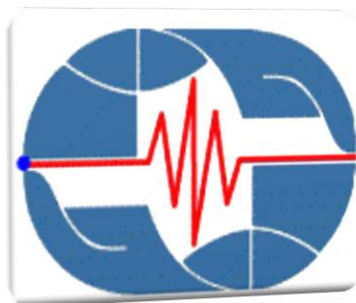




## Country Report: Republic of Armenia



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# REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA



## 1. General Information

- **Official Name:** Republic of Armenia (RA)
- **Local Name:** Hayastani Hanrapetutyun (Hayastan)
- **Head of State:** President
- **Head of Government:** Prime Minister
- **Legislative Power:** Unicameral National Assembly
- **Official Language:** Armenian (Indo-European family)
- **Capital:** Yerevan
- **Administrative Divisions:** 10 provinces (marz), 502 communities (49 urban, including 12 districts of Yerevan)
- **Currency:** Dram (AMD)

### 1.1 National Symbols

#### National flag



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.

#### Coat of Arms



Central shield features Mount Ararat with Noah's Ark and the coats of arms of four royal dynasties (Bagratuni, Arshakuni, Artashes, Rubenid). Shield supported by eagle (left) and lion (right). Elements include sword, tree branch, spikes, chain, ribbon. Main color: gold.

**Anthem:** *Our Fatherland*; lyrics by Michael Nalbandian, music by Barsegh Kanachian. Adopted July 1, 1991; RA law ratified December 25, 2006. [Armenian anthem](#)

## 1.2 Geography

- **Territory:** 29,740 km<sup>2</sup> (like Belgium or Albania)
- **Borders:** North – Georgia; South – Iran; East – Azerbaijan; Southwest – Nakhichevan (Azerbaijan); West – Turkey
- **Average Elevation:** 1,800 m (76.5% of territory between 1,000–2,500 m)
- **Highest Peak:** Mount Aragats, 4,090 m
- **Lowest Point:** Debed River Canyon, 375 m
- **Dimensions:** NW–SE: 360 km; W–E: 200 km
- **Time Zone:** GMT +4

## 1.3 Climate information

- **Region:** Northern latitudes of subtropics
- **Climate:** Dry continental
- **Average Temperature:** January: -6.8°C, July: +20.8°C

## 1.4 Demographics

- **Population:** 3 million
- **Ethnic Composition:** Armenians 98.1%; minorities: Russians, Yezidis, Kurds, Assyrians, Greeks, Ukrainians, Jews
- **Religion:** Predominantly Armenian Apostolic Christianity

### 1.5 History (Key Events)

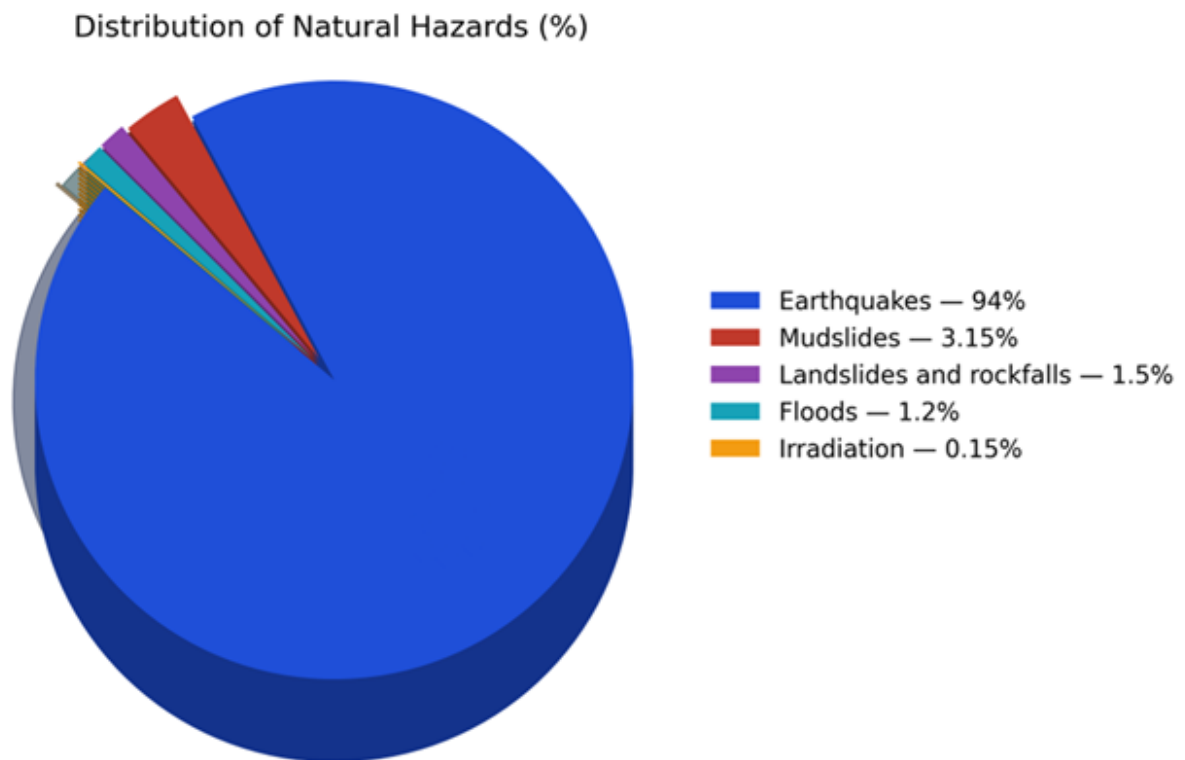
<b>Year/Period</b>	<b>Event</b>
IV–III millennia B.C.	Formation of early Armenian tribal unions on the Armenian Plateau
782 B.C.	Foundation of Yerevan
189 B.C.	Establishment of independent Armenian state
301 A.D.	Adoption of Christianity as state religion
405 A.D.	Creation of Armenian alphabet by Mesrop Mashtots
428 A.D.	Armenia partitioned between Rome and Persia
884 A.D.	Liberation of NW Armenia, recovery of statehood
1080–1375	Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia established
1639	Armenia divided between Ottoman Empire (West) and Persia (East)
1828	Eastern Armenia joins Russia
1915	Armenian Genocide in Western Armenia
1918	Declaration of Republic of Armenia
1920–1991	Armenia part of USSR
1991	Independence of RA; founding member of CIS
1992	Member of OSCE, CSTO, IMF, BSEC, World Bank, UN
2003	Joins WTO
2012	Joined the International Organization of La Francophonie
2017	Comprehensive partnership with European Union

