



## Country Report: Republic of Armenia



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## REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA



### 1. General Information

**Official name**

Republic of Armenia (RA), briefly – Armenia

**Name in official language**

Hayastani Hanrapetutyun, briefly – Hayastan

## National flag



A The law 'On the State Flag of the Republic of Armenia" was adopted on August 24, 1990, by the Supreme Soviet of the Republic of Armenia. Following the constitutional reform of November 27, 2005, a new RA law on the National Flag of the Republic of Armenia was adopted on June 15, 2006. The national flag of the Republic of Armenia is a national emblem of the Republic of Armenia. The national flag of the Republic of Armenia is of three colors in stripes of the same width - **red, blue, orange** respectively from top to bottom. **The Red** emblemizes the Armenian Highland, the Armenian people's continued struggle for survival, maintenance of the Christian faith, Armenia's independence and freedom. **The Blue** emblemizes the will of the people of Armenia to live beneath peaceful skies. **The Orange** emblemizes the creative talent and hard-working nature of the people of Armenia. The width-length ratio of the flag is 1/2. Smaller and larger pieces of cloth proportionate to the one described in this section may be used people.

## The Coat of Arms



The law 'On the State Coat of Arms of the Republic of Armenia" was adopted on April 19, 1992, by the Supreme Soviet of the Republic of Armenia. It is a rendition of the Coat of Arms of the First Armenian Republic (1918-1920) designed by member of the Russian Academy of Fine Arts, Architect Alexander Tamanian and artist Hakob Kojoyan. Following the constitutional reform of November 27, 2005, a new RA law on the State Coat of Arms of the Republic of Armenia was adopted on June 15, 2006. The Coat of Arms of the Republic of Armenia is a national emblem of the Republic of Armenia. The Coat of Arms of the Republic of Armenia is as follows: On a shield, positioned in the center, Mount Ararat is represented with Noah's Ark and the coats of arms of the four royal dynasties of the historical Armenia: from top to left - that of the Bargratunides, from top to right – that of the Arshakounides, from bottom to left - that of Artashesides, from bottom to right - that of the Rubenides. The shield is upheld by an eagle (on the left) and lion (on the right). There is a sword, as well as a branch of a tree, a bundle of spikes, a chain and a ribbon pictured below the shield. Golden is

the main color of the Coat of Arms of the Republic of Armenia. The colors of the kingdoms of the historical Armenia are as follows: from top to left - red, from top to right - blue, from bottom to left – blue, from bottom to right - red, with orange-painted Mount Ararat positioned in the center on a shield. The foregoing colors emblemize the colors of the national flag of the Republic of Armenia.

## **The Anthem**

The Anthem of the Republic of Armenia was adopted on July 1, 1991, by the Supreme Soviet of the Republic of Armenia. It is based on the Anthem of the First Armenian Republic (1918-1920). RA Law on the “Anthem of the Republic of Armenia” was adopted on December 25, 2006. The Armenian national anthem is “**Our Fatherland**”; lyrics by Michael Nalbandian, music by Barsegh Kanachian.

### **Our Fatherland**

*Our Fatherland, free, independent,  
That has lived for centuries,  
Is now summoning its sons  
To the free, independent Armenia.  
Here is a flag for you my brother,  
That I have sewed  
Over the sleepless nights,  
And bathed in my tears.  
Look at it, tricoloured,  
A valuable symbol for us.  
Let it shine against the enemy.  
Let Armenia be glorious forever.  
Death is the same everywhere,  
A man dies but once,  
Blessed is the one who dies  
For the freedom of his nation.*

**Head of the State**

President

**Legislative power**

Unicameral National Assembly

<b>Official language</b>	Armenian (is part of Indo-European family of languages)
<b>Capital</b>	Yerevan
<b>Administrative and territorial unit</b>	Marz (total number of 10), communities (total number of 502) Including: Urban: 49, in which Yerevan with its 12 administrative districts
<b>National currency</b>	Dram (international currency code - AMD)
<b>1.1 Geographical information</b>	
<b>Territory</b>	29.74 thousand square km (is comparable with the territory of Belgium or Albania)
<b>Neighboring countries</b>	North - Georgia South - Iran East - Azerbaijan South-West - Nakhichevan (Azerbaijan) West – Turkey
<b>Average elevation above sea level</b>	1800 m (76.5% of the republican territory is on the height of 1000-2500 m above sea level)
<b>The highest peak</b>	Aragats mountain - 4090 m
<b>The lowest altitude</b>	Debed river canyon - 375 m
<b>The greatest extent</b>	from North-West to South-East comprises 360 km from West to East 200 km 65 km
<b>Time zone</b>	Greenwich mean time + 4 hours

