

A photograph of a supermarket aisle with empty white shelves. A person in a black coat is walking away from the camera, carrying a shopping bag. The shelves are mostly empty, with some small items visible on the right side. The floor is light-colored tile.

# RAPID NEEDS ASSESSMENT AMONG THE POPULATION IN NAGORNO-KARABAKH

August 2023

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## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Lachin corridor has been closed for almost 8 months starting from December 12, 2022. This corridor is the only land route connecting the Armenian-controlled part of Nagorno-Karabakh (NK) to Armenia. Before June 15, 2023, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) accompanied by the Russian peacekeepers could provide the population of NK with the items of immediate needs such as food, medicine and hygiene items through the checkpoint. Since then, the ICRC was able to supply small volume of medication for a few times; however, since July 11, the Government of Azerbaijan has rejected to give access to the ICRC for supply of medications, while transfer of patients from Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia has been regularly interrupted by Azerbaijan – for a duration of 10-15 days each time.

As a result, 120,000 people are in a total blockade. Out of these people 30,000 are children, 20,000 are elderly and 9,000 are people with disabilities. The population of NK faces deprivations and lacks essential good for life.

From July 30 to August 4, 2023, Hub Artsakh has conducted a survey among 418 households in NK to collect representative data with the application of a robust methodology. Face to face interviews were held in four locations of NK, including Stepanakert, Martuni, Martakert and Askeran. Prior to conducting the fieldwork, data collectors were trained on the methodology and the questionnaire, and instructed to follow ethical considerations and interview people with due respect and impartiality.

The objective of the survey was to understand the real needs and concerns of the population in NK and accordingly to make those vocal. The results of this survey will be publicly available and disseminated among all actors of foreign, international, and local audience.

Interviewed households reported having meals three times a day on average, on each of the 3 days before the interview. Deeper analysis showed that the average number was conditioned with the higher frequency of having children below 2 years old, unlike older children and adults, who usually have meals less than three times per day. The main means of food purchase was with cash; therefore, food affordability is not a major issue.

More than half of households (65 percent) stated to have partially sufficient food for the past 7 days, 30 percent had insufficient food and only 5 percent reported that the food was fully sufficient. For about 90 percent of households the main obstacle to having sufficient food for the past 7 days

was the lack of food in the market. Another frequently mentioned reason was the limited transportation caused by the lack of fuel and increase in prices.

Extremely long queues to buy food also affected the sufficiency of food in households, because people, in particular with small children, elderly and/or disabled people, were unable to stand and wait in the queues for indefinite amounts of time. This was further compounded by the fact that those in queues are unsure whether the food will be sufficient for everyone waiting to purchase.

Households heavily adopt food coping mechanisms to have enough food for the week. On average, coping mechanisms were adopted 5 days during the previous week. 68 percent of households had to reduce the number of meals eaten and 51 percent had to rely on less preferred and less expensive food every day during the past week. Another, 38 percent of the adult population ate less so that small children would have sufficient food to eat.

According to interviewed households, the blockade in NK has very negatively affected access to the markets (95 percent), diversification of essential goods (95 percent), food availability (93 percent), as well as prices of essential goods (92 percent). About 60 percent reported not having a staple food stock. 36 percent had a staple food stock, and out of them, 75 percent indicated that it would last for 3 weeks.

The most serious concern of households was the security situation in NK. The shortage of food was ranked the second among the 1st priority concerns, and the first in the second and third priority concerns, confirming the lack of food availability. Another concern that can be seen in all three rankings was the shortage of medicine, indicating the challenges in assessing essential healthcare and medical supplies. The travel restrictions were frequently mentioned as one of serious concerns.

It can be concluded that as a result of the closure of the Lachin corridor, there is a critical lack of food and other essential goods in NK. Although people can afford to buy food, they do not have sufficient food, because of the lack of food in markets, limited transportation means, long queues, and more. Thus, the insufficiency of food at households makes the latter heavily adopt coping mechanisms to be able to sustain their essential food needs.

The combined impact of these factors can result in a vicious cycle of food insecurity, malnutrition, and poverty. This can lead to negative health outcomes, especially for vulnerable groups like children, pregnant women and elderly. Additionally, the food crisis can trigger humanitarian emergencies and social unrest among affected people.

In light of these circumstances, we recommend the following measures to address the short-term and long-term needs of the people in NK:

### **Recommendation 1. Humanitarian aid and assistance**

- Mobilize international aid organizations to provide immediate humanitarian aid, including food, medicine and other essential goods, in particular to vulnerable people.
- Regularly monitor the situation and call for immediate actions to stabilize the market.

### **Recommendation 2. Security and stability**

- Collaborate with regional and international partners to establish security measures and ensure the safety of residents of NK and aid workers.
- Facilitate dialogue and negotiations to address the underlying causes of the blockade and find peaceful solutions.

### **Recommendation 3. Diplomatic efforts**

- Seek support from international organizations and allies to exert pressure to open the corridor for international organizations to deliver humanitarian aid.





Photo by Ani Balayan

## 2. BACKGROUND

Since December 12, 2022, the Lachin corridor, which currently is the only land route connecting the Armenian-controlled part of NK to Armenia, was closed by Azerbaijanis claiming to be environmental protesters who appeared to be acting with some degree of support from Azerbaijan's Government in a move to put pressure on political negotiations with Armenia.

On April 28, 2023, the Azerbaijani activists have announced they will end their long running act, and instead, a checkpoint on the border with Armenia was installed.