## 2. Natural Hazards

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

Armenia is one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world, excluding marine-related hazards, but in Armenia the earthquake disaster is the most harmful for people and property. The primary natural hazard affecting Armenia is earthquakes (approximately 94%), while other hazards account for about 6%.

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



### 2.2. Recent Major Disaster

#### Spitak Earthquake (1988) – Destructive Event

The destructive earthquake in Spitak occurred on December 7, 1988, at 7:41:22.7 GMT (11:41:22.7 local time). According to seismograph records, the epicenter was located at latitude 40.92°N, longitude 44.23°E. The hypocenter depth, measured by different methods, ranged from 2.5 km to 10–15 km, reflecting the natural spatial variability of the earthquake source. The earthquake had a magnitude of 7.0, and the intensity at the epicenter reached 10 on the MSK-64 scale.

The earthquake affected approximately 40% of Armenia's territory, a densely populated region with around 1 million residents. Areas where the intensity exceeded 8 on the MSK-64 scale covered 30,000 km<sup>2</sup>. The disaster caused the destruction of 21 towns and 342 villages, leaving 514,000 people homeless, 20,000 injured, and 12,500 hospitalized. The total number of victims was approximately 25,000, with the highest casualties in Gyumri (15,000–17,000) and Spitak (4,000).

The earthquake destroyed 17% of residential buildings, halted the operation of 170 industrial enterprises, and caused significant damage to villages, agro-industrial complexes, and architectural, historical, and cultural monuments. In total, 917 public buildings were destroyed.



Rescue operations became systematically organized only two to three days after the earthquake. From the very beginning, local residents engaged in spontaneous rescue efforts. However, the lack of experience and basic knowledge on emergency response created challenges, sometimes leading to additional casualties. There was also a critical shortage of proper rescue equipment. Nevertheless, through combined efforts of the population and professional rescuers, 45,000 people were rescued from the rubble, and 12,500 were hospitalized.

### 3. Disaster Management System

#### 3.1 Administrative System

<b>Chairperson: President</b> (Oversee the observance of the Constitution, shall ensure the natural functioning of legislative, executive and judicial powers.)	
<b>Vice Chairperson: Prime Minister</b> (Oversee the Government's regular activities and coordinate the work of the Ministers)	
<b>Government of RA</b> (Executive power is vested in the Government of the Republic of Armenia)	
Ministry of Internal Affairs	Ministry of Defense
Ministry of Economy	Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport
Ministry of Environment	Ministry of Finance
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Ministry of Health
Ministry of High-Tech Industry	Ministry of Justice
Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs	Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure
<b>Bodies under the Government</b>	
Cadaster 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>	
Foreign Intelligence Service	National Security Service
State Protection Service	State supervision service of RA

### 3.2 Legal System and Framework

Armenia is highly prone to natural disasters. Statistically, eight out of ten people face the risk of experiencing events such as earthquakes, landslides, or floods. In recent years, thanks to the Government's efforts, the country has shifted from a reactive, relief-oriented approach to proactive disaster risk reduction.

