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**Human Rights Council**  
**Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review**  
**Forty-ninth session**  
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## **Summary of stakeholders' submissions on Armenia\*\***

### **Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights**

#### **I. Background**

1. The present report was prepared pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 5/1 and 16/21, taking into consideration the periodicity of the universal periodic review and the outcome of the previous review.<sup>1</sup> It is a summary of 27 stakeholders' submissions<sup>2</sup> for the universal periodic review, presented in a summarized manner owing to word-limit constraints. A separate section is provided for the contribution by the national human rights institution that is accredited in full compliance with the Paris Principles.

#### **II. Information provided by the national human rights institution accredited in full compliance with the Paris Principles**

2. The Human Rights Defender of Armenia (HRD) highlighted the adoption of the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2021 and considered it a step forward towards the realization of the commitments under CRPD.<sup>3</sup> However, HRD noted persistent challenges that undermine the rights of persons with disabilities, particularly the lack of effective employment promotion mechanisms for caregivers of persons with disabilities, and the absence of programs to support job placements or self-employment opportunities for graduates of orphanages with disabilities.<sup>4</sup>

3. HRD considered that Armenia partially implemented accepted recommendations to the right to education of children with disability and underscored the inaccessibility of the transportation system as a significant barrier to education for children with disabilities, particularly in rural areas and villages, where educational institutions are scarce.<sup>5</sup> While legislative measures, the provision of accessible textbooks, and the construction and renovation of schools and kindergartens represent efforts to address this issue, these initiatives have not fully resolved the underlying accessibility challenges, both physical and systemic, which continue to restrict educational opportunities for children with disabilities.<sup>6</sup>

4. HRD noted the lack of a robust legal framework to combat discrimination, which remained a pressing issue. Armenia lacked a stand-alone anti-discrimination legislation that

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\*\* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



defines the concept of discrimination, type of discrimination, procedural guarantees ensuring the effective protection of rights in cases of discrimination and creates the legal basis for the activity of an equality body.<sup>7</sup>

5. HRD stated that existing studies, and their office monitoring, provided evidence that intolerant attitudes and homophobic and transphobic ideas towards LGBT persons were quite prevalent in the society. In particular, “transsexualism”, other gender identification issues, puberty disorder, ego-dystonic sexual orientation, and other psychological and behavioural disorders related to sexual orientation were included as diseases in “Mental and Behavioral Disorders” chapter of the Order No. 871-Ն of Ministry of Economy, which can lead to stigmatization and may reinforce the prejudices and discriminatory attitude already found in the society, especially in the healthcare system.<sup>8</sup>

6. HRD noted deficiencies in Armenia’s Criminal Code, which, while recognizing hate motives as aggravating factors, failed to explicitly include sexual orientation and gender identity as protected attributes. This omission weakened accountability in cases of hate crimes. HRD, constrained by the lack of authority to intervene in investigations and trials, emphasized the need for legislative amendments to address this gap and ensure equal protection under the law.<sup>9</sup>

7. HRD noted that the draft laws “On Ensuring Equality” and “On National Minorities” developed in 2016 had not been adopted and emphasized the need for a comprehensive law on the protection and promotion of the rights of national minorities in accordance with international standards, through the mandatory participation of the relevant stakeholders, thus guaranteeing the proper realization of cultural, linguistic, educational, religious, cultural and other rights of national minorities.<sup>10</sup>

8. HRD also identified systemic issues in addressing violence against children. These included the absence of a cohesive strategy, insufficient legal regulations, inadequate professional training, and a lack of reliable statistical data. Despite State efforts, violence against children persisted in various settings, including schools, childcare facilities, homes, and on online platforms.<sup>11</sup>

9. HRD recommended developing and implementing programs aimed at the prevention of juvenile delinquency, taking steps to ensure the rights of minors under house arrest, and ensuring their right to education during house arrest; developing and introducing effective mechanisms for implementation of individual resocialization programs for juvenile offenders during the application of alternative restraint measures.<sup>12</sup>

### **III. Information provided by other stakeholders**

#### **A. Scope of international obligations<sup>13</sup> and cooperation with human rights mechanisms**

10. JS5, JS6 and JS11 recommended the ratification of the Istanbul Convention<sup>14</sup> while ICAN urged Armenia to ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.<sup>15</sup> JS15 recommended ratifying ILO Conventions 189 and 190 and integrating their provisions into domestic legislation.<sup>16</sup> MAAT recommended ratifying international and regional human rights agreements that had not yet been ratified.<sup>17</sup> CoE noted that its Commissioner for Human Rights had emphasized the importance of ratifying international legal instruments, particularly those addressing actions with indiscriminate or excessively injurious effects.<sup>18</sup>

11. MAAT recommended strengthening cooperation with United Nations special procedures mandate holders and expediting decisions on requests for visits, with priority given to those pending since 2011.<sup>19</sup>

## **B. National human rights framework**

### **1. Constitutional and legislative framework**

12. Several stakeholders emphasized the importance of adopting a comprehensive anti-discrimination law.<sup>20</sup> JS3, JS5, and JS10 highlighted the need for legislation that provides robust protections against discrimination.<sup>21</sup> JS3 and CoE-ECRI noted that, despite previous recommendations, the draft law had not yet been sent to parliament, although the 2023–2025 Action Plan scheduled its adoption for the second semester of 2024.<sup>22</sup> CoE-ECRI recommended ensuring the draft Equality Law covers all the discrimination grounds of relevance to ECRI, provides for effective, proportionate and dissuasive sanctions for discrimination cases and is adopted within a reasonable time.<sup>23</sup>

