

## **SUPPORT TO THE SYRIAN-ARMENIAN REPATRIATES IN SOLVING HEALTHCARE PROBLEMS (2012–2018)**

### **ԱՋԱԿՑՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ ՍԻՐԻԱՀԱՅ ՀԱՅՐԵՆԱԴԱՐՁՆԵՐԻ ԱՌՈՂՋԱՊԱՀԱԿԱՆ ԽՆԴԻՐՆԵՐԻՆ (2012–2018 ԹԹ.)**

### **СОДЕЙСТВИЕ АРМЯНАМ-РЕПАТРИАНТАМ ИЗ СИРИИ В ВОПРОСЕ ЗДРАВООХРАНЕНИЯ (2012–2018 ГГ.)**

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*Abstract* – As a result of the harsh and stressful conditions of the war in Syria since 2011, a significant number of our compatriots arrived in Armenia with illnesses, and therefore needed urgent medical care. Syrian Armenians in need have applied to the Ministry of Diaspora of the Republic of Armenia with requests for primary medical care, assistance in purchasing medicines, as well as free or partial reimbursement of healthcare and surgery-related expenses. By decision of the RA Government, the health problems of Syrian Armenians who applied to the RA Ministry of Health were resolved within the framework of a state order, with the mediation of the Ministry of Diaspora RA. Medical services not included within the framework of the state order or requiring high costs were financed by various Armenian and international organizations, again with the mediation of the Ministry of Diaspora RA. Programs to support Syrian Armenians operated in separate medical institutions in Armenia. Syrian-Armenian doctors have also supported the health problems of their compatriots, especially through the "AGBU – Clodia Nazarian" charity clinic opened in Yerevan, as well as establishing their own private medical centers. Syrian-Armenian doctors who have settled in Armenia have mainly been employed in various medical institutions, and individual Syrian-Armenians have opened their own private clinics in the Homeland. Overall, the Armenian government has managed to quickly and effectively resolve the health problems of Syrian-Armenians settled in the Homeland.

*Ամփոփում* – 2011 թվականից Սիրիայում ծավալված պատերազմական դաժան և սթրեսային պայմանների հետևանքով մեր հայրենակիցների զգալի մասը ձեռք է բերել զանազան հիվանդություններ, ուստի երբ նրանք ժամանել են Հայաստան, կարիք են ունեցել անհետաձգելի բժշկական օգնության: Սիրիահայերը դիմել են ՀՀ սփյուռքի նախարարություն՝ առաջնային բժշկական օգնություն, դեղամիջոցների գնման հարցում աջակցություն, ինչպես նաև առողջապահության ու վիրահատության հետ կապված ծախսերն անվճար դարձնելու կամ մասամբ փոխհատուցում ստանալու խնդրանքներով: ՀՀ կառավարության որոշմամբ, ՀՀ առողջապահության նախարարությանը դիմած սիրիահայերի առողջական խնդիրները լուծվել են պետական պատվերի շրջանակում՝ ՀՀ սփյուռքի նախարարության միջնորդությամբ: Պետպատվերում չներառված կամ մեծ ծախսեր պահանջող բուժօգնությունները ֆինանսավորվել են հայկական ու միջազգային տարբեր կազմակերպությունների կողմից՝ նորից ՀՀ սփյուռքի նախարարության միջնորդությամբ: Սիրիահայերի աջակցության ծրագրեր են գործել Հայաստանի առանձին բուժհաստատություններում: Սիրիահայ բժիշկները ևս աջակցել են հայրենակիցների առողջապահական խնդիրները լուծելու՝ հատկապես Երևանում բացված առանձին «ՀԲԸՄ– Քլոտիա Նազարյան» բարեգործական կլինիկայի միջոցով, ինչպես նաև հիմնել են իրենց մասնավոր բժշկական կենտրոնները: Սիրիահայ բժիշկները հիմնականում աշխատանքի են ընդունվել ՀՀ տարբեր բուժհաստատություններում, իսկ առանձին սիրիահայեր իրենց մասնավոր կլինիկաներն են բացել հայրենի երկրում: Ընդհանուր առմամբ, Հայաստանի կառավարությանը հաջողվել է արագ և արդյունավետ միջոցներով լուծել Հայրենիքում հաստատված սիրիահայերի առողջապահական խնդիրները:

