



FAR Relief and Development Project in support of the Artsakh Refugees and Besieged People of the Sisian Region

Emergency Appeal to FAR Friends

October 2022

Background Information

On September 13, 2022 the Azeri army launched a brutal aggression against the eastern borders of Armenia deploying all kinds of weapons. The aggression was not provoked. It took many precious lives of young Armenian men and women in the military, as well as civilians. The destruction of civilian infrastructure was devastating. Azeris occupied additional sovereign land of the Republic of Armenia, where they settled in up until now.

The reaction of the International community was muted. No major sanctions against Azeri aggressors have been considered by any foreign country, even by so-called allied countries, or any international organization.

The geography of this Azeri aggression causes serious concerns about a possibility of the next round of Azeri onslaught. Their appetite is to grab the land between their borders and Nakhijevan, which goes straight through the region of Sisian. That makes Sisian a critically important strategic locations for the security of Armenia.

As you may recall, 2 years ago, after the devastating 44-day war in Artsakh, FAR launched a project in support of the Artsakh refugees who were relocated from the occupied Artsakh territories to settle down in the Sisian area. It was called “Humanitarian Relief Project in support of Artsakh Refugees staying in Armenia”.

We launched that vital project to meet growing critical humanitarian demands of the refugee population. Within its framework not only we took care of bare survival needs of the most vulnerable families, providing them with food, warm clothes, bedding, sanitizing supply, medicine, schooling supply, attending to post trauma survival problems, preventing them from COVID-19, addressing acute health/rehab problems, delivering special post-traumatic rehab for children who lost family members. But we also paved the foundation for their future independent sustainable life in Armenia by organizing special projects for adult children – giving them homes to live in and start a new life, supporting them to plan immediate and long term future (education, sports/recreation, employment, service in the army, etc...); provide custom-tailored assistance to mothers who lost bread-bearers; engage them in basic economic activities, and much more.

As the recent aggression of the enemy showed, we need to not only continue supporting the Artsakh refugees in the region, but also – the entire population of Sisian. Today, we are appealing to our Friends to support FAR in launching a new project for the Sisian region, a project to support people of Sisian whose lives were shattered by ravages of Azeri enemy, to help them find sustenance and strength to continue building their lives in their land and be able to protect themselves and the people of Armenia.

So, today’s imperative is to expand the activities of the “Humanitarian Relief Project in support of Artsakh Refugees staying in Armenia”, and reach out to the entire population of the Sisian region, not only the refugees from Artsakh.

We have to provide them hope that does not disappoint.

What we plan to do

As we have been already established in the Sisian region, we do not need to start the feasibility study for the people’s needs from scratch. So, subject to availability of funds, our activities will be focused in 2 main directions:

- Provision of continuous humanitarian emergency relief to those living below the poverty level (like food, clothing, shelter, healthcare, education needs, etc..) – to refugees and local population.

But, concurrently:

- Implementation of longer term rehabilitation and development projects to promote self-sustainability of local people, their ability to generate enough income for a decent life in the land of their ancestors

In doing so, we will arrange our activities around family stabilization/psychosocial assistance, economic/community development, addressing acute health problems (especially of children), and supporting young adults' educational needs. Only with this multifaceted approach we would be able to support them live comfortably in their homes and not look for opportunities on other shores.

We have done projects like this in the Tavush region for more than 18 communities within the framework of the Breaking the Cycle of Poverty (BCPP), we have done a somewhat similar project for Artsakh IDPs in Sisian, so we could replicate our experience in this region, applying all the tools and know-how acquired by FAR team so far.