Both Armenia and Azerbaijan requested for provisional measures to the International Court of Justice under the International Conventions on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD). In February 22, 2023, the International Court of Justice has issued a legally binding order against Azerbaijan in the proceedings brought by Armenia against it, while categorically rejecting Azerbaijan's requests brought against Armenia. The Court has found that there is an imminent risk of irreparable harm to Armenians' rights under the CERD and ordered Azerbaijan to take all necessary measures to ensure unimpeded movement of persons, vehicles, and cargo along the Lachin Corridor in both directions.

Before June 15, 2023, the ICRC, accompanied by the Russian peacekeepers, was able provide the population of NK with the items of immediate need – such as food, medicine, and hygiene items – through the checkpoint. After June 15, 2023, the ICRC was permitted to supply only medicine; however, on July 11, 2023, the Azerbaijani State Border Service issued a statement on the discovery of “unauthorized cargo in ICRC vehicles,” while accusing the ICRC. In response, the ICRC announced that its work along the Lachin corridor was always strictly humanitarian, which allowed more than 600 patients to be evacuated for medical care and for medical supplies, food, baby formula and other essentials to enter NK. Since then, even medicine is not permitted to be supplied by the ICRC.

Due to the ongoing blockade, 120,000 people in NK, including 30,000 children, 20,000 elderly people and 9,000 people with disabilities, have been suffering many deprivations and continue to face increasing risks of food crisis.

The authorities of NK have established a food coupon system to mitigate the impact of the corridor closure on food availability and pricing. As of January 20, rice, pasta, buckwheat, sugar and oil have been sold through a coupon system.



The closure of the corridor has isolated the population of ethnic Armenian in NK, while its prolonged closure for almost 9 months has led to the accelerating deterioration of the humanitarian situation and notably the food security conditions.

The Government, the Ombudsman, and the National Assembly of Nagorno-Karabakh, as well as the Government of Armenia and state officials of different countries have made statements on the critical situation of NK.

Although there are numerous formal and informal sources, such as articles, interviews, and stories confirming the lack of essential goods and primary needs of people in Nagorno-Karabakh, no statistical analysis has been done so far. This survey was conducted by Hub Artsakh to collect quantitative data at the household level in order to understand the real needs and concerns of the population in Nagorno-Karabakh.

The results of this survey are summarized in this report to be publicly available and disseminated among all actors in the foreign, international, and local audiences.

## 2.1 About Hub Artsakh

Hub Artsakh is an independent, non-profit, non-governmental organization registered and based in NK since September 2021. Hub Artsakh runs several development programs in varied sectors from digital education and media to entrepreneurship and civil society. Additionally, it is the first co-working space in NK which brings together motivated people in an inspiring, comfortable environment.

The mission of Hub Artsakh is to strengthen the human capacity of NK, working to uncover and foster the boundless ability and untapped talent that exists. The aim of Hub Artsakh is to create a capable and self-sustainable society in NK since the climate of continued uncertainty makes it critical to build resilient human capital.

How do we do this?

1. **Social entrepreneurship** - We help budding social entrepreneurs turn their ideas into sustainable, impactful, and profitable businesses through incubation and fellowship programs.

2. **Community** - We connect local, national, and international likeminded changemakers whose interests and priorities are aligned to multiply their impact.
3. **Access to learning** – We aim to make non-formal and informal educational mechanisms accessible and available to all, regardless of age, gender, and formal education levels.
4. **Flexibility** – We prioritize flexibility and adaptability, to respond to local needs as they arise, given the volatile context. We have an ear on the ground, in the capital and beyond, in order to remain continuously alert and gain a deep understanding of effective points of intervention.

Based on the Hub Artsakh’s mission statement outlined above, and particularly the organization’s commitment to remaining flexible and adaptable to local needs and rapidly changing circumstances, it was deemed necessary to conduct the rapid needs assessment, given the growing demand for reliable statistical analysis that captures and reflects the current situation in Nagorno-Karabakh.



### 3. METHODOLOGY

#### Sampling and household selection

The household survey was conducted between July 30 - August 3, 2023, among the population of NK. A national representative sampling was used with a 95% confidence interval and 5% margin of error. The survey employed face to face interviews with a semi-structured questionnaire for data collection. The stratification per urban and rural settlements was ensured with several limitations due to the lack of transportation from urban areas to rural areas.

It is estimated that the total population in Stepanakert, Martuni, Martakert, and Askeran is about 110,000. The representative number of interviews was 400, but 418 interviews were conducted, proportionally distributed in Stepanakert, Martuni, Martakert and Askeran. Relevant quotas and weights were applied to achieve representation. The detailed distribution of interviews per 4 locations are presented in the table below.

Location	Number of people	Proportion	Sample size	Number of completed interviews
Stepanakert	50,400	46%	183	<b>188</b>
Martuni	23,200	21%	84	<b>89</b>
Martakert	19,000	17%	69	<b>78</b>
Askeran	17,400	16%	63	<b>63</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>110,000</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>418</b>

**Table 1:** Number of interviews in 4 locations

**All the interviews were conducted face to face with respondents at their places of residence** in Stepanakert, Martuni, Martakert and Askeran. The data collection was done via a webpage on the cellphones of the interviewers.

For the selection of households, the route research method was applied. In case the interviews were conducted in towns, they were conditionally divided into main blocks mainly starting from the center of the towns and moving on towards suburbs. Along these routes, a 3-step selection approach was used, i.e., knocking on the door of each third apartment in a building. The same 3-step selection approach was used in the blocks with private houses, where interviewers knocked on the door of each third house.