*Аннотация* – В результате войны, развернувшейся в Сирии в 2011 г., в Армению хлынул поток наших соотечественников, при этом большинство армян-репатриантов из Сирии нуждалось в срочной медицинской помощи, и с этой целью они вынуждены были обратиться в Министерство диаспоры РА с просьбой об оказании первичной медицинской помощи, содействия в приобретении лекарств, а также о частичной компенсации расходов на здравоохранение. По решению Правительства РА проблемы со здоровьем сирийских армян, обратившихся в Министерство здравоохранения РА, были решены в рамках государственного заказа при посредничестве Министерства диаспоры РА. Медицинские услуги, не входящие в рамки государственного заказа или требующие больших затрат, финансировались различными армянскими и международными организациями, опять же при посредничестве Министерства диаспоры РА. Программы поддержки сирийских армян действуют в отдельных медицинских учреждениях Армении. Армянские врачи – сирийцы также оказали поддержку своим соотечественникам, в частности, через отдельную благотворительную клинику «ВАБС – Клодия Назарян», открытую в Ереване, а также путем создания собственных частных медицинских центров. Врачи из числа сирийских армян, обосновавшиеся в Армении, в основном работают в различных медицинских учреждениях. Ряд сирийских армян открыли на родине собственные частные клиники. В целом правительству Армении удалось быстро и эффективно решить проблемы здравоохранения сирийских армян, обосновавшихся на Родине.

**Keywords** – Syria, war, Armenian Community, repatriation, healthcare.

**Հիմնաբառեր** – Սիրիա, պատերազմ, հայ համայնք, հայրենադարձություն, առողջապահություն:

**Ключевые слова** – Сирия, война, армянская община, репатриация, здравоохранение.

## Introduction

Since July, 2012, the flow of Syrian Armenians to Armenia has increased significantly.

From the very beginning of the war in Syria, the RA Ministry of Diaspora (hereinafter referred to as the RA Ministry of Diaspora, Minister Hranush Hakobyan, 2008–2018) has been engaged in the work of meeting the needs of Armenians repatriated from Syria, upon the instruction of the RA President (Համաժողովներ 2017, 1; Հաքարյան 2018, 570). Already on September 22, 2012, four sectorial working subgroups were formed in the RA Ministry of Diaspora to deal with housing, labor, health, and educational issues of Syrian Armenians (Պետական քաղաքականություն 2024, <<http://www.mindiaspora.am>>; Համաժողովներ 2017, 1).

## State Support for the Health Problems of Syrian-Armenians

The majority of Syrian-Armenians who have seen the horrors of war have arrived in Armenia with numerous health problems. That is why a significant number of them have applied to the RA Ministry of Health with a request for urgent medical assistance.

The health problems of Syrian-Armenians who applied to the Ministry with medical certificates (providing primary medical assistance, assistance in purchasing medicines, etc.) have been resolved directly through a corresponding official petition sent to the RA Ministry of Health by the Head of Staff (Firdus Zakaryan) on behalf of the RA Minister of Diaspora. In accordance with the agreement reached with the RA Ministry of Health, it was decided to implement the treatment of Syrian-Armenians as an exception within the framework of a state order (ՀԱԱ, §. 1786, g. 2, q. 7, p. 43). In the case of large expenses (heart surgery, purchase of medicines, prostheses, etc.), the Ministry was supported by various Diaspora and international charitable organizations operating in Armenia (Ապրում են Հայաստանում 2018). Moreover, the support of international organizations was mainly directed at those displaced from Syria to Armenia and those who found themselves in refugee status (Սիրիահայերին օժանդակություն տրամադրող 2018, 4).