## **1.2 Climate information**

<b>Region</b>	north latitudes of subtropics
<b>Climate</b>	dry, continental
<b>Average temperature</b>	in January - -6.8°C, in July - +20.8°C

## **1.3 Demographic data**

<b>Population</b>	3.0 Million
<b>Ethnic breakdown</b>	Armenians (98.1%), Russians, Yezidis, Kurds, Assyrians, Greeks, Ukrainians, Jews and representatives of other nationalities
<b>Religion</b>	Christianity (Armenian Apostolic Church), professed by the vast majority of the population

## **1.4 Historical Information**

<b>IV-III thousand years B.C.</b>	origin of fore Armenian tribal unions on the territory of the Armenian Plateau
<b>782 B.C.</b>	establishment of Yerevan city
<b>VI-V centuries B.C.</b>	completion of the Armenian people's ethnic forming on the Armenian Plateau territory and development of the Armenian language
<b>189 B.C.</b>	formation of independent Armenian state

<b>301 A.D.</b>	official acceptance by Armenia of Christianity as a state religion
<b>405 A.D.</b>	creation by Mesrop Mashtots of the Armenian Alphabet - the basis of written language
<b>428 A.D.</b>	partition of Armenia between Rome and Persia
<b>VII century</b>	Armenia is in the power of Arabs
<b>884 A.D.</b>	liberation of the northwestern part of Armenia and recovery of Armenian State system
<b>1080-1375</b>	Armenian State system established in Kilikia (Mediterranean area)
<b>1639</b>	partition of Armenia between Turkey (Western Armenia) and Persia (Eastern Armenia)
<b>1828</b>	Eastern Armenia joins Russia
<b>1915</b>	deportation and genocide of Armenians in Western Armenia
<b>1918</b>	Armenian State system recovery in Eastern Armenia-Declaration of the Republic of Armenia
<b>1920</b>	establishment of the Soviet rule in Armenia
<b>1922-1991</b>	Armenia is a part of the USSR
<b>1991</b>	collapse of the USSR and declaration of Independence of the Republic of Armenia



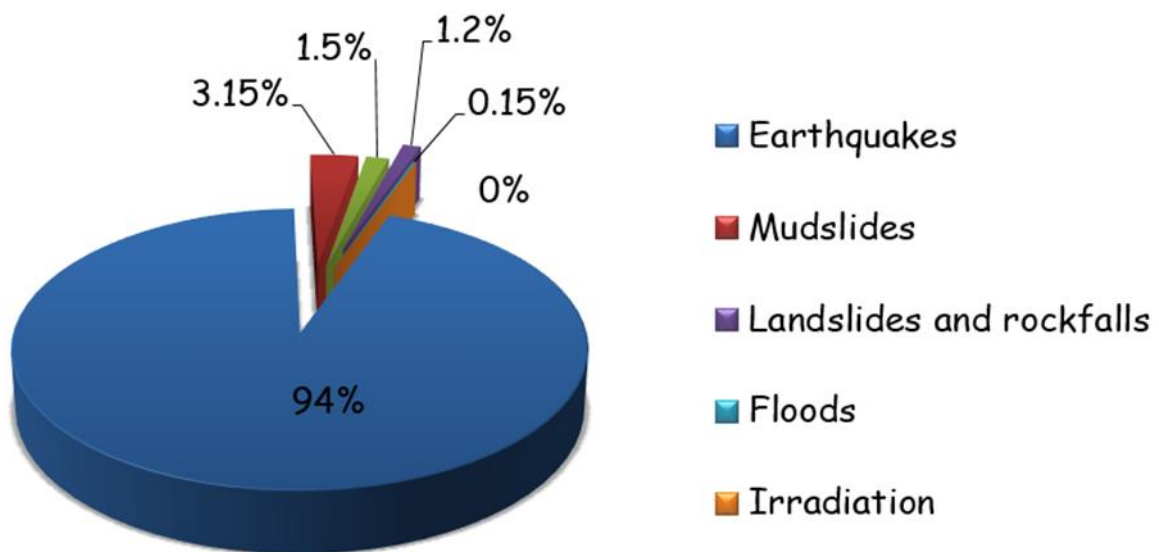
<b>1991</b>	Armenia is a founding member of the Commonwealth of Independent States
<b>1991</b>	Armenia is a member of the CIS
<b>1992</b>	Armenia is a member of the OSCE
<b>1992</b>	Armenia is a member of the Collective Security Treaty Organization
<b>1992</b>	Armenia is a member of the International Monetary Fund
<b>1992</b>	Armenia is a member of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC)
<b>1992</b>	Armenia became a member of the World Bank
<b>1992</b>	Armenia is a member of the U.N.O.
<b>1999</b>	Signing of partnership agreement between Armenia and the European Union
<b>2001</b>	Armenia is a full member of the Council of Europe
<b>2003</b>	Armenia enters into the World Trade Organization (WTO)
<b>2012</b>	The Republic of Armenia is a full member of the International Organization of Francophonie
<b>2017</b>	The Republic of Armenia and European Union concluded Comprehensive and enhanced partnership agreement.