13. Regarding domestic violence, JS5 highlighted the alarming number of 508 recorded cases in 2023, including severe incidents such as murder and grievous harm.<sup>24</sup> They noted that the legal framework addressing domestic violence remained critically insufficient, with significant legislative gaps that undermine the enforcement and effectiveness of existing laws. While the new Criminal Code introduced aggravating circumstances for violence committed by close relatives, it still fell short of explicitly criminalizing domestic violence.<sup>25</sup> JS5 recommended amending the Criminal Code to explicitly criminalize domestic violence, incorporating clear definitions and penalties to ensure consistent application and better protect victims.<sup>26</sup>

14. On the same issue, JS6 noted progress in the amendments to the 2017 Domestic Violence Prevention Law, which had previously emphasized reconciliation and traditional values over individual rights. They highlighted the July 2022 amendments to the Criminal Code that reclassified domestic violence cases as criminal matters initiated through public accusation, preventing their dismissal based on reconciliation. However, JS6 stressed the need to further strengthen the legal framework to enhance victim protection and ensure accountability for perpetrators.<sup>27</sup>

### **2. Institutional infrastructure and policy measures**

15. JS12 noted that Armenia lacked a comprehensive national strategy on crime prevention. This absence disproportionately impacted vulnerable groups particularly youth, contributing to higher rates of recidivism and undermining rehabilitation efforts. They recommended developing and implementing national crime prevention strategies, focusing on rehabilitation, education, and social reintegration; ensuring that the crime prevention strategy includes targeted interventions for vulnerable groups, and addresses underlying factors such as poverty, education, and social inequalities.<sup>28</sup>

## **C. Promotion and protection of human rights**

### **1. Implementation of international human rights obligations, taking into account applicable international humanitarian law**

#### *Equality and non-discrimination*

16. JS1 expressed concern with actions engaged by Armenia, including the destruction of religious and cultural heritage belonging to Azerbaijan, as well as the dissemination of prejudiced content through media broadcasts and publications, and the use of derogatory language targeting Azerbaijanis was reported as pervasive in school textbooks.<sup>29</sup> JS1 recommended complying with the ICERD; revising secondary and higher education curricula to remove any content that promotes racial prejudice or hatred; and taking substantive measures to address and mitigate instances of racism within the media.<sup>30</sup>

17. JS3 raised concerns about the persistent and troubling prevalence of hate speech, particularly targeting marginalized groups and recommended that authorities publicly condemn hate speech against the LGBT+ community and take steps to counter political manipulations that exploit and target these individuals.<sup>31</sup> JS3 further noted the absence of an official system to collect and maintain data on hate crimes and hate speech. They considered

that lack of data hindered the ability to address and combat these forms of discrimination effectively. To bridge this gap, JS3 recommended investing in a system for coding and maintaining statistics on hate crimes and hate speech.<sup>32</sup>

18. CoE-ECRI also emphasized the importance of strengthening institutional capacities to address hate crimes and recommended providing law enforcement officials, prosecutors, and other criminal justice actors with specialized training and clear guidelines to ensure effective handling of such cases, promoting justice and accountability for victims of discrimination.<sup>33</sup> FPU highlighted the pervasive use of hate speech, offensive language, and defamation within Armenia's media environment, which exacerbated social divisions and reinforced discriminatory attitudes, and thus recommended establishing and enforcing comprehensive legal frameworks that effectively address hate speech, offensive language, and defamation in the media.<sup>34</sup>

*Right to life, liberty and security of person, and freedom from torture*

19. JS8 highlighted serious concerns about the disproportionate use of force by law enforcement during protests, including arbitrary detentions and police brutality against demonstrators. They recommended thorough, independent investigations, prosecution of those responsible, and strengthened oversight mechanisms to ensure the protection of demonstrators and bystanders during protests.<sup>35</sup>

20. JS11 reported a significant setback concerning torture since the previous UPR cycle, with the dissolution of the Special Investigative Service which was investigating gross violations committed by public officials. Instead, the torture crimes were now investigated by the designated unit of the Investigative Committee, which reportedly did not have the capacity and necessary independence guarantees. Armenia's Criminal Code also failed to define or criminalize acts of cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment. Many such crimes were prosecuted under unrelated legal provisions, which do not categorize them as ill-treatment under the standards of CAT. This misclassification resulted in these offenses being excluded from official statistics, impeding transparency and accountability. JS11 recommended amending the Criminal Code to explicitly criminalize acts of cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment, in alignment with CAT and removing Article 81's provision for exemptions based on proactive repentances it undermines justice for victims and weakens the deterrent effect of the law and conflicts with Armenia's Constitution and its international obligations, ensuring that perpetrators of such serious crimes are held accountable without exception.<sup>36</sup>

21. JS14 noted that during the period of 2020–2024, proper investigations into reported cases of torture had not conducted. In some instances, proceedings were initiated, but they were largely formal and superficial, lacking genuine investigative efforts. Many cases were simply announced without any subsequent investigation, and in other instances, proceedings were not initiated at all, despite public statements by law enforcement authorities promising thorough investigations.<sup>37</sup> JS14 recommended ensuring the torture reported cases are fully and impartially investigated and that investigation processes are real and aimed for protection of the rights of the victims of torture.<sup>38</sup>