The selection of the respondents was determined by the very nature of the survey. The survey topics and questions cover aspects of the households' food security and related issues. Thus, only the members of the selected households who were well aware of those issues were able to answer the questions. Usually, these are heads of households, as the most informed persons of the households, main breadwinners, and main spenders. In each household **only one person was interviewed**.

The questionnaire was semi-structured, consisting of a combination of closed and open-ended questions. It included questions from the tools applied by international organizations, the Sphere Handbook and other sources that are publicly available, to ensure the quality of the questionnaire used. The average duration of each household interview was 15 minutes.

The main sections of the questionnaire were: general information about the respondents, demographics, food consumption and food sources, market accessibility, and primary concerns.

### **3.1 Training of the interviewers**

Prior to the fieldwork, Hub Artsakh organized an online training of interviewers, during which the objective of the survey was explained, and the data collection tool was presented in detail and tested.

Interviewers were instructed to stay as impartial as possible and to abstain from showing their agreement or disagreement.

Before the actual start of the data collection, all the trained interviewers piloted and tested the questionnaire, and all necessary changes were incorporated into the questionnaire.

All the interviewers were provided with a detailed guide with instructions about the questionnaire as well as the software being used for data collection.

### **3.2 Ethical considerations**

Considering that the survey was conducted during the blockade, and it could provoke different reactions among the population, ethical behavior and code of conduct while interviewing were introduced to interviewers.

The interviewers were instructed to make sure that children were not present during the interviews, as there were questions about food consumption, coping with difficulties, and the concerns of respondents, all of which could be sensitive for children.

Another important point was data privacy and protection. The interviewers were requested to keep the data private and confidential, and inform the respondents that the survey was anonymous, stating that names would not be collected or disclosed.

Finally, considering the tense emotional condition of people, sensitivity training was also incorporated in these online sessions, and interviewers were instructed to stop the interviews in case the respondents displayed signs of distress and did not wish to continue.

### **3.3 Quality assurance**

The quality assurance was done through the daily checking of the database by the coordinator of the survey. In case of any issues, the interviewer was immediately contacted.

Programming the questionnaire online eliminated logical errors and minimized the data entry errors. Kobo Toolbox was used for data collection, ensuring that data collection could take place offline as well. With Kobo Toolbox, when the interviewer enters data, it is stored first on the device. Kobo Toolbox attempts sending the information through a network connection immediately and will retry until a connection has been established again. Therefore, all synchronization was proofed even against poor Internet connection quality.

Due to lack of transportation, security considerations, data protection issues, and the anonymous nature of the questionnaire, back visits or call backs were not done. Instead, the survey coordinator tracked the interviewers in the field, including the duration of interviews.

### **3.4 Data analysis and reporting**

Prior to the data analysis, the database was cleaned. The analysis was performed using SPSS software and excel. The analysis is done at the national level only, as the sampling was not representative at the level of the 4 locations.



Photo by Ani Balayan



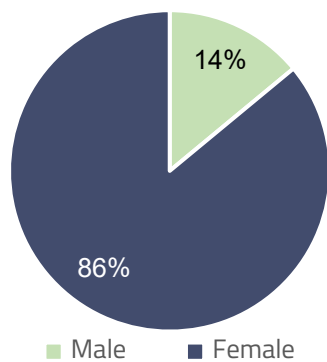
## 4. KEY FINDINGS

### 4.1 Demographics

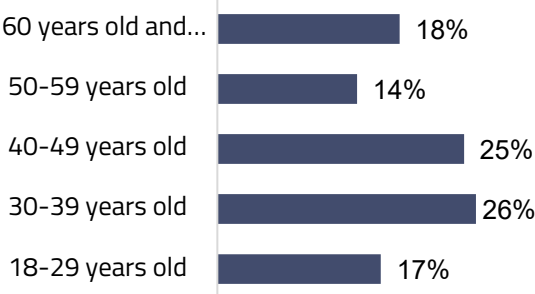
The survey was conducted among the adult permanent residents of NK. The number of interviews was 418, including Stepanakert, Martuni, Martakert and Askeran.

The majority of respondents were female (86 percent), because they were more aware of the food consumption and sources, although in many cases, both men and women were present during the interview and could complement each other's answers. The age of the respondents was proportionally representing the age groups. The highest shares of respondents were in the age groups of 30-39 years old and 40-49 years old: 26 percent and 25 percent respectively.

**Figure 1:** Gender of the respondent, %

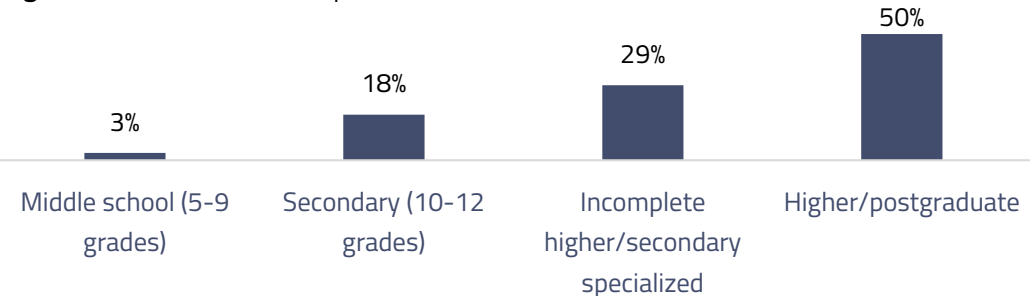


**Figure 2:** Age of the respondent, %



Half of the respondents reported having a higher education (50 percent), 29 percent had an incomplete higher or secondary specialized education, 18 percent had secondary education, and finally, another 3 percent had middle school education.

