE BENEFICIARIES</b>						
<b>Strategic Outcome</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Women</b> (18+ years)	<b>Men</b> (18+ years)	<b>Girls</b> (0-18 years)	<b>Boys</b> (0-18 years)	<b>Total</b>
Strategic Outcome 1	General Food Assistance	9,200	7,200	6,800	6,800	30,000
<b>TOTAL (no overlap)</b>		<b>9,200</b>	<b>7,200</b>	<b>6,800</b>	<b>6,800</b>	<b>30,000</b>

15. WFP's initial food assistance will be provided in-kind, given the shortages in food supply and concerns about availability of food in the region. WFP has designed a food basket to cover the full kilocalorie requirements of the whole population, and considers local dietary habits, potential limited alternative food sources, and the higher calorie diet requirements during the winter season. This basket is designed for an initial phase during which it is anticipated a number of early returns could include adults – and the basket has been agreed with humanitarian partners operating in the area. Depending on findings of upcoming assessments, WFP may consider specialized baskets taking into account the particular micronutrient needs of children under the age of 5, adolescents, and pregnant/lactating women.

<b>TABLE 2: FOOD RATION (g/person/day)</b>	
<b>Activity</b>	<b>General Food Assistance g/p/d</b>
Cereals <sup>2</sup>	300
Pulses	133
Animal protein (canned fish or meat)	67
Oil	31 <sup>3</sup>
Dried fruit without sugar	33
Iodized Salt	3
<b>total kcal/day</b>	2,052
<b>Number of feeding days per year</b>	Up to 180 days

16. Food commodities will be sourced as cost effectively as possible. Additional COVID-19 related safeguards will be put in place to protect the integrity of the food and supply chain.
17. *In-country capacity:* WFP will leverage its capacities to enable and respond to the crisis. WFP has deployed coordination expertise to Azerbaijan (housed in FAO premises). Additional surge capacity can be mobilized if required. Longer-term structure will require additional costs not yet budgeted – to be addressed through a future budget revision if applicable.
18. *Partnerships:* Adequate coordination among stakeholders is essential to ensure effective and rapid response with the appropriate modality to meet the needs of the most vulnerable and avoid duplication.

<b>TABLE 3: TOTAL FOOD/CASH-BASED TRANSFER REQUIREMENTS AND VALUE</b>		
<b>Food type / cash-based transfer</b>	<b>Total (mt)</b>	<b>Total (USD)</b>
Cereals	1 620	1 258 740
Pulses	718	808 693
Oil and Fats	162	289 980
Mixed and blended foods	0	0
Other	556	2 400 840
<b>TOTAL (food)</b>	<b>3 056</b>	<b>4 758 253</b>
Cash-Based Transfers (USD)		0
<b>TOTAL (food and CBT value – USD)</b>	<b>3 056</b>	<b>4 758 253</b>

<sup>2</sup> Includes 200 g of fibre-rich carbohydrates (buckwheat/spelt/dzavar/oats) and 100 g simple carbohydrates (pasta/wheat/flour/rice).

<sup>3</sup> Actual ration slightly higher, a 920 g / 1 litre per month due to packaging considerations.

19. *The right way*: This Limited Emergency Operation will be implemented in-line with WFP's policy on humanitarian principles, namely the respect of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and operational independence – and guarantee that populations in need have access to food. WFP will coordinate its activities, including food delivery modalities with the Government of Azerbaijan. WFP will ensure that it continues to provide food assistance where required in areas of arrival, so that people are able to choose when and if they return, and will work closely with protection partners before and when providing assistance in areas of return / recovery. If and when access is granted, WFP will engage men and women equally to inform programmatic adjustments including on transfer modalities and basket, eligibility criteria, distribution and monitoring – and once able, complaints and feedback mechanisms (CFM) will allow to monitor accountability. In line with WFP's minimum commitments on conflict sensitivity and do no harm, WFP will implement a principled response, engage with the Government of Azerbaijan and with humanitarian actors, to understand and monitor dynamics, and adapt the programmatic intervention as required to contribute to the peaceful coexistence of different communities. Understanding the needs of different communities will be critical to informing an appropriate response – given conscription requirements among young men, and the particular needs of women and girls, as well as people injured by the conflict.