22. JS12 noted that the Armenian Criminal Code prescribed disproportionately long sentences, particularly for non-violent offenses, which contribute to prison overcrowding and heightened risks of human rights abuses, including poor detention conditions and limited access to rehabilitative services. This overuse of incarceration also negatively impacted families and communities, leading to broader social harms.<sup>39</sup> They recommended amending the Criminal Code to reduce the length of sentences, particularly for non-violent offenses; ensuring that sentencing practices are proportionate to the crime and focused on rehabilitation; promoting alternatives to imprisonment, such as probation, community service, or home imprisonment with electronic monitoring.<sup>40</sup>

23. CoE-CPT reported that conditions in prisons remained very poor, with significant discrepancies in material conditions between different cells, and urged the authorities to prioritize the planned closure of Nubarashen Prison, proceed with the comprehensive refurbishment of Artik Prison, and take urgent measures to address the dilapidation, poor hygiene, and vermin infestations affecting much of the prisoner accommodation at Armavir Prison.<sup>41</sup>

*International humanitarian law*

24. CoE noted that its Commissioner for Human Rights emphasized the need to respect the human rights of all persons detained in relation to the conflict, in particular their right to life and the prohibition of torture and ill-treatment, as well as to facilitate their release and return, and called on to renounce the use of cluster munitions and to ensure effective investigations and accountability for violations of international humanitarian law as well as reparations for the victims.<sup>42</sup>

25. JS1 noted that Azerbaijani prisoners of war were subjected to inhumane treatment. Additionally, wounded soldiers and captives, were subjected to torture, with in some cases leading to the death of the prisoners. JS1 recommended undertaking thorough investigations concerning the treatment of prisoners of war, including identifying and prosecuting those responsible for acts of torture and ill-treatment.<sup>43</sup>

*Administration of justice, including impunity, and the rule of law*

26. JS11 reported that Armenia's courts remained among the least trusted institutions, with reports of civil society organizations highlighting the lack of merit-based appointments for judges and candidates in First Instance and Anti-Corruption Courts by the Supreme Judicial Council, as well as in the Cassation Court by Parliament. They recommended publicizing the concluding parts of integrity checks for judges, prosecutors and investigators; and obliging the Supreme Judicial Council to substantiate their decisions on appointment and promotion of judges.<sup>44</sup>

27. JS6 highlighted that court proceedings were excessively lengthy, with cases often lasting three years or more without clear deadlines. Delays were exacerbated by issues such as changes in judges and the absence of determinations from guardianship bodies, particularly affecting cases involving children, to their detriment. JS6 recommended improving court management systems to prevent postponements, strictly enforcing legal time limits for processing claims and decisions and expediting criminal and child custody cases to reduce the duration of proceedings and minimizing psychological distress for victims.<sup>45</sup>

28. JS12 raised concerns about prosecutorial supervision of sentences, which contributed to double punishment of prisoners and other adverse consequences, and recommended reforms to transfer sentence supervision responsibilities from prosecutors to courts to ensure impartiality and mitigate negative impacts on prisoners.<sup>46</sup>

29. With regards to domestic violence, JS5 observed that procedural delays and systemic gaps in handling such cases undermined victim protection and increased the risk of recidivism and recommended removing financial barriers such as court fees for victims and establishing compensation mechanisms for trial-related costs to improve access to justice.<sup>47</sup>

30. JS6 added that while progress had been made within the police force, training and sensitization efforts for the judiciary and other law enforcement bodies remained insufficient. They noted that victim-blaming attitudes among judges, investigators, prosecutors, and forensic experts often diminished victims' experiences and hinder thorough investigations, leading to inadequate legal protection. In addition, despite increased issuance of Emergency Protective Orders (EPOs), violations of both EPOs and court-issued Protective Orders (POs) remained significant. JS6 recommended conducting comprehensive training programs for law enforcement and judiciary and ensuring legal repercussions for violations of EPOs and POs to uphold victim safety and accountability for perpetrators.<sup>48</sup>

31. JS3 noted that over half of the human rights violations documented during 2023 related to domestic violence. The lack of robust mechanisms within law enforcement hindered the protection and safety of survivors, deterring them from lodging complaints, especially against family members.<sup>49</sup> JS6 highlighted that while there had been progress in training the police force, less progress had been made in training and sensitizing other law enforcement bodies, the judiciary, and relevant actors. JS6 recommended implementing, specialized training programs to address domestic violence, focusing on the realities of abuse, victim rights, and trauma-informed responses.<sup>50</sup>

32. Addressing police accountability, JS14 reported that impunity among law enforcement remained a major obstacle to the freedom of peaceful assembly. They cited

instances of grave human rights abuses, including beatings of protesters by special police units and the illegal use of stun grenades. JS14 recommended conducting thorough investigations into such abuses to ensure accountability and uphold the rule of law.<sup>51</sup>

33. JS7 pointed out that the Non-Cash Transactions Law and the new Tax Code had imposed significant barriers to accessing legal aid. According to JS7, non-cash payment requirements were impractical for many individuals, including prisoners, detainees, and stateless persons. Additionally, the new tax regulations had substantially increased the cost of legal services, with income taxes on legal service providers rising from 5% to 20%, making legal aid unaffordable for low-income individuals. JS7 recommended reviewing the provisions of the Non-Cash Transactions Law and Tax Code to ensure greater accessibility to justice.<sup>52</sup>

*Fundamental freedoms and the right to participate in public and political life*

34. EAJW observed that Jehovah's Witnesses faced disruptions to religious meetings, verbal and physical attacks, and other obstacles to peacefully sharing their faith and recommended ensuring their fundamental rights to freedom of religion, expression, and peaceful assembly without interference or abuse.<sup>53</sup>