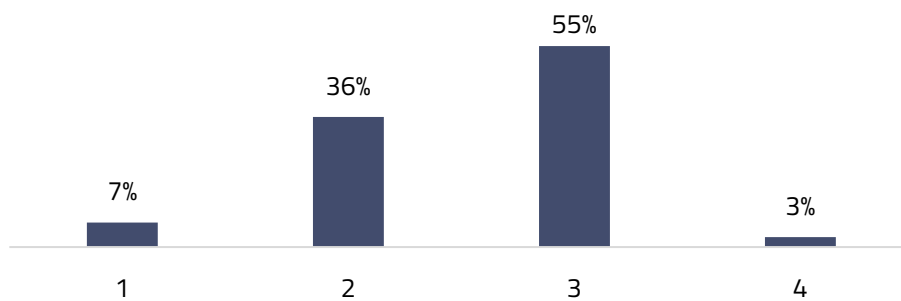
**Figure 3:** Education of the respondent, %



The vast majority of respondents were from urban areas, due to the transportation constraints which prevented interviewers from conducting the interviews in rural areas.

The average household size was 4. The majority of households consisted of 4-5 members (55%), 36 percent consisted of 2-3 members, 7 percent were single member households and 3 percent reported having 6-7 members.

**Figure 4:** Household members, %



In 6.7 percent of households there were children under 12 months and 11 percent reported having a child of 1-2 years old. In more than 20 percent of households there were 1-3 children of 3-6 years old. A higher proportion of households had children from 6-17 years old (43 percent), and out of them 33 percent reported having 3 and more children.

In about 60 percent of households there are no members of 60 years old and above.

## **4.2 Food consumption and food sources**

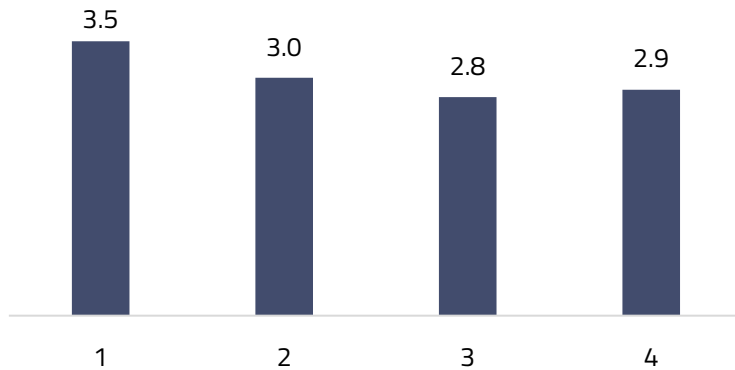
This section examines the food accessibility of households to understand if people have adequate resources for acquiring appropriate foods. This includes concerns about insufficient food access with a focus on markets and price.

### ***Food consumption***

The analysis of the food consumption in the interviewed households showed that on average the households manage to have meals three times a day. However, this did not reflect the sufficiency of the meals, and the food coping mechanisms employed to manage food scarcity and ensure they can meet their basic food needs.

The analysis per age groups showed that children below 2 years old have meals more frequently compared to older children and adults. About 10 percent reported that children of 6-17 years old had 1-2 meals on average of the last three days before the interview day. It is important to mention that 11 percent of households reported that adult members had only one meal and 35 percent had two meals on average of the last three days before the interview.

**Figure 5:** The number of times household members had meals, on average, of the last three days before the interview



Comparing the findings of four locations, the lowest mean number for all age groups was seen in Askeran. In particular, 25 percent reported that adults had one meal and 51 percent – two meals during the last three days. Considering the lack of food and the situation in NK, it can be assumed that adults eat less to be able to provide food to children.





### ***Food sufficiency and obstacles to having sufficient food***

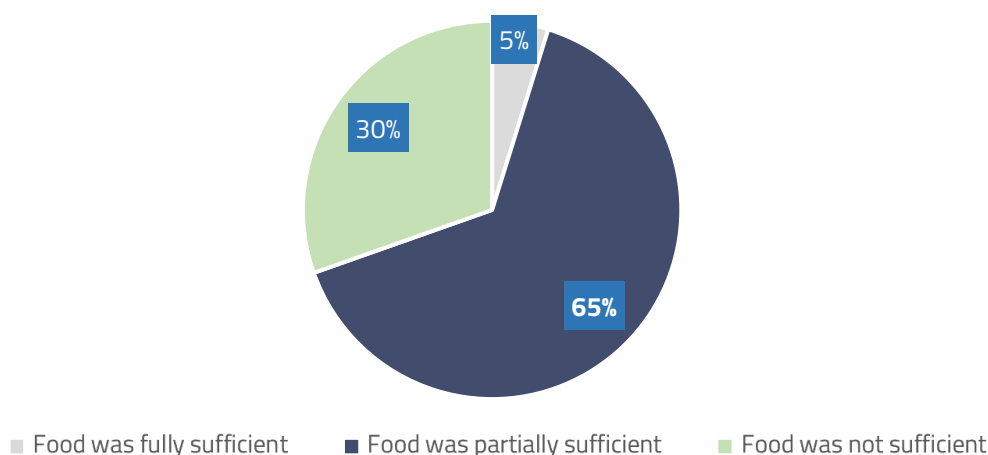
Having sufficient food means that all members of households have access to an adequate and nutritious food supply that meets their dietary needs and supports their overall well-being. This includes having enough food to maintain a balanced diet for all members of the households, without experiencing hunger or malnutrition.

