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## Armenia

### Compilation of information prepared by 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 outcome of the previous review.<sup>1</sup> It is a compilation of information contained in relevant United Nations documents, presented in a summarized manner owing to word-limit constraints.

#### II. Scope of international obligations and cooperation with human rights mechanisms

2. Two Committees recommended that Armenia ratify the core human rights instrument to which it was not yet a party, namely the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.<sup>2</sup>

3. Three Committees recommended ratifying the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence.<sup>3</sup> The Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations of the International Labour Organization (ILO) recommended ratifying the ILO Private Employment Agencies Convention, 1997 (No. 181).<sup>4</sup> The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended ratifying the ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189).<sup>5</sup>

4. Armenia contributed financially to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in 2020, 2021, 2023 and 2024.<sup>6</sup>

#### III. National human rights framework

##### 1. Constitutional and legislative framework

5. Two Committees welcomed the fact that the Human Rights Defender had retained A status following reaccreditation by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions.<sup>7</sup> The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women commended the Human Rights Defender for its intervention during the constructive dialogue with Armenia, but expressed concern that its mandate did not comprehensively address protection of the rights of lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women.<sup>8</sup> Two



Committees recommended providing the Human Rights Defender with the technical and financial resources necessary to discharge its mandate effectively and independently, in compliance with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles).<sup>9</sup>

6. The Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence observed that while the judicial and legal reform strategy and action plan for 2022–2026 had reiterated the commitment to establish the independent fact-finding commission as part of a transitional justice toolkit, a bill reportedly drafted in 2023 appeared to have substantially distorted the initial concept and downgraded the independent fact-finding commission as a transitional justice mechanism.<sup>10</sup>

7. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights welcomed the legislative, institutional and policy measures taken to increase the protection of economic, social and cultural rights in Armenia, such as the adoption of the Government Programme for the period 2021–2026, which provided for a comprehensive labour and social protection strategy.<sup>11</sup>

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

8. The United Nations country team noted that new challenges to human rights were emerging, including the proliferation of online hate speech, especially towards vulnerable groups, human rights issues arising from the increasing use of artificial intelligence and developments in biotechnology. It urged the Government, which had been promoting technological innovations, to remain vigilant of their human rights aspects.<sup>12</sup>

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

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

### **1. Equality and non-discrimination**

9. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights expressed concern about the absence of comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation and a comprehensive policy framework to address all grounds of discrimination. It recommended that Armenia ensure that its laws effectively prohibited and provided for effective remedies for discrimination, including by adopting the pending anti-discrimination legislation without delay, and strengthen the enforcement of anti-discrimination legislation.<sup>13</sup> The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination recommended that Armenia finalize urgently the adoption of the draft law on ensuring equality and the draft law on national minorities, and that it continue to bring its legislation into line with the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.<sup>14</sup> The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women expressed concern about delays in the enactment of the draft law on legal equality, which had been pending adoption since 2019, and recommended that Armenia expedite its adoption and ensure that new legislation prohibited discrimination against women.<sup>15</sup>

10. The same Committee expressed concern about the persistence of hate speech, patriarchal attitudes and discriminatory stereotypes concerning the roles of women and men in the family and in society, including in educational materials and the media, and recommended that Armenia develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to eliminate such discriminatory stereotypes.<sup>16</sup>

11. The United Nations country team noted that Armenia had revised the draft law on ensuring equality and protection from discrimination, but that the draft law did not explicitly prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.<sup>17</sup> The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights expressed regret that the new Criminal Code did not explicitly criminalize acts of hate speech and hate crime on all prohibited grounds.<sup>18</sup> It recommended that Armenia amend the Code and revise the draft law by including a definition of discrimination covering all grounds and ensure access to effective remedies for victims, and explicitly criminalize acts of hate speech and hate crime on all

prohibited grounds.<sup>19</sup> The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination made similar recommendations.<sup>20</sup> The United Nations country team recommended that Armenia ensure the adoption of a stand-alone law prohibiting discrimination on all grounds.<sup>21</sup>