Some of the Syrian Armenians were not at all able to cover their or their relatives' healthcare or surgery-related expenses with their own funds, so they applied for full (i.e.: free) medical care, while others applied for partial or 50% (i.e.: discounted) reimbursement.

An individual approach was shown to Syrian Armenians who applied to the RA Ministry of Social Affairs with a request for assistance in solving health problems. Before the RA Ministry of Health submitted a written request to be included in the state order, a detailed assessment of the needs of Syrian Armenians was carried out in the Ministry of Health on a daily basis (ՀԱԱ, §. 1786, g. 3, q. 43, p. 23).

All medical institutions in Yerevan were given instructions on the free use of outpatient polyclinic services by Syrian Armenians (ՀԱԱ, §. 1786, g. 2, q. 78, p. 47).

Hospital and outpatient medical care for Syrian Armenians was organized free of charge within the framework of the state order. Moreover, outpatient medical

care was provided according to their actual place of residence, in regional polyclinics and medical outpatient clinics (Առողջապահություն 2019, <<http://www.mindiaspora.am>>).

The Chief of Staff of the RA Ministry of Health responded to numerous applications from Syrian Armenians without delay, upon receipt. They mainly concerned the issue of providing urgent and largely free solutions to certain diseases of our needy compatriots. The diseases of the Syrian-Armenians who applied for treatment were diverse: ophthalmology, coronagraphy, cardiac stenting, cardiac surgery, internal organ surgery, urology, gynecology, pregnancy, childbirth, osteoporosis, hip joint endoprosthesis, post-accident, fracture, prosthetics, hernia, implant, cancer-chemotherapy, as well as mammography, skin, respiratory, therapeutic physical education, provision of appropriate medications, up to in vitro fertilization, etc. Many Syrian-Armenians have also been repeatedly or periodically provided with medicines that are difficult to find and require constant intake (ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, ց. 3, զ. 70, թ. 2, 32, 39; զ. 77, թ. 6; զ. 99, թ. 34, 35; զ. 100, թ. 36; զ. 101, թ. 61; զ. 102, թ. 64; զ. 104, թ. 72).

Many have benefited from several different programs designed to support Syrian-Armenians at the same time: for example, housing compensation, purchase of medicines, etc. (ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, ց. 3, զ. 70, թ. 2, 32, 39; զ. 77, թ. 6).

The medical care provided to Syrian-Armenians in need included a number of directions, often several at the same time: consultative, research, therapeutic, surgical, postoperative. In some cases, it also concerned several members of the same family.

Compensation for some difficult-to-access examinations, heart and other complex surgeries not included in the state order, as well as the purchase of necessary medications and the settlement of other health issues of Syrian-Armenians was carried out by petitions of the RA Ministry of Health. The Chief of Staff of the RA Ministry of Foreign Affairs has, through official letters, interceded with the heads of various charitable organizations to include Syrian-Armenians and their relatives who have applied to them in support programs (ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, ց. 2, զ. 7, թ. 43).

Financial expenses related to healthcare issues of Syrian-Armenians settled in Armenia have been reimbursed in full or in the form of co-payments, thanks to the cooperation of the RA Ministry of Health with a number of state, international, charitable and public institutions, organizations and foundations (Առողջապահություն, <<http://www.mindiaspora.am>>). These are: the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Armenia, the "Center for Coordination of Syrian-Armenian Issues" NGO, the Armenian Office of the "Izmirlian Foundation", the Armenian General Benevolent Union (hereinafter referred to as the AGBU), the "Mission Armenia" NGO, the "SOS-Children's Villages" Armenian Charitable Foundation, the "Armenia" Pan-Armenian Foundation, the Armenian Missionary Association of America, the "Howard Karagyozyan" Medical Charitable NGO, the Armenian-American Health Center, the "Aragil" Reproductive Medicine Support Foundation, the Armenian Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Armenian branch of the Oxford Committee for Famine Relief (OXFAM), Yerevan State Medical University after