The respondents were asked if there was sufficient food for their household during the last 7 days.

**Only 5 percent reported that the food was fully sufficient, 65 percent the food was partially sufficient, and 30 percent had insufficient food.**

The highest proportion of households which didn't have sufficient food was seen in Askeran (48 percent) and in Stepanakert (39 percent).

**Figure 6:** Food sufficiency during the past 7 days, %



The disaggregation per the age, gender of the respondent and the household size didn't show any major differences in answers.

**This is an alarming finding confirming the lack of food in NK and showing that 95 percent of households either have partially sufficient or insufficient food.**

In a follow-up question, the respondents explored the reasons of having partially sufficient or insufficient food during the last 7 days. The respondents could provide up to three answers, thus the answers didn't sum into 100 percent and it was an open-ended question.

As the main obstacle for having insufficient food during the past 7 days, 89 percent of respondents mentioned that **“there is no food in the market”**. For 43 percent one of the reasons was the limited or no access to markets because of lack of transportation. Another 25 percent indicated high prices and not enough money to buy food.

The analysis of the answers of the open-ended question revealed that the queues for food in shops were a significant issue of households, in particular for those with small children and disabled, elderly people. Many people were unable to stand in queues because of work, illness, or mental health concerns.

Below are several quotes from the respondents:

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*When the shops are supplied with food, people stand in long queues, and not everyone manages to buy food, as it finishes quickly.*

*I have a small child and cannot stand in long queues for food.*

*My nerves are too fragile to be standing in long queues, without even being sure that I will eventually manage to buy food. It is better to eat less than to stand in these long queues.*

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Photo by Ani Balayan

### ***Sources for obtaining food***

To better understand the sources of consumed food, a specific question was asked about the main source of the households to obtain food during the past 7 days.

More than half of respondents (62 percent) bought food with cash. For 19 percent, the main source was their own production. Another 8 percent bought food on credit; 4 percent received food as assistance; 3 percent exchanged or borrowed food; 2 percent received food as a gift.

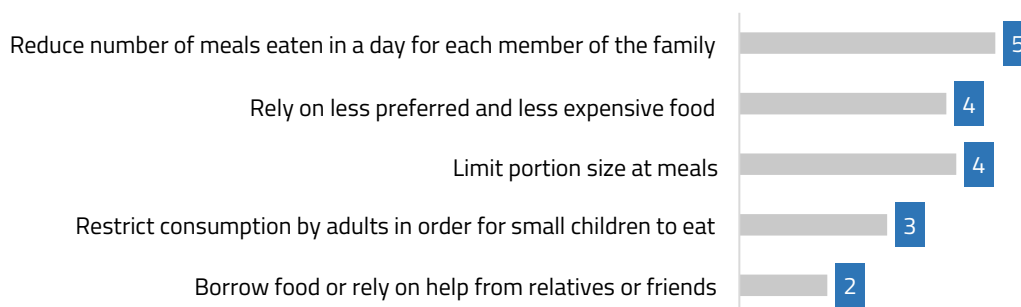
This means that overall, the households' purchasing power is not very low, which comes to confirm that the main reason for insufficient food consumption is the availability of food and not its accessibility.

### ***Food Coping Mechanisms***

Households usually employ food coping mechanisms to manage food scarcity and ensure they can meet their basic food needs.

The next set of questions assesses the stress faced by households due to shortage of food and the frequency of adoption of coping mechanisms. In particular, to understand to which level the households had to cope to have enough food or enough money to buy food in the past 7 days and, if so, how many days in a week they adopted each of coping mechanisms.

**Figure 7:** Number of days that the coping mechanism was adopted during the past 7 days, mean



As seen in Figure 7, on average the households had to reduce the number of meals eaten 5 days out of 7. On average, 4 days in the week prior to the interview, households had to rely on less preferred and less expensive food and to limit portion size at meals. The highest level of adoption of coping mechanisms was seen in Askeran, compared to the other 3 locations.

When disaggregated by demographic features, such as the age, gender and the education of the respondents, no major differences were observed. However, depending on the household size the adoption of coping mechanisms differed. For instance, households consisting of 1 to 3 people had to rely on less preferred and expensive food and limit the portion size at meals more frequently, whereas households of 4 and more members, also had to restrict consumption by adults in order for small children to eat (5 days a week) and reduce the number of meals in a day for each member of the family (6 days).

The analysis of the adoption of each coping mechanism per day displayed an alarming finding. **68 percent of households had to reduce the number of meals eaten and 51 percent had to rely on less preferred and less expensive food all 7 days a week. Moreover, during all 7 days in the past week 38 percent of the adult population ate less so that small children could eat.**

Coping strategies	Household had to employ every day in the past 7 days
Reduce number of meals eaten in a day for each member of the family	<b>68%</b>
Rely on less preferred and less expensive food	<b>51%</b>
Restrict consumption by adults in order for small children to eat	38%
Limit portion size at meals	36%
Borrow food or rely on help from relatives or friends	20%

**Table 2:** Proportion of households which reported coping **every day during the past 7 days**, %

In light of the persisting situation and the continued adoption of food coping strategies, there is a growing concern for potential hunger and health issues with the affected population. As people resort to various coping mechanisms to access food, there could be significant consequences on overall well-being of people.