35. FPU raised concerns about the persistent issue of impunity for attacks on journalists. It noted that such violence undermined press freedom and freedom of expression and recommended ensuring a safe environment for journalists through protection measures, public support for their work, and investigations and prosecutions of violent acts against them.<sup>54</sup>

36. JS8 noted that nationalist groups campaigns targeted human rights defenders through false criminal complaints and acts of violence and recommended conducting prompt, independent, and impartial investigations into these attacks to hold perpetrators accountable and protect the rights of defenders.<sup>55</sup>

37. JS7 recommended initiating prompt and effective responses to cases of violence against lawyers, emphasizing the need to safeguard their ability to perform their duties without fear or intimidation.<sup>56</sup>

38. HayaQve reported restrictions on signature collection, petitions, and dissemination of information, limiting citizens' ability to participate fully in public life. HayaQve recommended Armenia to adhere to the Constitution and international obligations to protect citizens' rights without discrimination or favoritism.<sup>57</sup>

39. JS14 reported significant violations of voters' rights, including political repressions in local self-government bodies after elections. These violations involved the imprisonment of winning mayors, deprivation of council members' mandates through coercive actions, and misuse of state resources. JS14 recommended halting political persecutions and ensuring that voters' rights and democratic principles are upheld without interference.<sup>58</sup>

40. JS14 also raised concerns about political pressure on university professors who constructively criticized the government. Professors were dismissed without notice, violating their rights to free speech and academic freedom. They recommended ending such political interference and respecting educators' rights to express their opinions freely.<sup>59</sup>

41. JS11 noted gaps in the Electoral Code that prevented citizens, observers and NGOs from challenging election commission decisions unless their individual rights had been directly affected. JS11 recommended amending the code to allow broader challenges to electoral decisions, enhancing women's participation in elections, and improving accessibility by introducing alternative voting methods for persons with disabilities.<sup>60</sup>

42. The OSCE/ODIHR and the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe recommended reforming electoral provisions during emergencies to prioritize suspending the electoral process over terminating it. They considered that termination should be a last resort, and suspensions after votes have been cast should be avoided to maintain electoral integrity and public confidence.<sup>61</sup>

43. JS11 highlighted restrictions on the right to freedom of information, particularly amendments to the Law "On State Secrets" that created vague grounds for denying access to

information. Many state institutions were uncooperative, and exceptions to information access lacked clear harm tests or public interest criteria. JS11 recommended amending these laws, introducing independent oversight, and ensuring transparency in information access.<sup>62</sup>

#### *Right to privacy*

44. JS7 referred to cases of violation of lawyer's privacy and the confidentiality of the professional secret that involved actions that potentially violated the confidentiality principles and privacy to the legal profession and recommended adopting stronger safeguards to ensure that lawyers can perform their duties without interference, harassment, or breach of confidentiality.<sup>63</sup>

45. JS8 noted that journalists, dissidents, and human rights defenders were targeted with Predator spyware, and the Armenian government was involved in the surveillance. JS8 recommended conducting thorough investigations into the use of spyware against journalists and civil society actors and adopting stronger legal safeguards to prevent future violations of privacy.<sup>64</sup>

46. JS10 raised serious privacy concerns and recommended not including Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, Expression and Sex Characteristics information in personal health records, including electronic healthcare systems.<sup>65</sup>

#### *Right to marriage and family life*

47. JS10 highlighted that Armenia's requirement for prospective adoptive parents to present a marriage certificate effectively excluded same-sex couples from adopting, as same-sex marriages were not legally recognized. They recommended legalizing same-sex marriages to ensure equal opportunities for child adoption, granting same-sex couples the same rights as heterosexual couples to build families.<sup>66</sup>

#### *Prohibition of all forms of slavery, including trafficking in persons*

48. CoE-GRETA expressed concerns over Armenia's insufficient measures to address trafficking in human beings, highlighting several critical gaps. They noted that victims of trafficking had no practical access to compensation from perpetrators, making justice and reparations for these victims unattainable. CoE-GRETA urged Armenian authorities to implement robust measures to ensure trafficking victims can effectively claim compensation.<sup>67</sup>

49. Additionally, they observed that authorities had not taken concrete steps to monitor recruitment and temporary work agencies, resulting in a failure to detect cases of trafficking for labor exploitation among Armenian citizens working abroad. To address this, CoE-GRETA called for continued efforts to strengthen the capacity and skills of officials involved in detecting and investigating trafficking cases, particularly those related to labor exploitation.<sup>68</sup>

50. CoE-GRETA stressed the need for Armenian authorities to ensure that all assistance measures outlined in the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings and Armenian law are implemented effectively, including guaranteeing long-term assistance to support the social reintegration of trafficking victims, enabling them to rebuild their lives with dignity and stability.<sup>69</sup>

51. JS2 noted that surrogacy was deeply intertwined with trafficking, as defined by the UN Palermo Protocol, because these arrangements often involved the recruitment of women through exploitation of their economic vulnerabilities, with some women being transported across borders to circumvent restrictions. They recommended taking robust measures to guarantee protect victims from exploitation and trafficking.<sup>70</sup>

#### *Right to work and to just and favourable conditions of work*

52. JS15 highlighted a critical gap in Armenia's labor legislation, noting that it did not require employers to proactively prevent, address, or rectify workplace harassment, including sexual harassment. They recommended adopting legal provisions that mandate employers to implement workplace policies focused on preventing and addressing sexual harassment,

thereby fostering safer and more equitable working environments. Further, J15 recommended amending the Civil Procedural Law to shift the burden of proof in sexual harassment cases to the employer, ensuring greater accountability and protection for employees.<sup>71</sup>