## 2. Natural Hazards

### 2.1. Natural Hazards likely to affect the country

Armenia is one of the most disaster prone countries in the world (except the sea disasters), but in Armenia the earthquake disaster is the most harmful for people and property. Among various types of disasters, main hazard for the territory of Armenia is the earthquake-94%, and only 6% is another hazards.

Armenia is located in a region where seismic activities are active.



### 2.2. Recent Major Disaster

#### Spitak (1988)

##### Destructive Earthquake

December 7, 1988 at 7.41.22.7 GMT (11.41.22.7 local time). The epicenter by the records of seismographs has the following coordinates: latitude 40.92°N, longitude 44.23°E. The depth of the hypocenter, measured by various methods and means, varies from 2.5km to 10-15km. It is natural as the earthquake source as a spatial. The magnitude of the earthquake was 7.0. The intensity at the epicenter was 10 value on MSK-64 intensity scale.

The earthquake hit 40 % of the territory of Armenia, densely populated region with 1 ml people. The affected area, where the intensity of the earthquake was  $\geq 8$ , involved 30002 km area. 21 towns and 342 villages were destructed, 514 000 people were left without shelter, 20 000 people were injured and 12 500 people were hospitalized. Number of victims was about 25 000.

Particularly in Gyumri (15 000-17 000) and in Spitak (4 000) number of victims was more than anywhere else. 17% funds of dwellings were destroyed, the work of 170 industrial companies were halted, the great losses were caused to villages and agro industrial complexes as well as to the architectural, historical and cultural monuments, 917 public buildings were destroyed.



The rescue activities were systemized only two or three days later. From the first second the earthquake strike, the population carried out restless rescuing works. Anyhow the absence of their experience and sometimes the lack of basic knowledge on actions in emergency caused real difficulties for the efficiency of rescue operations. Even there were cases when the public unawareness brought to life losses. Also there was a need of rescue equipment. With the efforts of population and the rescuers 45.000 dead or alive people were brought out from the rubble and 12.5000 people were hospitalized.