### 4.3 Market and Food availability

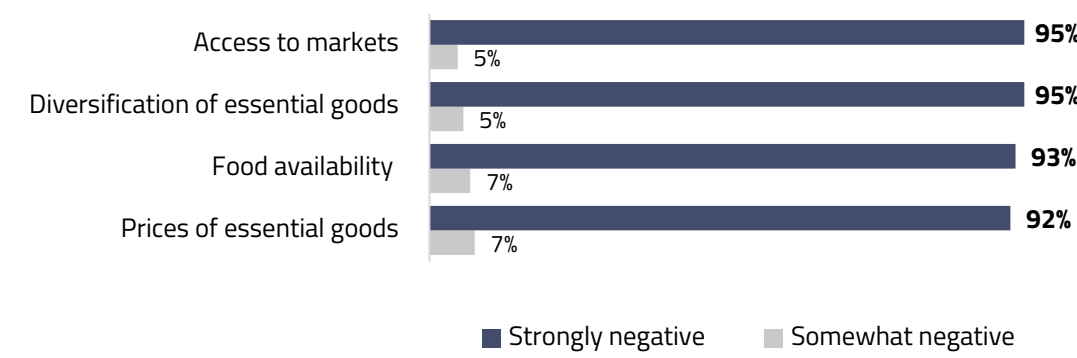
It has been almost 9 months that Azerbaijan keeps NK in blockade and since July 11, it has been impossible to provide any humanitarian assistance to the people in NK. This could significantly affect the markets and food availability in several ways, leading to food shortages and increase in prices. The scale and duration of this ongoing blockade have led to supply disruptions, restricted agricultural work, increased dependence on imports and significant disruption of food security.

#### ***The effect of the blockade on the markets***

The blockade can have a significant impact on market availability, particularly of goods and commodities that are dependent on imports. The ways that blockade can impact the market availability include: disruption of supply chains, limited import and export, shortage of essential goods, inflation and price instability, etc. This eventually can result in humanitarian crisis and social unrest.

The survey aimed to understand the extent to which this has affected the markets from the point of view of households. As seen in Figure 8, the majority of households stated that the situation had a strongly negative effect on the access to markets, diversification of essential goods, food availability and prices of essential goods.

**Figure 8:** The extent the situation affected the following, %



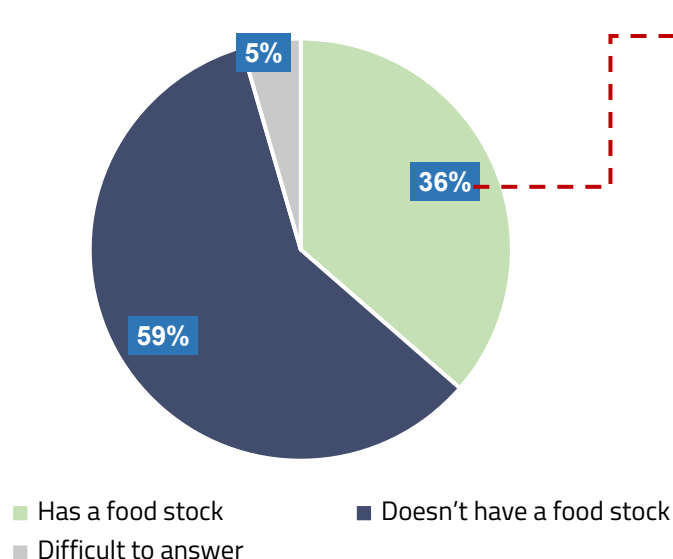
Thus, it can be concluded that the blockade has limited the access to the markets for the general population, while also causing a sharp decline in the diversification of essential goods and the availability of food, as well as negatively affecting the prices of essential goods.

### Availability of staple food stock

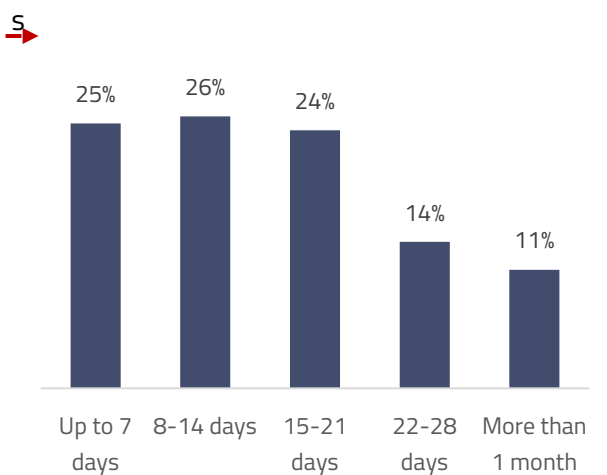
The survey included questions related to the availability of staple food stocks in households and the time period for which the food stock will last. Having staple food stocks is an important factor, as it ensures that the households can sustain their food security during emergencies, in case of further supply disruptions, limited transportation, financial and health issues. Staple food usually includes the most commonly consumed food, such as wheat flour, vegetable oil, rice, pasta, and other items.

More than half of households in NK reported not having a staple food stock (59 percent). Another 36 percent mentioned having a staple food stock, out of which 75 percent indicated that it would last for 3 weeks (Figure 10).

**Figure 9:** Availability of the food stock, %



**Figure 10:** How long will it last, %



The highest proportion of households, which didn't have a staple food stock was seen in Askeran (70 percent) and Martakert (63 percent).

Based on these findings it can be assumed that if the closure of the corridor continues, and no opportunities are created to deliver food to NK, this can lead to the widespread food insecurity among the population.

To the question whether the households have access to fuel or electricity to cover their cooking needs, 30 percent reported having access, 67 percent have partial access and 5 percent reported having no access. Those who could cover their cooking needs, 93 percent used electricity and 7 percent used wood.