#### *Right to health*

53. JS13 highlighted that Armenia's legal framework continued to permit involuntary hospitalization and psychiatric treatment, raising serious human rights concerns. Such practices undermined individual autonomy and dignity. They recommended prohibiting involuntary hospitalization and forced institutionalization, alongside developing an action plan to align with rights-based mental health practices.<sup>72</sup>

54. JS13 also noted that the institution of legal incapacitation for individuals with mental health conditions remained in place, depriving them of the ability to make decisions about their lives, including healthcare choices. They recommended abolishing the incapacitation system and replacing it with supported decision-making regimes that respect the autonomy of individuals with mental health conditions.<sup>73</sup>

55. JS13 further emphasized the lack of adequate mental health services in rural and sparsely populated areas, which forced individuals to seek non-professional and potentially harmful alternatives to address fear, stress, and developmental issues. They recommended ensuring access to professional, rights-based mental health services in these underserved regions to provide equitable care.<sup>74</sup>

56. JS9 highlighted ongoing barriers to women's access to safe and legal abortion services, particularly for those living in rural areas. Limited availability of healthcare facilities, affordability, and restricted information disproportionately affect rural women. They recommended ensuring that abortion services are accessible, safe, and affordable for women in rural and underserved regions.<sup>75</sup>

#### *Right to education*

57. JS11 highlighted that the right to education and equity in education had been systematically eroded in Armenia, resulting in increased learning poverty and illiteracy. To address these critical challenges, JS11 recommended amending the National Plan for Education Development 2022–2030 and its Action Plan with urgent steps to restore integrity, equity, and access in education.<sup>76</sup>

58. Broken Chalk pointed out structural issues in Armenia's education system, including an outdated teaching approach, low teacher salaries, and a teacher shortage, as well as corruption.<sup>77</sup> To tackle outdated teaching approach, they recommended revising textbooks and learning materials, and promoting active learning methodologies.<sup>78</sup> For low salaries and teacher shortage, they recommended conducting a salary review for teachers, with the goal of gradually increasing their pay to a level that is competitive with other professions.<sup>79</sup> For corruption, they recommended implementing stricter oversight and transparency measures to tackle corruption in the education sector.<sup>80</sup>

59. JS9 noted that the government refused to implement comprehensive sexuality education, arguing that addressing topics related to sexuality would provoke societal divisions and tension. They recommended introducing comprehensive and evidence-based sexuality education in Armenian schools and developing and implementing alternative comprehensive sexuality education.<sup>81</sup> CoE-ECRI also recommended strengthening teacher training to ensure it includes mandatory components on human rights, respect for diversity, and the prevention of discrimination based on ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, and sex characteristics.<sup>82</sup>

#### *Cultural rights*

60. JS1 recommended returning unlawfully appropriated museum artifacts and cultural heritage items to Azerbaijan to restore and preserve the cultural integrity of the affected regions.<sup>83</sup>



## 2. Rights of specific persons or groups

### *Women*

61. JS9 emphasized that women continue to face significant discrimination and societal judgement, particularly in relation to issues concerning sexuality and recommended ensuring that gender stereotyping is understood as a serious problem affecting women and girls, in both the public and private spheres, by undertaking comprehensive campaigns tackling harmful stereotypes.<sup>84</sup>

62. ECLJ noted that, despite being outlawed in 2016, sex-selective abortions remained a serious issue in Armenia.<sup>85</sup> ADF International and JS9 observed that son preference significantly contributed to sex-selective practices, including prenatal sex selection.<sup>86</sup> According to ADF International, these practices constituted a profound violation of the dignity and human rights of girl children, undermining their rights to life, equality, and non-discrimination, noting that the reasons for son preference included cultural beliefs that sons continue the family lineage (91%) and serve as “defenders of the homeland” (83%).<sup>87</sup>

63. ECLJ recommended reforms to ensure the protection of life at all stages, particularly for preborn girls, and emphasized that abortion should not be considered a method of family planning.<sup>88</sup> ADF International recommended amending article 10 and 11 of the Law on Reproductive Health and Reproductive Rights to prohibit sex-selective abortion at any stage of pregnancy.<sup>89</sup> JS9 and ADF International recommended continuing efforts to combat sex-selective abortions by promoting awareness-raising and educational initiatives.<sup>90</sup>

64. GRECO highlighted the significant underrepresentation of women in Armenia's police force, where they made up only 18.7% of officers and are particularly absent in senior management roles. They recommended that additional dedicated measures be taken to strengthen the representation of women at all levels in the police, including senior management.<sup>91</sup>

65. JS2 noted that surrogacy posed significant risks to the health and rights of women, as they faced heightened risks of complications such as postpartum haemorrhage, pre-eclampsia, and postpartum depression. JS2 recommended amending Armenia's Law on Human Reproductive Health and Reproductive Rights to prohibit surrogacy in all its forms.<sup>92</sup>

### *Children*

66. JS1 noted that Armenia engaged individuals under the age of 18 in military training and operations and recommended adhering to the stipulations of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict by ceasing any involvement of individuals under the age of 18 in military training and combat operations.<sup>93</sup>

67. JS5 noted that the underreporting of sexual violence against children was widespread in Armenia, primarily due to societal stigma, victim-blaming, and fear of retaliation. The absence of a unified and comprehensive reporting system exacerbates the problem. JS5 recommended establishing a centralized system for comprehensive tracking of cases of sexual violence, disaggregated by age, gender, and other vulnerabilities because improved data collection will address underreporting.<sup>94</sup>