Here are the activities we would plan to start once the funding is available

In Family Stabilization/Psychosocial assistance direction we:

- Create and fund a social workers team to psychologically support the people of the region traumatized by the ravages of the recent brutal aggression
- Continue identifying the immediate needs of families in education, social assistance, health, economic development (expanding the pool of beneficiaries beyond just Artsakh refugees)
- Conduct resource mapping
- Provide assistance packages based on the findings during the needs assessment
- Continue supporting the families to improve living conditions in their homes, especially for families with many children

In addressing Healthcare needs

- Support communities and medical professionals to ensure that locally available healthcare services become affordable to the most vulnerable segments of the population (with all legal and administrative challenges), as well as train local doctors and healthcare professionals within FAR's CME program to be able to provide higher quality medical services
- Organize training sessions for local community on public health related issues, especially for younger mothers
- Organize needs assessment of healthcare facilities and local providers and based on the needs provide them with necessary equipment and supplies
- Start addressing child malnutrition issues by providing special healthy food to families with under-aged children
- Continue improving hygienic and other conditions at the community daycare centers for children of 3-6 y/o age
- Support organizing a proper nutrition for children of 0 to 6 y/o age

In supporting education of young adults and children

- Provide basic school supplies, including – backpacks, pens, pencils, copybooks, textbooks, clothes, etc., to the most vulnerable schoolchildren of all the communities in the Sisian region, to ease the financial burdens of families living below the poverty level, who still face financial crisis.
- Provide scholarships to students pursuing various professions and skill sets, to be able to pursue their ambitions in humanities and social sciences through university and/or vocational education at a young age and head in the right direction in the future.
- Organize IT training for young adults, through capacities of FAR's GITC
- Support establishing and maintaining extracurricular groups in the schools of the region so that kids could develop and enhance their skills in crafts and tapestry, as well as through sport activities.

In Economic/Community Development

- Provide tools to families to boost their entrepreneurial skills and get the enrolled in activities towards self-reliance, i.e. starting a small scale in house income generating businesses like bakery, shoe repair, sewing, family farming, etc.
- Support families that have been active in agricultural activities, to gradually move into the direction of smart farming technologies in the field (this is a longer term process)
- In collaboration with local authorities and other NGOs present in Armenia, provide assistance to improve local infrastructure for animal breeding (construction of barns, improved grazing areas, creation of wet/watering points, animal meal production, etc.)
- Start training those willing to acquire business management and specific tech skills
- Provide business grants and/or loans on a competitive basis to farmers who could prove their ability to use it efficiently

In Project Management

For effective day-to-day management and implementation of the project management, a special FAR office should be housed in the Sisian region of Syunik province, a team of social workers to be hired as office employees.

Required Funding

We believe that the adopted format of this project will help FAR to meet not only basic needs of the people in the region but also, open up possibilities for their self-sustainable life.

However, this is multiyear complex project, which would require significant resources for its implementation.

We need to raise more than \$300,000 annually in the course of the next 2-3 years to be able to make a difference in the lives of the local people.

We do rely on support of FAR Friends.

Targeted Gifts to Support FAR's Sisian Project in 2023

Healthcare:

- \$500 to finance a training of one doctor
- \$200 to finance a training of one nurse
- \$150 for one set of emergency medical kit
- \$ 800 for minor renovation of one rural medical post
- \$100 to organize one community training for 15-20 young mothers

Education:

- \$35 for providing schooling supplies to one schoolchild
- \$50 to finance one schoolchild's participation in STEM program
- \$ 125 for one schoolchild's one- academic -year participation in the extracurricular education group of "Preliminary Knowledge of Agricultural management"
- \$200 to organize an art contest and exhibition among all the schoolchildren of the community
- \$800 for one student's one academic year scholarship

Economic Development:

- \$70 for gardening tools set (spade, tree scissors etc.)
- \$200 to finance spring seeds of wheat, barley or corn for a family
- \$400 to finance a family to start beekeeping (instruments +3 beehives)
- \$600 to support a beneficiary to start rural self-employment (baking from home, hairdressing)
- \$1,500 to support a beneficiary with a land cultivation equipment (motor block)

Family Stabilization:

- \$40 to ensure the participation in recreational/activation integration event for one child
- \$500 to meet the primary needs of one socially vulnerable family
- \$75 to conduct positive parenting training for one representative
- \$100 to ensure Emotional Preparedness (healthy coping skills development) for one beneficiary
- \$30 to create and print a leaflet on the first steps in emergencies
- \$150 to provide an emergency kit and grab-and-go bag for one person
- \$500 to organize a training on social work for paraprofessionals (one specialist)