## 4.4 Main concerns

One of the objectives of the survey was to understand the main concerns of the population in NK considering the current situation. The respondents were asked to name their concerns and rank them based on their priority.

It became clear that primarily 67 percent of households are concerned with the security situation in NK, shortage of food (15 percent), shortage of medicine (5 percent), limited access to medical services (3 percent) and travel restrictions (3 percent).

Ranking	1 <sup>st</sup> priority concerns	Percent
1	Security issues	67%
2	Shortage of food	15%
3	Shortage of medicine	5%
4	Limited access to medical services	3%
5	Travel restrictions	3%

**Table 3:** Ranking of the first priority concerns, %

Among the second priority concerns, the shortage of food was mentioned by 38 percent of households, followed by shortage of medicine (16 percent) and travel restrictions (10%).

Ranking	2 <sup>nd</sup> priority concerns	Percent
1	Shortage of food	38%
2	Shortage of medicine	16%
3	Travel restrictions	10%
4	Limited access to medical services	8%
5	Security issues	7%

**Table 4:** Ranking of the second priority concerns, %

The ranking of concerns of the third priority showed that 22 percent of households mentioned the shortage of food, followed by shortage of medicine (10 percent) and shortage of hygiene items (11 percent).

Ranking	3 <sup>rd</sup> priority concerns	Percent
1	Shortage of food	22%
2	Shortage of medicine	20%
3	Shortage of hygiene items	11%
4	Travel restrictions	11%
5	Limited access to medical services	8%

**Table 5:** Ranking of the third priority concerns, %

Based on the findings, it is evident that the primary concern of households was the security situation in NK. The shortage of food was ranked the second among the first priority concerns. It had the first ranking among the second and third priority concerns, confirming the lack of sufficient food supply. Another concern that can be seen in all three rankings was the shortage of medicine, indicating the challenges in assessing essential healthcare and medical supplies.





## 4.5 Humanitarian Assistance

This survey was also used to collect data on the openness of the population for humanitarian support. Respondents were asked if it would make a difference where the humanitarian assistance is being delivered from. 93.5% of the respondents answered that it would indeed make a difference for them where the assistance is coming from, 5.7% were unable to answer, and only 0.7% mentioned that it would not make a difference where the support is coming from.

In the follow-up question aiming to understand the reasoning behind the answers, those who said it makes no difference to them gave the following reasons: (1) it's a catastrophic humanitarian crisis and people are already starving, and (2) the primary concern is the availability of food for children.

Among the 93.5% of the respondents the predominant response was that humanitarian assistance would be accepted if it comes through the Lachin corridor, sent from Armenia or from international community actors that have "amicable attitude to Armenians in NK." The key concern raised was that the humanitarian assistance provided from any other route would not be trustworthy.

The respondents were also asked to list their first 3 priority actions once the communication with Armenia is open. 56.65% of the respondents chose "stocking food" as their first priority. 14.35% of the respondents chose storage of medicine and seeking after medical services as their first priority. 13.39% of the respondents gave varying responses to this question, which stretched from reconnecting with the family to visiting the tomb of a friend in Armenia.

Among those who answered that they will firstly seek after medical service once the border with Armenia is open, 48.57% mentioned "stocking food" as their 2<sup>nd</sup> priority. Overall, 16.74% of the respondents mentioned "stocking food" as their 2<sup>nd</sup> priority. About 11% of the respondents, as their 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, or 3<sup>rd</sup> choice, stated that once the border opens, they will work on safeguarding their families.

Another interesting finding came from the question where the respondents were asked to make predictions about the next couple of months till the end of the year, and 71.27% of the population fears that the blockade will continue one way or the other. Only 5.2% has responded that people of NK might want to leave NK due to security concerns.

Finally, respondents were asked to rate on a scale of 1 (definitely in favor) to 10 (definitely against) how they feel about the coexistence of Armenians and Azerbaijanis. 98.8% of respondents gave the rating of 10, indicating that they are definitely against.



Photo by Ani Balayan

## 5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this survey come to confirm that there is a pressing need to take immediate actions to ensure the security and the well-being of the population in NK. The availability of food is rapidly deteriorating, and households are increasingly unable to sustain their food security and other essential needs.

It can be concluded that as a result of the closure of the Lachin corridor, there is a critical lack of food and other essential goods in NK. Although people can afford to buy food, they do not have sufficient food, because of the lack of food in markets, limited transportation means, long queues, and other concerns. Thus, insufficient food at households makes them heavily adopt coping mechanisms to be able to sustain their essential food needs.

The following recommendation are to consider addressing the needs of people in NK both in a short-term and long-term perspectives:

### **Recommendation 1. Humanitarian aid and assistance**

- Mobilize international aid organizations to provide immediate humanitarian aid, including food, medicine and other essential goods.
- Regularly monitor the situation and call for immediate action.

### **Recommendation 2. Security and stability**

- Collaborate with regional and international partners to establish security measures and ensure the safety of residents of NK and aid workers.
- Facilitate dialogue and negotiations to address the underlying causes of the blockade and find peaceful solutions.

### **Recommendation 3. Diplomatic efforts**

- Seek support from international organizations and allies to exert pressure to open the corridor for international organizations to deliver humanitarian aid.