68. JS5 also noted that Armenia lacked dedicated shelters and mental health services specifically for children affected by sexual violence, leading to inadequate care and inappropriate placements. They recommended expanding access to specialized support services, including shelters, counseling, and free legal aid tailored to the needs of children, particularly those from marginalized groups.<sup>95</sup>

69. JS5 highlighted that the practical implementation of the Council of Europe's Lanzarote Convention remained inadequate, with critical gaps in child-sensitive procedures, prevention of secondary victimization, and support services and recommended developing gender- and child-sensitive investigation protocols to prevent secondary victimization.<sup>96</sup>

*Persons with disabilities*

70. DRA emphasized that accessibility to the physical environment remained a major barrier in Armenia, despite the 2006 standards and legal provisions against non-compliance, and recommended establishing an independent accessibility monitoring body responsible for enforcing accessibility standards in all types of buildings.<sup>97</sup>

71. JS15 noted that people with disabilities were banned from being employed in several positions. More specifically, people with "blindness" were banned from being appointed as judges, which also implies that a blind person cannot receive education at the Justice Academy. They recommended removing the legal ban preventing blind persons from being appointed as judges in Armenia.<sup>98</sup>

72. OSCE/ODIHR recommended ensuring equal suffrage in accordance with international standards, restrictions to the right to vote based on mental disability should be removed.<sup>99</sup>

*Minorities*

73. CoE-ACFC noted that the high school drop-out rates affecting Yezidis, and especially at the gender bias with girls dropping out more than boys. CoE-ACFC recommended taking priority measures to address the disproportionately high drop-out rate affecting Yezidi students, especially girls.<sup>100</sup>

74. CoE-ACFC noted that there was very little information about national minorities in school curricula, with the only possibility for intercultural education through attending classes together with minorities.<sup>101</sup> ACFC recommended ensuring that information about the culture, traditions, history, religion and language of national minorities and their contribution to society was included in school curricula and accompanying teacher training and teaching materials.<sup>102</sup>

*Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons*

75. JS3 noted that Armenia had made no progress on legal gender recognition, leaving transgender individuals without adequate legal and medical support. They recommended including gender-affirming surgeries in the list of state-provided medical services and developing a comprehensive transgender care system within the healthcare framework.<sup>103</sup> JS4 further recommended developing quick, transparent and accessible legislative and medical mechanisms for legal gender recognition.<sup>104</sup>

76. JS4 and JS10 highlighted ongoing challenges faced by the LGBTIQ+ community in exercising their right to peaceful assembly, with authorities failing to fully enforce the "Law on Freedom of Assembly".<sup>105</sup> JS4 recommended ensuring the full enforcement of this law, particularly the obligation of the police to guarantee the peaceful conduct of assemblies.<sup>106</sup> JS10 recommended providing access to peaceful assembly for LGBTIQ+ communities.<sup>107</sup>

77. JS10 noted that homosexuality was still classified as a mental disorder in some domestic legal acts in Armenia and recommended abolishing this classification to align Armenia's policies with international human rights standards.<sup>108</sup>

*Migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers*

78. CoE-ECRI noted that fair asylum procedures were not always ensured, notably regarding legal aid, translation/interpretation, security risks assessment.<sup>109</sup> CoE-ECRI recommended adopting a comprehensive Integration Strategy supported by adequate financial resources and capacity-building measures.<sup>110</sup>

79. CoE-ECRI noted that while refugees and asylum-seekers had in principle the same work entitlement as Armenian nationals, except for civil service employment, they were in practice more vulnerable than other migrants on the labour market, with administrative obstacles to get access to work opportunities.<sup>111</sup>

*Internally displaced persons*

80. JS5 noted that the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and subsequent escalations, culminating in the forced displacement of 100,000 persons in 2023, had dramatically reshaped Armenia's socio-political landscape. Women had been disproportionately affected by these events.<sup>112</sup> JS6 noted that services and resources for vulnerable and marginalized displaced women of ethnic Armenians remained limited. It recommended implementing outreach programs designed for marginalized groups, to raise awareness about domestic violence and inform them of available support services.<sup>113</sup>

*Notes*

<sup>1</sup> A/HRC/44/10, A/HRC/44/10/Add.1, and A/HRC/45/2.

<sup>2</sup> The stakeholders listed below have contributed information for this summary; the full texts of all original submissions are available at: [www.ohchr.org](http://www.ohchr.org) (one asterisk denotes a national human rights institution with A status).

*Civil society**Individual submissions:*

ADF	ADF International, Geneva (Switzerland);
BC	Broken Chalk, Amsterdam (Netherlands);
DRA	Disability Rights Agenda, Yerevan (Armenia);
EAJW	European Association of Jehovah's Witnesses, Selters (Germany);
ECLJ	European Centre for Law and Justice, Strasbourg (France);
FPU	Free Press Unlimited, Amsterdam (Netherlands);
HayaQve	HayaQve, Yerevan (Armenia);
ICAN	International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, Geneva (Switzerland);
MAAT	Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights, Cairo (Egypt).