### 3. Disaster Management System

#### 3.1 Administrative System

<p><b>Chair Person: President</b>          (Oversee the observance of the Constitution, shall ensure the natural functioning of legislative, executive and judicial powers.)</p>
<p><b>Vice Chairman: Prime minister</b>          (Oversee the Government's regular activities and coordinate the work of the Ministers)</p>
<p><b>Government of RA</b>          (Executive power is vested in the Government of the Republic of Armenia)</p>

Territorial Administration and Infrastructure	Economy
Emergency Situations	Foreign Affairs
Defense	Health
Finance	Justice
Environment	Labor and Social Affairs
Education, Science, Culture and Sport	High-Tech Industry
Internal Affairs	
<b>Bodies under the Government</b>	
Cadastral Committee	Education Inspectorate
Environmental Protection and Mining Inspection Body of the Republic of Armenia	Food Safety Inspectorate
Health and labor Inspection body of the Republic of Armenia	Market Surveillance Inspection Body
Nuclear Safety Committee	Statistics Committee
State Revenue Committee	Urban Development, Technical Standards and Fire Safety Inspectorate
Urban Development Committee	
<b>Bodies under the Prime Minister</b>	
National Security Service	State supervision service of RA

### 3.2 Legal System and Framework

Armenia is prone to natural disasters. Eight out of every 10 persons face the probability of experiencing a natural disaster such as an earthquake, landslide or flooding. But thanks to recent efforts of the Government, Armenia has shifted from reactive relief to proactive risk reduction. Seismic Protection activities are regulated by a number of laws and legislative acts and national programs of the Republic of Armenia:

<b>Law of Republic of Armenia</b>	
The Law of the Republic of Armenia on Seismic Protection	2002
<b>Resolutions of Government</b>	
The Complex Program of Seismic Risk Reduction in the Territory of Armenia	1999
The complex program of seismic risk reduction in Yerevan city	1999
<b>Regulation</b>	
Regional Survey for Seismic Protection	2017

Other normative documents, regulating organization of seismic protection have been also developed. Some of them are as follows: a) New seismic building codes; b) Principles of Seismic Microzoning; c) Instruction on conducting of observations in seismic, geophysical and other stations; d) The procedure of the expert analysis and providing the information about earthquake threat to the Government of RA.

### **3.3 Structure of the Disaster Management**

Armenia is located within a zone particularly prone to earthquakes and other natural disasters like landslides and floods frequently occurring on a small scale. Ministry of Emergency Situations of the Republic of Armenia is a republican body of executive authority, which in line with such competences as are vested in it by laws and other legal acts, develops, implements and coordinates RA government's policy in the area of civil defense and protection of the population in emergency situations. Objectives of the MES:

- To establish and vest governmental policy in Civil Protection and enhance the country's preparedness level;
- Co-ordinate and organize Civil Protection system activities;
- Organize governmental expertise in solutions and projects concerning objects and processes as possible causes of emergencies;
- The consequences of emergencies; prepare for possible consequences; establish, provide and implement Civil Protection programs;
- Organize government control over the secured implementation of industrial activities concerning civil protection and the utilization of mineral resources;
- Organize and implement preparedness in government administrations, local self-government bodies and the administrative staff of organizations, to promote stable


activities in the civil protection system in emergencies, and the training of professional personnel;





- Participate, organize and co-ordinate rehabilitation and rescue activities in emergencies and the invention of corresponding forces for that purpose. Promote co-operation between governmental, departmental (administrational) and public rescue organizations;
- Organize and provide resources for international co-operation in civil protection problems.

<b>Ministry of Emergency Situations of RA</b>					
Rescue Service	Regional Survey for Seismic Protection (RSSP) (takes various measures for earthquake disaster management)	Agency for State Reserves	National Technical Safety Center	Russian-Armenian Humanitarian Response Center	State Of Emergency Crisis Management Academy

Since the day of its foundation the Armenian RSSP made close links with international organizations well known in the field of seismic hazard and seismic risk assessment and reduction, giving importance to the experience of these organizations and aiming to adjust it to local conditions.

Scientific and technical relations of the Armenian RSSP:

<b>Institution/Organization</b>	
	US Geological Survey
	European-Mediterranean Seismological Centre, France
	International Institute of Seismology and Earthquake Engineering, Iran
	GeoforschungsZentrum-Postdam, Germany
	Geophysical Survey of the Russian Academy of Sciences
	Japan Meteorological Agency

	Institute for the Physics of the Earth RAS
	Massachusetts Institute of Technology
	Seismic Monitoring Center of Georgia
	Asian Disaster Reduction Center
	Kandilli Observatory and Earthquake Research Institute, Istanbul, Turkey
	University of Athens, Greece
	Japan International Cooperation Agency
	National Institute of Geophysics, Rome, Italy
	Kazakhstan National Data Center, Institute of Geophysical Research

and other institutions working in the field of seismic risk assessment and seismic risk reduction.