Mkhitar Heratsi, the "Dinamo" Sports NGO of Armenia, the Combat and Physical Training Department of the RA Police, the "Gracia" Armenian International Rehabilitation Center of the Red Cross Society LLC (Առողջապահություն 2019, <<http://www.mindiaspora.am>>; ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, ց. 3, գ. 99, թ. 34, 35; գ. 100, թ. 36; գ. 101, թ. 61; գ. 102, թ. 64; գ. 104, թ. 72; գ. 61, թ. 17, 18, 26, 49, 56, 60, 61, 86, 87, 92; գ. 62, թ. 29, 30, 41, 42, 45, 48, 54, 103; գ. 63, թ. 1, 6, 7, 22, 29, 92, 99; գ. 64, թ. 14, 93, 96, 97, 98, 103, 105, 106, 109; գ. 65, թ. 10, 39, 40, 43, 45, 74, 75, 84, 86, 100; գ. 66, թ. 9; գ. 67, թ. 13, 20, 71, 75; գ. 68, թ. 31, 61; գ. 69, թ. 12, 16, 29, 51, 65; գ. 70, թ. 2, 29, 32, 33, 39, 95; գ. 71, թ. 60; գ. 72, թ. 3, 18, 25, 33ա, 57, 105; գ. 73, թ. 18, 29, 30, 37, 45, 54, 58, 87; գ. 74, թ. 10, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 31, 33, 71, 81, 82; գ. 75, թ. 99; գ. 77, թ. 6; գ. 79, թ. 52; գ. 80, թ. 17), etc.

It should be noted that the AGBU, based on written petitions provided by the Armenian Missionary Association of America and the "Center for Coordinating the Issues of Syrian-Armenian Issues" NGO, also provided financial assistance to address the health problems of Syrian Armenians in need (Սիրիահայերին օժանդակություն տրամադրող կազմակերպությունների 2018, 7; Առողջապահություն 2019, <<http://www.mindiaspora.am>>).

### **Support Programs for Syrian Armenians in Armenian Medical Institutions**

In addition to the above, a number of Armenian medical institutions have operated support programs for Syrian Armenian compatriots.

Thus, on March 17, 2017, the launch of the "Medical Assistance to Needy Syrian Armenians Living in Armenia" program and the signing of a memorandum of cooperation took place at the "Izmirlian" Medical Center (ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, ց. 3, գ. 71, թ. 43). The initiator and supporter of the program is the Armenian office of the "Izmirlian Foundation". The goal of this program, co-financed by this foundation and the Mother See of Holy Edjmiadzin, is "to provide free medical assistance to needy Syrian-Armenians who have settled in Armenia since 2012 as a result of the Syrian war". The beneficiaries were provided with special discounts for all medical services at the Izmirlian Medical Center, which implemented the program (Մամլո հաղորդագրություն, <<https://www.izmirlianmedicalcenter.com>>). Within the framework of the Medical Assistance to Syrian-Armenians program, the beneficiary was also sent for an initial medical consultation to the "Claudia Nazarian" clinic located on the 2nd floor of the AGBU "Vahe Karapetian" Center, founded by AGBU (Սիրիահայերին օժանդակություն տրամադրող կազմակերպությունների 2018, 6). The partners of the program were: the Ministry of Diaspora of the RA, "Izmirlian" Medical Center, "Izmirlian" Foundation in Armenia, the Mother See of St. Edjmiadzin, AGBU, "Center for Coordination of Syrian-Armenian Issues" NGO, "Aleppo" NGO (Մամլո հաղորդագրություն 2017, <<https://www.izmirlianmedicalcenter.com>>). The state-ordered and difficult-to-access examinations and a number of complex surgical interventions for needy Syrian-Armenians living in Armenia were carried out within the framework of

this program (Առողջապահություն 2019; Մեննարկեց սուրիահայերու բժշկական աջակցութեան ծրագիրը 2017, <<http://www.ragmamoul.net>>).