*Joint submissions:*

JS1	<b>Joint submission 1 submitted by:</b> Human Rights Education and Research Public Association, Baku (Azerbaijan); Citizens' Labor Rights Protection League, Baku (Azerbaijan);
JS2	<b>Joint submission 2 submitted by:</b> ADF International, Geneva (Switzerland); Casablanca Declaration, Paris (France);
JS3	<b>Joint submission 3 submitted by:</b> "Pink" human rights defender NGO, Yerevan (Armenia); The Advocates for Human Rights, Minneapolis (USA);
JS4	<b>Joint submission 4 submitted by:</b> Right Side Human Rights Defender NGO, Yerevan (Armenia); Global Action for Trans Equality (GATE), New York (USA);
JS5	<b>Joint submission 5 submitted by:</b> The Coalition to Stop Violence Against Women that unites 10 local organizations working on women, LGBT, disability rights, and intersecting gender issues, Yerevan (Armenia);
JS6	<b>Joint submission 6 submitted by:</b> the Women's Support Center NGO, Yerevan (Armenia); Coalition of Domestic Violence Support Centers, Yerevan (Armenia);
JS7	<b>Joint submission 7 submitted by:</b> Chamber of Advocates of the Republic of Armenia, Yerevan (Armenia); Paris Bar Association, Paris (France);
JS8	<b>Joint submission 8 submitted by:</b> Human Rights House Yerevan (HRHY), Yerevan (Armenia); Human Rights House Foundation (HRHF), Geneva (Switzerland);
JS9	<b>Joint submission 9 submitted by:</b> The Women's Resource Centre Armenia (WRC), Yerevan (Armenia); The Sexual Rights Initiative, Geneva (Switzerland);
JS10	<b>Joint submission 10 submitted by:</b> New Generation Humanitarian NGO (NGNGO), Yerevan (Armenia); National Trans Coalition Human Rights NGO (NTC); Eurasian Coalition on Health, Rights, Gender and Sexual Diversity

	(ECOM), Tallinn (Estonia);
JS11	<b>Joint submission 11 submitted by:</b> Democracy Development Foundation; Disability Rights Agenda NGO; Real World, Real People NGO; Center for Rights Development NGO; Transparency International Anti-Corruption Center NGO; Protection of Rights without Borders NGO; Helsinki Citizens' Assembly-Vanadzor office NGO; Analytical Centre on Globalization and Regional Cooperation NGO; For Equal Rights Educational Center NGO; Public Journalism Club NGO; Union of Informed Citizens NGO; Coalition to Stop Violence against Women; Public Board for Monitoring of Penitentiary Institutions; Peace Dialogue NGO; "Asparez" Journalists' Club NGO; New Generation NGO; Law Development and Protection Foundation, Yerevan (Armenia);
JS12	<b>Joint submission 12 submitted by:</b> Civil Society Institute NGO, Yerevan (Armenia); Juremonia Platform's Organizations, Yerevan (Armenia);
JS13	<b>Joint submission 13 submitted by:</b> Helsinki Citizens' Assembly-Vanadzor, Vanadzor (Armenia); Democracy Development Foundation, Yerevan (Armenia); Disability Rights Agenda NGO, Yerevan (Armenia); Armenian Mental Health Association, Yerevan (Armenia);
JS14	<b>Joint submission 14 submitted by:</b> Civil and Political Rights Coalition;
JS15	<b>Joint submission 15 submitted by:</b> Women's Resource Centre Armenia NGO; Human Rights Research Center NGO; Women's Rights House NGO; "Pink" human rights defender NGO; "Agate" Rights Defense Center for Women with Disabilities NGO; "Kanani" social-psychological center NGO, Yerevan (Armenia).
<i>National human rights institution:</i>	
HRD	The Human Rights Defender of Armenia, Yerevan (Armenia).
<i>Regional intergovernmental organization(s):</i>	
CoE	The Council of Europe, Strasbourg (France).
	<b>Attachments:</b>
CPT	The European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, Report to the Armenian Government on the visit to Armenia carried from 12 to 22 September 2023, CPT/Inf (2024) 12;
ECRI	The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, ECRI REPORT ON ARMENIA (sixth monitoring cycle), adopted on 29 March 2023 and published on 20 June 2023;
ACFC	The Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention, the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (ACFC), Published on 13/02/2023, ACFC/OP/V (2022)01;
GRETA	Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, GRETA evaluation report (3rd evaluation round), GRETA (2022)05;
OSCE-ODIHR	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe/Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, Warsaw (Poland).

<sup>3</sup> HRD, para.20.

<sup>4</sup> HRD, para.25.

<sup>5</sup> HRD, para.12. See also A/HRC/44/10, recommendations: 153.150, 153.151, 153.152, 153.153, 153.154, 153.155, 153.156, 153.215, 153.216.

<sup>6</sup> HRD, para.13.

<sup>7</sup> HRD, para.30.

<sup>8</sup> HRD, paras.32–33.

<sup>9</sup> HRD, para.37.

<sup>10</sup> HRD, para.41.

<sup>11</sup> HRD, para. 44.

<sup>12</sup> HRD, para.46 and 47.

<sup>13</sup> The following abbreviations are used in UPR documents:

ICERD	International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
CAT	Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
OP-CAT	Optional Protocol to CAT
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
OP-CRC-AC	Optional Protocol to CRC on the involvement of children in armed conflict
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
OP-CRPD	Optional Protocol to CRPD

<sup>14</sup> JS5, para. 4, JS6, para. 20, JS11, page 6.

<sup>15</sup> ICAN, page 1.

<sup>16</sup> JS15, para.20 and 54. ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), ILO Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190).

<sup>17</sup> MAAT, page 6.

<sup>18</sup> CoE, page 2.

<sup>19</sup> MAAT, page 6.

<sup>20</sup> JS3, para. 1; JS10, para.6; CoE, page 4 ACFC, paras.5 and 21.

<sup>21</sup> JS3, paras. 1 and 28; JS5, para. 28; JS10, paras.4 and 8.

<sup>22</sup> JS3, para. 1, CoE, page 4, ACFC, paras.5 and 21.