## 6. ANNEXES

### 6.1 Acronyms

**CERD** Court of Justice under the International Conventions on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

**HH** Household

**ICRC** International Committee of the Red Cross

**NK** Nagorno-Karabakh

### 6.2 Rapids Needs Assessment Questionnaire

#### Q1. Do you permanently reside in NK?

1. Yes
2. No

#### Q2. Please mention your location

1. Stepanakert
2. Martuni
3. Martakert
4. Askeran

#### Q2\_1. Please mention the type of the location

1. Urban
2. Rural

#### Q3. Gender of the respondent

1. Male
2. Female



**Q4. How old are you?**

**Q5. What is your completed education level**

1. No elementary and not literate
2. No elementary, but literate
3. Elementary
4. Primary
5. Secondary
6. Pre-vocational (crafts)
7. Secondary vocational (technical school, college)
8. Incomplete higher
9. Higher (Bachelor/Master)
10. Postgraduate (postgraduate studies)
11. Refuse to answer

**Q6. How many people are living in your household (including yourself)? Please take into consideration only those members who live in your household for at least 4 nights per week. Please do not list those who live at your household as a guest.**

**Q6.1 Now I will list age groups, please indicate how many people of each age group are living in your household.**

Age group	Number of people
1. Children aged 0-12 months	
2. 1-2-year-olds	
3. 3-6-year-olds	
4. 6-17-year-olds	
5. 18-59-year-olds (adults)	
6. 60-year-olds and above	

**Q7. How many meals did your household members in this household eat on average of the last three days?**

1. Children under 2 years old \_\_\_\_\_ ( times )
2. 2-5 year old children \_\_\_\_\_ ( times )
3. Girls aged 5-17 \_\_\_\_\_ ( times )

4. 18 + years \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ ( times )

**Q8. Was the food sufficient for your household in the past 7 days?**

1. Yes, the amount of food was sufficient
2. The amount of food was partially sufficient
3. The amount of food was insufficient

**Q8\_1. What was the main reasons for insufficient quantities of food during the past 7 days? (Maximum 3 answers )**

1. There is no food in the market
2. The market is not accessible due to lack of transportation
3. The market or grocery stores are closed
4. High prices
5. No money / not enough money to buy food
6. Too many debts , there is no possibility to borrow food
7. The members of the household were sick and could not go to the market / shop
8. Other, please specify

**Q9. What was your household's main source of obtaining food in the household in the past 7 days?**

1. Bought with cash
2. Bought on credit
3. Assistance
4. Exchange or borrowed
5. Received as a gift
6. Own production
7. Other

**Q10. During the last 7 days, were there days (and, if so, how many) when your household had to employ one of the following strategies (to cope with a lack of food or money to buy it)?**

Coping strategy	Number of days
1. Rely on less preferred and less expensive food	
2. Borrow food or rely on help from relative(s) or friend(s)	
3. Limit portion size at meals	
4. Restrict consumption by adults in order for small children to eat	
5. Reduce number of meals eaten in a day for each member of the family	

**Q11. Q11. To which extent has the situation affected negatively the following?**

	Strongly negative	Somewhat negative	Didn't affect	Difficult to answer
Access to markets				
Food availability				
Diversification of essential goods				
Prices of essential goods				

**Q12. Does your household currently have a stock of staple foods (e.g., wheat flour, rice, spelt)**

1. Yes
2. No

**Q12.1 . How long do you think the food stock would last?**

1. Up to 7 days
2. 8-14 days
3. 15-21 days
4. 22-28 days
5. More than 1 month

**Q13. Does your household have access to fuel or electricity to cover your cooking needs?**

1. Yes
2. Yes, partly
3. No

**Q13.1 Please indicate the main type of fuel used.**

1. Wood
2. Gas
3. Electricity

**Q14. Will it make a difference where the humanitarian assistance is coming from?**

1. Yes

2. No
3. I don't know/I can't say

**Q14.1 Q13.1 What would be acceptable and why?**

**Q14.2 Why is there no difference?**

**Q15. What is your most important concern under the current circumstances?**

Level of importance	Concern
1 <sup>st</sup> importance	1. Shortage of food
2 <sup>nd</sup> importance	2. Increase in the price of food
3 <sup>rd</sup> importance	3. Shortage of medication
	4. Shortage of hygiene items
	5. Limited access to medical service
	6. Limited access to educational institutions
	7. Out of school children
	8. Losing Job/Unemployment
	9. Shortage of drinking water
	10. Shortage of gas
	11. Shortage of electricity
	12. Loss of livelihood source
	13. Travel restriction
	14. Security issues
	15. No concern
	16. Other, mention

**Q16. What are the first 3 priority things you would do once the communication with Armenia is opened?**

Level of importance	Step
1 <sup>st</sup> importance	1. Ensure the security of family members outside NK
2 <sup>nd</sup> importance	2. Stock food
3 <sup>rd</sup> importance	3. Stock medicine
	4. Stock hygiene items
	5. Seek medical service
	6. Other, mention



**Q17. In the next 3 months what do you think will be the likely development?**

1. Continuation of the full blockade
2. Continuation of blockade with humanitarian corridor from Aghdam
3. Continuation of blockade with humanitarian corridor from Lachin
4. Continuation of blockade with humanitarian corridor from Aghdam and Lachin
5. Peace treaty between Armenia and Azerbaijan
6. Negotiations between Stepanakert and Baku
7. Cohabitation with the Azerbaijanis
8. Armenians leaving NK/depletion of NK
9. Escalation of the military situation
10. Other, mention

**Q18. How do you feel about the cohabitation of Armenians and Azerbaijanis? Mark the answer on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 means "definitely in favor" and 10 is "definitely against."**

1 (definitely in favor)	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 (definitely against)
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