Medline Clinic, equipped with the latest medical equipment, also cooperated with the Ministry of Diaspora of the RA and provided our Syrian-Armenian compatriots with both outpatient and inpatient surgical services free of charge (Առողջապահություն 2019, <<http://www.mindiaspora.am>>).

In 2012-2015, about 1,700 Syrian-Armenians applied to the Ministry of Diaspora of the RA with health problems. Moreover, in 2013, according to June, 2013 data, with the support of the Ministry of Health of the RA, about 500 Syrian-Armenians received hospital medical care (ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, ց. 3, գ. 44, թ. 40; Նորածին երեխաներ ունեցող սիրիահայ ընտանիքներ 2013, <<https://news.am>>). About 750 Syrian-Armenians were examined and treated in hospital conditions (Հայաստան-Սփիւռք չորրորդ համաժողովում 2014, 70; ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, ց. 1, գ. 137, թ. 1).

By the decision of the Mayor of Yerevan and the Minister of Health of the RA, Syrian-Armenians living in Yerevan received free polyclinic services, which were used by more than 1,000 Syrian-Armenians during the mentioned period (Զաքարյան 2018, 572; Աշխատանք փնտրող սիրիահայ բժիշկներ 2013, <<https://www.panarmenian.net>>).

During 2012-2015, in total, more than 100 million drams were allocated from the RA budget for the purpose of providing difficult-to-reach examinations and services (Զաքարյան 2018, 572).

During this period, 20 heart surgeries were performed on Syrian-Armenians with the support of the Ministry of Health of the RA and the "Hayastan" All-Armenian Fund (ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, ց. 3, գ. 44, թ. 40).

In total, more than 60 heart and other complex surgeries were performed during 2012-2015. 1,128 Syrian-Armenians underwent difficult-to-reach examinations and received hospital medical care (ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, ց. 3, գ. 141, թ. 99). (See Table 1.)

Table 1

| <b>The number of Syrian-Armenians who underwent difficult-to-reach examinations and received medical services in 2012-2015 (Zakaryan 2018, 572)</b> |               |
|---|---------------|
| <b>Year</b>   | <b>Number</b> |
| 2012-2013   | 608           |
| 2014  | 380           |
| 2015  | 140           |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>1.128</b>  |

On October 11, 2016, numerous Syrian-Armenian compatriots received medical care at Yerevan "Nork-Marash" Medical Center CJSC with the referral of the Ministry of Diaspora of the RA. In addition to the assistance provided by the state and with state support, the Medical Center, in turn, provided financial assistance to those referred in the form of discounts (ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, ց. 3, գ. 141, թ. 99). Often, many

were urgently operated on or stented, and only then the issue of payment was raised (ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, ց. 3, գ. 64, թ. 14).

With the mediation of the Ministry of Diaspora of the RA, the Ministry of Health provided a referral for surgery to the Syrian-Armenians with health problems, to pay "in the manner and amount established within the framework of the state order," which implied that the Syrian-Armenian's surgery would be partially paid for by the state or a charitable organization, and partially by the Syrian-Armenian. However, very often, Syrian-Armenians, being in difficult social conditions, did not have the opportunity to pay even the partial amount necessary for the surgery. Therefore, the newcomers again turned to the assistance of the Ministry of Diaspora of the RA. In such cases, the Chief of Staff of the Ministry of Diaspora of the RA addressed an official letter to this or that medical center, asking to perform the necessary urgent medical operation until the necessary amount is paid through the mediation of the Ministry of Diaspora of the RA (ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, ց. 3, գ. 59, թ. 91, 93).

Over the past years, more than 80 heart and other complex surgeries of Syrian-Armenians were performed with the assistance of the Ministry of Diaspora of the RA, including more than 25 heart stenting in 2015 alone. In 2016, up to 30 cardiac stenting surgeries were expected (ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, ց. 3, գ. 64, թ. 95).