### 3.4 Regional Survey for Seismic Protection (RSSP)

Regional Survey for Seismic Protection (RSSP) was founded under the Government of the Republic of Armenia on July 17, 1991. Armenian RSSP is under the Ministry of Emergency Situation.

The basic goal of RSSP is Seismic Risk Reduction in Armenia.

Armenian RSSP has developed two Strategic National Programs on "**Seismic Risk Reduction in Armenia**" and "**Seismic Risk Reduction in Yerevan-city**". The Programs, adopted by the Government of the Republic of Armenia on the 10<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> of July in 1999 are designed for 30 years. All the Ministries and other Governmental, non-Governmental and private organizations will implement these National Programs under the general co-ordination of Armenian SSP assigned by the Government as a responsible body for the Seismic Risk Reduction Strategy development and implementation.

**Seismic risk reduction Strategy includes:**

- Seismic Hazard and Risk Assessment
- Vulnerability reduction in urban areas, including reinforcement and upgrading of existing buildings, design of new codes and standards

- Public awareness, people education and training
- Early warning and notification
- Partnership establishment, involving public and private organizations
- Risk management, including Emergency Response and Rescue Operations
- Disaster relief and people rehabilitation
- Insurance
- State disaster Law and regulations

The Armenian RSSP is consists into 4 professional centers, according to the main goals and research directions.

- Seismic Hazard Assessment Center
- Earthquake Engineering Center
- National Observation Networks
- Center of Work with Population.

The Armenian RSSP carries out all seismic risk reduction related studies including geophysics, geology, geochemistry, geodesy and earthquake engineering, sociology, psychology, etc.

The Armenian RSSP has significant achievements in the field of seismic risk reduction. The main of them are the following:

- **Seismic Hazard Assessment.** The maps of Seismic Hazard Assessment (SHA). The last SHA map was compiled and approved in 2017:
- **Current Seismic Hazard Assessment.** A unique multi-parameter network has been established. It consists of 140 monitoring stations performing round-the-clock data acquisition and analysis via satellites.
- **Seismic Risk Assessment.** The new methods for seismic risk quantitative assessment, based on the main seismic risk assessment factors (such as seismic hazard level, population density and buildings' vulnerability) have been elaborated.
- **Reinforcement of existing buildings and structures.** New methods for increasing the earthquake resistance of existing buildings and structures have been developed, successfully tested and implemented into practice.
- **New building codes.** The Armenian RSSP took part in creation of the first national building codes for Armenia, which are in good accordance with the international standards and requirements.



- **Public Education.** The Center for Public Education and Training has been established in Armenian RSSP. Educational system based on knowledge dissemination through mass media, TV Programs have been developed.
- **State disaster Law and regulations.** Numerous normative documents, regulating organization of seismic protection have been developed. Example: The Law on Seismic Protection has been adopted by the Parliament in 2002.

#### **4. Disaster Management Strategy, Policy, and Plan**

Natural and technological hazards threatening Armenia urge the need of development and strengthening of DRR system in Armenia. This process implies involvement of all the potential of the country, which can be achieved through elaboration of Disaster Risk Reduction National Platform (DRR NP). DRR system is a framework of functions and processes with the aim to reduce population's vulnerability to disaster risks. It is aimed at prevention or reduction of negative impacts of hazards and contributes to sustainable development of the society. Fund for DRR NP was established in 2010. The Head of the Board is Minister of Emergency Situations. The goal of the DRR NP is to establish a multi-spectral mechanism with involvement of all stakeholders.

MES of RA has established a Crisis Management Centers as the main body for planning, co-ordinating and implementing measures related to natural and other forms of disasters (complementary to a National Platform on Disaster developed in cooperation with UNDP).

The main goal of "Seismic Risk Assessment and Risk Management Planning Project" is to reduce vulnerability to large-scale earthquakes in the capital city of Yerevan, where a third of the country's population is concentrated, by providing assistance in preparing risk management plans which cover all viewpoints surrounding disaster management cycle from prevention, emergency response to recovery/reconstruction. This project was started from August 2010 with the cooperation of the MES of RA.