<sup>23</sup> CoE, page 4, ECRI, pages 7 and 8.

<sup>24</sup> JS5, para.12.

<sup>25</sup> JS5, para.14.

<sup>26</sup> JS5, para.14.

<sup>27</sup> JS6, paras. 9, 10, and 20.

<sup>28</sup> JS12, para.5 and page 2.

<sup>29</sup> JS1, paras. 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3.

<sup>30</sup> JS1, para. 4.1.

<sup>31</sup> JS3, paras. 18 and 32.

<sup>32</sup> JS3, paras. 16 and 31.

<sup>33</sup> CoE, page 4, ECRI, para. 57.

<sup>34</sup> FPU, pages.2 and 3.

<sup>35</sup> JS8, para. 7 and page 5.

<sup>36</sup> JS11, page 5.

<sup>37</sup> JS14, page 9

<sup>38</sup> JS14, page 10.

<sup>39</sup> JS12, paras. 11 and 12.

<sup>40</sup> JS12, page 3.

<sup>41</sup> CoE, page 2.

<sup>42</sup> CoE, page 3.

<sup>43</sup> JS1, para. 4.3 and 2.1.

<sup>44</sup> JS11, page 4.

<sup>45</sup> JS6, para 17f, para. 21.

<sup>46</sup> JS12, para.10 and page 3.

<sup>47</sup> JS5, page 7, para. 19.

<sup>48</sup> JS6, paras. 14c, 14d, and para. 21.

<sup>49</sup> JS3, paras. 22 and 33.

<sup>50</sup> JS6, paras. 14c and 21.

<sup>51</sup> JS14, page 8.

<sup>52</sup> JS7, paras 34,37, and page 12.

<sup>53</sup> EAJW, paras, 9, 10, and 39.

<sup>54</sup> FPU, pages.2 and 3.

<sup>55</sup> JS8, para. 18 and page 9.

<sup>56</sup> JS7, page 8.

<sup>57</sup> HayaQve, pages. 2,3 and 6.

<sup>58</sup> JS14, pages 1 and 2.

<sup>59</sup> JS14, page 7.

<sup>60</sup> JS11, page 8.

<sup>61</sup> OSCE/ODIHR, page 6.

<sup>62</sup> JS11, pages 7–8.

- <sup>63</sup> JS7, para. 24 and page 10.  
<sup>64</sup> JS8, para. 15 and page 7.  
<sup>65</sup> JS10, paras.22 and 25.  
<sup>66</sup> JS10, paras.46 and 48–49.  
<sup>67</sup> GRETA, page 4.  
<sup>68</sup> GRETA, page 5.  
<sup>69</sup> GRETA, page 5.  
<sup>70</sup> JS2, paras. 29 and 31c.  
<sup>71</sup> JS15, paras.11, 21 and 25.  
<sup>72</sup> JS13, para.17 and page 6.  
<sup>73</sup> JS13, para.13 and page 5.  
<sup>74</sup> JS13, para.11 and pages 4 and 8.  
<sup>75</sup> JS9, para.28 and page 10.  
<sup>76</sup> JS11, pages 10 and 11.  
<sup>77</sup> Broken Chalk, paras.15, 19 and 24.  
<sup>78</sup> Broken Chalk, paras.38 and 40.  
<sup>79</sup> Broken Chalk, para.41.  
<sup>80</sup> Broken Chalk, paras.45, 46 and 47.  
<sup>81</sup> JS9, para.15 and page 10.  
<sup>82</sup> CoE, page 4, ECRI, para.14.  
<sup>83</sup> JS1, paras. 4.2 and 1.4.  
<sup>84</sup> JS9, para. 4 and page 9.  
<sup>85</sup> ECLJ, para. 9.  
<sup>86</sup> ADF International para. 31g, JS9, para.9 and page 10.  
<sup>87</sup> ADF International para. 16.  
<sup>88</sup> ECLJ, para. 18.  
<sup>89</sup> ADF International paras. 31b and 31c.  
<sup>90</sup> ADF International para. 31g, JS9, para.9 and page 10.  
<sup>91</sup> CoE, page 6, GRECO, para.193.  
<sup>92</sup> JS2, paras. 17, and 31a.  
<sup>93</sup> JS1, paras. 4.4 and 3.2.  
<sup>94</sup> JS5, paras. 22–23 and page 9.  
<sup>95</sup> JS5, para.26 and page 9.  
<sup>96</sup> JS5, para. 21and page 9.  
<sup>97</sup> DRA, paras. 9 and 10.  
<sup>98</sup> JS15, paras.68 and 95.  
<sup>99</sup> OSCE-ODIHR, page 4.  
<sup>100</sup> CoE-ACFC, paras. 10 and 18.  
<sup>101</sup> CoE, page 4, ACFC para.9.  
<sup>102</sup> ACFC, para.17.  
<sup>103</sup> JS3, paras. 26–27 and 36.  
<sup>104</sup> JS3, para. 25.  
<sup>105</sup> JS4, paras. 14–16, JS10, para.42.  
<sup>106</sup> JS4, paras. 14–16 and 18–19.  
<sup>107</sup> JS10, para. 44.  
<sup>108</sup> JS10, paras.22 and 26.  
<sup>109</sup> CoE-ECRI, para. 66 and page 21.  
<sup>110</sup> CoE, pages 6 and 21, ECRI, and paras. 58 and 67.  
<sup>111</sup> CoE-ECRI, pages 22 and 70.  
<sup>112</sup> JS5, page2, para 2.  
<sup>113</sup> JS6, para16 and page 22.
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