Very often, for Syrian-Armenians in need of urgent surgery or stenting, medical intervention was performed before the financing issue was resolved.

In addition to heart surgeries, the Chief of Staff of the Ministry of Diaspora, in order to solve various health problems of Syrian-Armenians (medical examination, gynecological and mammographic examinations, chemotherapy, hernia surgery with mesh implant placement, etc.), has applied with official letters to the heads of various medical institutions (Armenian-American Health Center, "Armenia" MC, "Izmirlian" MC, etc.), as well as to various national and international charitable organizations ("Hayastan" All-Armenian Fund, Armenian Representation of the Armenian Missionary Association of America, etc.) to cover the costs related to treatment (1,000,000 drams and more) (ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, ց. 3, գ. 57, թ. 14, 15, 92; գ. 60, թ. 21, 54, 97; գ. 71, թ. 43; գ. 75, թ. 99).

In the medical institutions under the jurisdiction of the Municipality, many socially vulnerable Syrian-Armenian families received medical assistance and services (The Municipality Donated Strollers 2013, <<https://news.am>>). Thus, in 2013-2016 January-March, 5,977 Syrian-Armenians were provided with free medical assistance and services in the medical institutions under the jurisdiction of the Municipality of Yerevan (ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, ց. 3, գ. 135, թ. 34). By the way, in January, 2013, Yerevan Municipality provided assistance to 81 Syrian-Armenian families, 31 families received free medical assistance (Շարունակվում են սիրիահայ ընտանիքներին ցուցաբերվող 2013, <<https://www.panorama.am>>).

During 2016 and the first 6 months of 2017, about 3,400 Syrian-Armenians applied to medical institutions under the jurisdiction of the Yerevan Municipality, receiving free medical assistance (ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, ց. 3, գ. 45, թ. 6). And according

to April, 2017, medical assistance was provided to 1,686 Syrian-Armenians («Պետք է անենք հնարավոր ամեն ինչ...» 2017, <<https://www.aravot.am>>).

All applications submitted by Syrian-Armenians to the Ministry of Diaspora of the RA were accepted and, upon written mediation by the Ministry, they were given appropriate processing. As a result, over the course of just 5 years (from 2012 to the first half of 2017), about 4,000 Syrian-Armenians benefited from free healthcare services (ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, ց. 3, զ. 70, թ. 65).

This process of support, with a few exceptions, generally continued until the end of the Ministry of Diaspora of the RA and, in particular, the end of Minister H. Hakobyan's term (May 11, 2018).

### **Support of Diaspora and International Organizations for the Health Issues of Syrian-Armenians**

Diaspora and international organizations have also provided support for the health issues of Syrian-Armenians.

The "Hayastan" All-Armenian Fund has implemented health support programs for Syrian-Armenians. For example, donations from Brazilian, Argentine and Swedish branches paid for the heart surgery expenses of 6 Syrian-Armenians (Hayastan All-Armenian Fund Continues 2013, <<http://www.armradio.am>>), etc.

On November 1, 2013, among other issues, the United Armenian Fund (USA, founding president Harut Sassounian) and the Ministry of Diaspora of the RA discussed and reached an agreement to submit to the fund a list of medicines and medical supplies needed by Syrian-Armenians (ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, ց. 3, զ. 36, թ. 118).

On July 30, 2015, the reference submitted to the 6th session of the Court under the RA Minister of Diaspora stated that the Ministry of Diaspora carried out preparatory work for the signing of memorandums of cooperation with the Armenian Relief Society (ARS), the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU), as well as the "Howard Karagyozyan" Medical Caritable Non-Governmental Organization (MC NGO) (ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, ց. 3, զ. 35, թ. 11 շրջ.).

The huge financial support provided by the AGBU to our Syrian-Armenian compatriots in the healthcare sector is undeniable: the health problems of numerous Syrian-Armenians have been solved (ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, ց. 3, զ. 19, թ. 28), the expenses related to medication, medical care and emergency surgeries have been reimbursed (ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, ց. 3, զ. 45, թ. 33, 37), etc.