Seismic protection activities in Armenia are governed by several laws, legislative acts, and national programs, including:

<b>Law of the Republic of Armenia</b>	
Law on Seismic Protection	2002
<b>Government Resolutions</b>	
Complex Program of Seismic Risk Reduction in the Territory of Armenia	1999
Complex Program of Seismic Risk Reduction in Yerevan City	1999
<b>Regulation</b>	
Regional Survey for Seismic Protection	2017

In addition, other normative documents have been developed to regulate seismic protection activities. Key examples include:

- a) New Seismic Building Codes
- b) Principles of Seismic Microzoning
- c) Instructions for conducting observations at seismic, geophysical, and other monitoring stations
- d) Procedures for expert analysis and reporting of earthquake threats to the Government of the Republic of Armenia

These legal instruments collectively provide a structured framework for earthquake preparedness, risk reduction, and public safety in Armenia.

### 3.3 Structure of the Disaster Management

Armenia is located in a zone particularly prone to earthquakes, as well as other natural hazards such as landslides and floods, which frequently occur on a smaller scale.

Following governmental restructuring, the seismic protection and disaster management functions are now under the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, which incorporates the Regional Survey for Seismic Protection (RSSP). The Ministry coordinates civil protection and emergency preparedness, ensuring the safety of the population during natural and man-made hazards.

Key objectives include:








- Developing and implementing governmental policy in civil protection and enhancing national preparedness;
- Coordinating the activities of the civil protection system; The consequences of emergencies; prepare for possible consequences; establish, provide and implement Civil Protection programs.
- Conducting governmental expertise on projects and objects that may pose emergency risks;
- Preparing for and mitigating the consequences of emergencies through civil protection programs;
- Overseeing the safe implementation of industrial activities related to civil protection and responsible utilization of mineral resources;
- Ensuring preparedness in governmental bodies, local self-governments, and organizational administrations, including training professional personnel;
- Organizing, coordinating, and participating in rescue and rehabilitation operations during emergencies, fostering collaboration among governmental, departmental, and public rescue organizations;
- Supporting and providing resources for international cooperation in civil protection.

<b>Ministry of Internal Affairs of RA</b>			
Rescue Service	Regional Survey for Seismic Protection (RSSP) (Take various measures for earthquake disaster management)	Migration and Citizenship Service	Police

Since its establishment, the Armenian RSSP has maintained strong links with international organizations specializing in seismic hazard assessment and risk reduction. It actively integrates international experience into local practices to enhance Armenia’s disaster preparedness and response capabilities.

International Scientific and Technical Cooperation of the RSSP and other institutions working in the field of seismic risk assessment and seismic risk reduction.

<b>Institution/Organization</b>	
	US Geological Survey
	European-Mediterranean Seismological Centre, France
	International Institute of Seismology and Earthquake Engineering, Iran
	Geoforschungs Zentrum-Potsdam, 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

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

The Regional Survey for Seismic Protection (RSSP) was established under the Government of the Republic of Armenia on July 17, 1991. Currently, the Armenian RSSP operates under the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Armenia. Its primary goal is the reduction of seismic risk in Armenia.

Armenian RSSP has developed two Strategic National Programs:

- Seismic Risk Reduction in Armenia
- Seismic Risk Reduction in Yerevan City

These programs, adopted by the Government on July 7<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>, 1999, are designed for a 30-year implementation period. All ministries, governmental bodies, non-governmental organizations, and private institutions implement these programs under the general coordination of the Armenian RSSP, which is responsible for developing and executing the national seismic risk reduction strategy.

**The Seismic Risk Reduction Strategy includes:**

- Seismic Hazard and Risk Assessment
- Vulnerability reduction in urban areas, including reinforcement of existing buildings and development of new codes and standards
- Public awareness, education, and training
- Early warning and notification systems
- Partnerships with public and private organizations

- Risk management, including emergency response and rescue operations
- Disaster relief and population rehabilitation
- Insurance schemes
- Development and enforcement of state disaster laws and regulations

### **Organizational Structure of Armenian RSSP:**

The RSSP consists of four professional centers, aligned with its main objectives and research directions:

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

The RSSP conducts comprehensive studies related to seismic risk reduction, including geophysics, geology, geochemistry, geodesy, earthquake engineering, sociology, and psychology.