#### **5. Progress of the implementation of Hyogo Framework for action (HFA)**

Armenia is at high risk of natural and technological hazards, owing to high levels of exposure and vulnerability.

There are many issues and concerns in the country, which increase the vulnerability and

exposure of the Armenian population to the above mentioned hazards. These include:

1. Need of a Comprehensive approach to Disaster Risk Reduction.
2. Absence of DRR strategy.
3. Imperfection of DRR legislative field.
4. Lack of clarity in roles and responsibilities of DRR stakeholders.
5. Poor coordination among various stakeholders in DRR sector.
6. Insufficient level of cooperation in DRR sector.
7. Agency interests are a priority.
8. Insufficient level of knowledge and education in DRR sector.
9. Imperfection of awareness raising process.
10. Inefficient use of resources.
11. Insufficient level of analytical capacities.
12. Absence of DRR common methodology.
13. Imperfection of monitoring system in DRR.
14. Lack of comprehensive understanding of DRR in the development perspective.
15. Need of multi-stakeholder partnership on DRR.

The national platform states that DRR implies joined actions by the Government, state bodies, communities, civil society, scientific organizations, private sector, as well as the mass media.

DRR NP in Armenia is a structure elaborated and administered by the country with the involvement of stakeholders. It aims to promote DRR implementation at all levels, coordinate, analyze and consult in main sectors which require joined, participatory and coordinated actions.

Together with the UNDP, MES of RA developed a national disaster risk reduction strategy based on the Hyogo Framework of Action, a 10-year, UN-backed plan to make the world safer from natural hazards. The strategy will promote the further institutionalization and sustainability of the DRR system in Armenia.

## **6. Recent Major Projects on Disaster Risk Reduction**

### **6.1. The Real Time Seismic Intensity Display System (Joint MES of RA- Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) project)**

Based on Japanese earthquake experiences, JICA has been supporting Armenian earthquake disaster prevention through "Seismic Risk Assessment and Risk Management Planning Project" by utilizing Japanese technology.

One of the project goals is to formulate a system for citizens to use their own self-discretion to act properly in case of emergency. Real Time Information System on Seismic Intensity was installed at the Risk Management Center of the MES of RA which aims to promote disaster prevention actions of the citizens through publicity of disaster information and to raise public awareness towards disaster prevention. The demonstration of the system was made in the presence of the Minister of Emergency Situations and project counterparts. Based on a lesson from the Great East Japan Earthquake on the importance of citizens' capability for proper evacuation actions based on their own decision, the project also focuses on awareness raising activities for citizens.

MES of Armenia develops following plans:

1. Formulation of Earthquake Disaster Management Plan for Yerevan City
2. Formulation of Evacuation Plan based on Earthquake Disaster Management Plan for Yerevan City
3. Formulation of Business Continuity Plan for MES RA.

## **6.2. Strengthening of National Disaster Preparedness and Risk Reduction Capacities - II phase (Joint MES of RA- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Armenia project)**

The project second phase is a continuation of the implementation plan contained in the Programme Framework for Strengthening of National Disaster Management Capacities, developed jointly by UNDP and Armenian Government in 2007. The project provides support in strengthening of legal and institutional framework for disaster risk management in Armenia, including development of comprehensive disaster risk reduction national strategy. Risk identification and assessment as well as its reduction measures and further monitoring are considered as four major dimensions for the national strategy formation. The project is aimed at strengthening of legal and institutional framework for disaster risk management in Armenia, including development of national disaster risk reduction strategy and enhancement of risk identification, assessment and monitoring system in Armenia.

Project activities include: National risk assessment and establishment of national data observatory for disaster statistics; strengthening of legal and institutional framework and inter-agency coordination for disaster management in Armenia.

#### Expected Results

Disaster Risk Reduction project implementation will contribute to strengthening of DRR capacities of the country and more systematized coordination and management of the disaster management system having a functional National Platform and DRR strategy as a basis for sustainable development of the country. The project will continue to pay special attention to gender sensitive issues in DRR.

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