With the support of the Ministry of Diaspora of the RA, "Howard Karagyozyan" MC NGO carried out preventive ophthalmological and dental medical examinations of Syrian-Armenians, as well as Iraqi-Armenians, in 2014, which continued in subsequent years. Thus on December 9, 2015, at the initiative of the Ministry of Diaspora of the RA and "Howard Karagyozyan" MC NGO, a traditional health outing was organized to the Darbnik community of Ararat province, where 117 local children (Syrian-Armenians, Iraqi-Armenians, and displaced persons from Soviet Azerbaijan) under the age of 18 underwent ophthalmological and dental examinations. 70 of them (under 14



years old) needed professional treatment, which was provided at the "Howard Karagyo-zian" MC NGO in Yerevan (ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, g. 3, q. 35, թ. 11 շրջ., 88, 89, 92).

And already in November, 2016, the medical staff of the "Howard Karagyo-zian" MC NGO in the Darbnik community performed ophthalmological and dental examinations of 45 Syrian-Armenian and Iraqi-Armenian children. Those in need of treatment were referred to the "Howard Karagyo-zian" MC NGO clinics to receive free treatment (ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, g. 3, q. 172, թ. 102).

"Mission Armenia", with the support of the UNHCR Office in Armenia, provided extensive assistance to refugees and asylum seekers in Armenia, providing a variety of social and health services: medical care (surgery, physiotherapy and inpatient treatment, examinations), household, etc. The NGO provided financial assistance for the implementation of examinations not included in the framework of the state order, providing co-payments, purchasing medicines, and other issues (Հաքարյան 2018, 573; Առողջապահություն 2019, <<http://www.mindiaspora.am>>).

Although UNHCR has been operating under conditions of declining global funding, in November, 2016, UNHCR Armenia provided an additional \$10,000 to the medical assistance programs provided by "Mission Armenia", bringing the total funding for the program, in 2016, to \$101,842. In 2017, the overall budget of UNHCR Armenia will decrease by approximately 34% compared to 2016, however, \$81,000 will be allocated to the medical assistance program (ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, g. 3, q. 144, թ. 25, 25 շրջ.).

The "Mission Armenia" charitable NGO also provided care services to bedridden or limited mobility Syrian-Armenians, as well as health assistance: doctor's consultation, provision of medication, and, if necessary, organization of treatment and examination (Սիրիահայերին օժանդակություն տրամադրող կազմակերպությունների 2018, 4; Germany Allocates 2013, <<http://asbarez.com>>), etc.

The Armenian Red Cross Society (ARCS) also assisted with the health problems of Syrian-Armenians: providing: medication, musculoskeletal equipment, visual aids (ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, g. 3, q. 45, թ. 9, 10), etc.

The Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) has assisted Syrian-Armenians in terms of reimbursement of medical diagnosis and treatment costs, as well as providing humanitarian packages (Սիրիահայերին օժանդակություն տրամադրող կազմակերպությունների 2018, 3), etc.

And or, on October 3, 2012, the Armenian Lighthouse Charitable Foundation, operating in Seal Beach, California and Ptghunk, Armavir, under the Ministry of Diaspora of the RA, provided assistance to 14 Syrian-Armenian families. At the same time, as a result of cooperation with the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Armenia, free humanitarian surgeries were organized for Syrian Armenians. The Foundation has expressed its willingness to continue to assist Syrian-Armenian families and individuals who have applied to it and have already become beneficiaries of the Fund (ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, g. 2, q. 78, թ. 3).

Of course, it has not always been possible to raise the required amount at the right time, especially since some international charitable organizations have not reimbursed the amount needed for the healthcare of Syrian-Armenians on time or at all for various reasons.

### **Syrian-Armenian Doctors' Support for Their Compatriots' Health Issues. Charity Medical Center for Syrian-Armenians**

Syrian-Armenians living in Armenia have also made a significant contribution to supporting their compatriots' health issues by organizing a charity medical center.