Significant Achievements of Armenian RSSP include:

- **Seismic Hazard Assessment.** Maps of seismic hazard assessment, with the latest map compiled and approved in 2017.
- **Current Seismic Hazard Assessment.** A unique multi-parameter network of 140 monitoring stations, providing round-the-clock data acquisition and satellite-based analysis.
- **Seismic Risk Assessment.** Development of quantitative assessment methods based on hazard level, population density, and building vulnerability.
- **Reinforcement of existing buildings and structures.** New methods for enhancing earthquake resistance of existing structures have been developed, tested, and implemented.
- **New building codes.** Participation in creating Armenia's first national building codes aligned with international standards.
- **Public Education.** Establishment of the Center for Public Education and Training, with educational programs disseminated through mass media and TV.
- **State disaster Law and regulations.** Numerous normative documents have been developed, including the Law on Seismic Protection adopted by Parliament in 2002.

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

Armenia faces significant natural and technological hazards, which underscores the need to develop and strengthen the Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) system. This requires the involvement of all national resources, coordinated through the Disaster Risk Reduction National Platform (DRR NP). The DRR system is a structured framework of functions and processes aimed at reducing the population's vulnerability to disasters, preventing or mitigating their impacts, and contributing to sustainable development.

The Fund for DRR NP was established in 2010 to support these efforts. Initially overseen by the Ministry of Emergency Situations, all DRR functions—including the management of the Crisis Management Centers and related planning, coordination, and response activities—are now under the Ministry of Internal Affairs, specifically its Department for Disaster and Emergency Risk Management.

A key project under this framework is the “Seismic Risk Assessment and Risk Management Planning Project”, launched in August 2010. Its main objective is to reduce vulnerability to large-scale earthquakes in Yerevan, home to one-third of the country's population, through comprehensive risk management plans covering all stages of the disaster management cycle: prevention, emergency response, and recovery/reconstruction.

## **5. Progress in Implementing the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA)**

Armenia's high exposure and vulnerability to hazards highlight several challenges in DRR implementation, including:

1. Need for a comprehensive approach to DRR
2. Absence of a unified DRR strategy
3. Gaps in DRR legislation
4. Lack of clarity in roles and responsibilities of DRR stakeholders
5. Poor coordination among DRR stakeholders
6. Insufficient cooperation within the DRR sector
7. Agency interests prioritized over collective goals
8. Low levels of knowledge and education on DRR
9. Imperfect public awareness campaigns
10. Inefficient use of resources
11. Limited analytical capacities
12. Absence of a standardized DRR methodology
13. Weak monitoring systems
14. Limited integration of DRR into development planning
15. Need for multi-stakeholder partnerships

The DRR NP promotes coordinated actions by government agencies, communities, civil society, scientific institutions, the private sector, and media. It is designed to coordinate, analyze, and advise on DRR implementation at all levels.

Together with UNDP, Armenia developed a national disaster risk reduction strategy aligned with the Hyogo Framework for Action, a 10-year UN-backed plan to enhance disaster resilience. This strategy aims to institutionalize and sustain Armenia's DRR system.

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

### **6.1. Real-Time Seismic Intensity Display System (RSSP / JICA Project)**

Drawing on Japanese earthquake experience, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has supported Armenian earthquake disaster prevention through the Seismic Risk Assessment and Risk Management Planning Project.

The project established a Real-Time Information System on Seismic Intensity, installed at the Risk Management Center of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (formerly MES). Its objectives are:

- Promote disaster-prevention actions among citizens by providing timely information
- Raise public awareness and education on proper evacuation and emergency response
- Enable citizens to act independently during emergencies

Key plans developed include:

1. Earthquake Disaster Management Plan for Yerevan City
2. Evacuation Plan based on the Earthquake Disaster Management Plan
3. Business Continuity Plan for the Ministry of Internal Affairs

## **6.2. Strengthening National Disaster Preparedness and Risk Reduction Capacities – Phase II (UNDP / Ministry of Internal Affairs Project)**

This second-phase project continues the Programme Framework for Strengthening National Disaster Management Capacities (2007), jointly developed with UNDP. Its focus areas include:

- Strengthening Armenia's legal and institutional DRR framework
- Developing a comprehensive national DRR strategy
- Risk identification, assessment, reduction measures, and monitoring

Project activities include:

- National risk assessment and establishment of a disaster data observatory
- Strengthening inter-agency coordination and legal frameworks
- Enhancing monitoring and analytical capacities

Expected Results:

- Strengthened national DRR capacities
- More systematized disaster management coordination
- Functional National Platform and DRR strategy as a basis for sustainable development
- Continued focus on gender-sensitive DRR initiatives

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