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## **5 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND EVALUATION**

### **4.1 Monitoring and evaluation**

20. WFP's monitoring and reporting systems will be set up to cover key emergency activities and harmonized where possible with the monitoring and evaluation activities of other international organizations, in coordination with the Government of Azerbaijan. Performance indicators, as well as roles and responsibilities for outcome, output and process monitoring, frequency, sources etc. will be defined. WFP will focus on output monitoring including gender and age-disaggregated beneficiary figures, the amount of food assistance distributed, as well as process monitoring and beneficiary feedback. This information will be provided by cooperating partners and verified by WFP. Where possible, WFP will strive to collect beneficiary feedback. Monitors will assist as possible during distributions and undertake beneficiary contact monitoring to collect feedback. If WFP's food assistance programme extends beyond an initial six months, WFP will collect outcome data for key performance indicators. Implementation will be undertaken in coordination with the Government of Azerbaijan and it will be kept informed timely about project implementation.

### **4.2 Risk Management**

21. Arrangements will be made to ensure that timely risk assessments are carried out prior to implementing and scaling up the operation. WFP will conduct periodic risk assessments and communicate regular progress towards identifying and implementing risk mitigation actions to its key stakeholders. Timely communication to partners and other stakeholders on revisions to programme response, increase in beneficiary numbers, other, will maintain credibility of WFP's response.
22. *Strategic Risks*: The primary risk is not being able to access populations in the affected area due to security constraints. WFP will work with Government of Azerbaijan and other partners to overcome this constraint.
23. *Operational Risks*: The volatility of food and fuel prices, and the potential for an evolving context, will be mitigated through the early and strategic positioning of supplies to ensure efficient action. If WFP is unable to access certain population groups, it may need to temporarily coordinate distribution of commodities and monitoring with other humanitarian actors accredited in Azerbaijan to ensure the life-saving food assistance even in pockets where WFP does not yet have access; dedicated SOPs will be developed as required. It is essential that WFP's response is designed and

implemented in a way that does no harm and is conscious of the dynamics of the area; and is developed in coordination with the Government of Azerbaijan and partners.

24. *Fiduciary Risks:* WFP will monitor the security situation and adhere to common and standard protocols in case of a deterioration in the situation with the objective of ensuring the safety and security of its staff and those of its cooperating partners. COVID-19 presents additional requirements for duty of care and WFP will work with Government of Azerbaijan and humanitarian partners to reinforce access to health services for personnel. WFP has zero tolerance for fraud and corruption, and any breach of obligation by WFP staff or cooperating partners will be handled seriously following the relevant corporate procedures.
25. *Financial Risks:* WFP will closely monitor currency and exchange rate fluctuations, setting up alternate arrangements with vendors to limit its exposure as required. Continuous monitoring and feedback loops will help management adjust implementation in order to optimize use of assets.

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## 6 RESOURCES FOR RESULTS

<b>Table 4 – LIMITED EMERGENCY OPERATION BUDGET (USD)</b>	
Strategic Outcome 1 (SR1)	
<b>Total Direct Operational Costs</b>	<b>5 282 375</b>
DSC	475 414
ISC (6.5%)	374 256
<b>Total cost to WFP</b>	<b>6 132 046</b>

26. Preliminary funding needs stand at approximately USD 6.1 million to support up to 30,000 individuals with direct assistance and effective coordination support for up to six months.

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### RECOMMENDATION

The Regional Director is requested to approve the proposed Emergency Response Limited Emergency Operation (XS01).

ANNEX I: LINE OF SIGHT (TO BE ENTERED IN COMET)

<b>Line of Sight – Regional LEO XS01</b> <b>Southern Caucasus Countries Impacted by Recent Conflict</b>
<b>SR 1 – Everyone has access to food (SDG Target 2.1)</b>
<b>CRISIS RESPONSE</b>
<b>STRATEGIC OUTCOME 1</b> Crisis-affected populations are able to meet their basic food and nutrition needs during and in the aftermath of shocks.
<b>OUTPUTS:</b> 1.1 Affected populations receive food assistance to meet basic food needs.  1.2 Affected populations benefit from coordination and assessment to meet their basic food needs.
<b>ACTIVITY 1</b> Provide emergency food assistance to crisis affected populations (Act Category 1: URT)

ANNEX III: INDICATIVE COST BREAKDOWN

<b>INDICATIVE COST BREAKDOWN ALONG STRATEGIC OUTCOME (USD)</b>		
<b>Focus Area</b>	<b>Strategic Result 1 / SDG Target 2.1</b>	<b>Total</b>
	<b>Strategic Outcome 1</b>	
	<b>Crisis Response</b>	
<b>Transfer</b>	4 846 216	<b>4 846 216</b>
<b>Implementation</b>	436 159	<b>436 159</b>
<b>Direct support costs</b>	475 414	<b>475 414</b>
<b>Subtotal</b>	5 757 790	<b>5 757 790</b>
<b>Indirect support costs</b>	374 256	<b>374 256</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6 132 046</b>	<b>6 132 046</b>