Thus, the "Center for Coordinating the Issues of Syrian-Armenians" NGO (founded on October 18, 2012, President of the CCISA NGO Lena Halajian), continuing its mission to support Syrian-Armenians living in Armenia, has opened its doors to the office every Saturday, since 2014, to support the health issues of Syrian-Armenians who have moved to Armenia. Seven Syrian-Armenian doctors working there on a voluntary basis provided free consultations and prescriptions, assisting 2,800 patients. The center's prescriptions were recognized by various NGOs and served as a basis for providing free medication (ՀԱԱ, §. 1786, g. 3, q. 125, p. 116).

Many organizations in Armenia and the Diaspora, in the face of the humanitarian disaster caused by the ongoing war in Syria, which inevitably affected the local Armenian community, even created separate funds within their structures specifically for the assistance of Syrian Armenians. Thus, the AGBU created an emergency fund in October, 2016, to provide urgent assistance to Syrian-Armenians (Տեղի է ունեցել սիրիահայերի հիմնախնդիրները համակարգող 2016, <<https://www.azatutyun.am>>).

And already on December 5, 2016, the union opened the "AGBU – Claudia Nazarian" outpatient medical service clinic at the AGBU "Vahe Karapetyan" Center in Yerevan (1 Z. Kanakertsi Street, 2nd floor), within the framework of the program to support Syrian Armenians, specifically for our compatriots who arrived from Syria. In 2012, at the new medical service center, which is part of the "Support to Syrian Armenians" program launched by the AGBU, Syrian-Armenians could receive free medical consultation, assistance, and services in the following areas requiring urgent and urgent medical care: ophthalmology, gynecology, cardiology, and pediatrics (Հայկական բարեգործական ընդհանուր միություն 2016; ՀԱԱ, §. 1786, g. 3, q. 45, p. 37; q. 143, p. 18; q. 154, p. 112).

In 2017, in the context of the reduction of the general budget of the UNHCR Armenia office, the role of the polyclinic opened with the joint support of the AGBU and the Center for Coordination of the Problems of Syrian Armenians has become even more important (ՀԱԱ, §. 1786, g. 3, q. 144, p. 25, 25 շրջ.).

In addition to the above, Syrian-Armenian doctors who settled in Armenia were mainly employed in various medical institutions, and some opened their own private clinics in their Homeland. As of 2015, more than 80 Syrian-Armenian doctors have been employed in their specialty. The RA Ministry of Social Affairs sent a petition for

employment for 10 Syrian-Armenian medical workers to the RA Ministry of Health, which also received a positive decision (ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, g. 3, q. 175, թ. 45, 46).

### Conclusion

As a result of the terrible and stressful conditions of the war that has been going on in Syria since 2011, a significant part of our compatriots have arrived in Armenia with illnesses, and therefore have been in need of urgent medical care.

Syrian-Armenians in need have applied to the RA Ministry of Diaspora with requests to receive primary medical care, assistance in purchasing medicines, as well as free or partial reimbursement of healthcare and surgery-related expenses.

By decision of the RA Government, the health problems of Syrian Armenians who applied to the RA Ministry of Health were resolved within the framework of a state order, with the mediation of the RA Ministry of Diaspora. Medical services not included within the framework of the state order and or requiring high costs were financed by various Armenian and international organizations, again with the mediation of the RA Ministry of Diaspora (Համաժողովներ 2017, 2).

Programs to support Syrian-Armenians have operated in separate medical institutions in Armenia. Syrian-Armenian doctors have also supported the health problems of their compatriots, especially through the separate "AGBU – Claudia Nazarian" charity clinic opened in Yerevan, as well as establishing their own private medical centers.

Syrian-Armenian doctors who settled in Armenia were mainly employed in various medical institutions in their homeland, and individual Syrian-Armenians opened their own private clinics in the Homeland.

In general, the Armenian government has managed to quickly and effectively resolve the health problems of Syrian-Armenians settled in the Homeland.

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