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

12. The Human Rights Committee expressed concern about the persistence of allegations of torture and ill-treatment perpetrated by law enforcement officers and the low number of investigations, prosecutions and convictions for torture since the adoption of a new definition of torture in 2015.<sup>22</sup> It recommended taking robust measures to eradicate torture and ill-treatment by allocating sufficient resources and increasing the use of audio and video recording of criminal interrogations.<sup>23</sup> The United Nations country team noted that in 2023, 507 criminal proceedings related to torture and ill-treatment had been initiated. It recommended further integrating the provisions of the Manual on the Effective Investigation and Documentation of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Istanbul Protocol) into the national regulatory framework and ensuring broad adherence to its standards, establishing mechanisms for prompt, thorough and impartial investigations into allegations of torture and ill-treatment by law enforcement officials and the judiciary, and strengthening the capacity of law enforcement officials in techniques for investigating torture cases.<sup>24</sup>

13. The Human Rights Committee expressed concern about the poor material conditions in some prisons, and recommended taking measures to ensure that conditions of detention were in full compliance with international human rights standards, in particular to prevent overcrowding and address unequal living conditions.<sup>25</sup>

## **3. International humanitarian law**

14. In September 2023, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights expressed concern about the humanitarian situation, noting that the rights of internally displaced persons and of those in a refugee-like situation must be fully upheld. He called for proper attention to reports of missing persons. Any reported violations of human rights or international humanitarian law required follow-up, including prompt, independent and transparent investigations to ensure accountability and redress for the victims, as appropriate.<sup>26</sup>

15. The Special Rapporteur on truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence, noting the lack of specialized truth-seeking mechanisms for systemic violations endured under foreign rule and during episodes of conflict, recommended prioritizing the establishment of independent truth-seeking mechanisms. Furthermore, work in the search and identification of missing persons must be prioritized, sustained and supported by all relevant actors, including the parties to the conflict and members of the international community.<sup>27</sup>

## **4. Administration of justice, including impunity, and the rule of law**

16. The Human Rights Committee noted that it remained concerned about the influence exerted by the executive and legislative branches on the judiciary and the public prosecution service, and recommended taking all the measures necessary to safeguard the full independence, impartiality and safety of judges and prosecutors.<sup>28</sup>

17. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women noted with concern persistent barriers to women's and girls' access to justice. It recommended addressing those barriers, including by safeguarding the independence of the judiciary and strengthening capacity-building and awareness-raising.<sup>29</sup>

18. The United Nations country team noted that Armenia was implementing the judicial and legal reform strategy and action plan for 2022–2026, which focused on strengthening democratic institutions and transitional justice tools and reforming the Constitution, electoral system and criminal justice system. Despite ongoing reforms, court overloading remained a significant concern. While the right to a fair trial was legally protected, efforts were needed to ensure its consistent application. It recommended launching a public awareness campaign on the availability and scope of free legal aid services, and strengthening the capacity of the

Public Defender's Office to effectively manage the workload and ensure high-quality free legal aid.<sup>30</sup>

19. The Human Rights Committee noted that it remained concerned about reports that detained persons did not always enjoy fundamental legal safeguards. It recommended that Armenia guarantee that they were afforded in practice all the fundamental legal and procedural safeguards from the outset of their detention, and decrease the use of pretrial detention.<sup>31</sup>

20. The Special Rapporteur on truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence noted that the Criminal Code had been amended in 2022 to incorporate a list of international crimes and prohibit the application of amnesty and statutes of limitations to those crimes. Access to justice for victims of torture was elusive, as although the crime of torture had been criminalized in 2015, claims of victims had been dismissed by domestic courts through the application of statutes of limitations, until their application had been outlawed in the Criminal Code of 2022.<sup>32</sup>

21. The same Special Rapporteur expressed concern about ongoing cases of non-combat deaths in the armed forces and the insufficient pursuit of accountability in those cases. No adequate measures had been taken to ensure effective and objective investigation into those cases and no perpetrators had been held responsible, reportedly owing to resistance in the criminal justice system, where the vetting of allegedly corrupt personnel had not been carried out.<sup>33</sup>

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

22. The Human Rights Committee recommended taking all measures necessary to ensure that the civilian alternative to military service was not discriminatory in duration by comparison with the military service, revising the draft law on freedom-of-conscience and religious organizations to remove all restrictions that went beyond those permitted under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and amending all discriminatory laws that unduly restricted the freedom of conscience and religious belief.<sup>34</sup>

23. The same Committee expressed concern about reports of threats, intimidation, harassment and attacks against journalists and human rights defenders. It recommended that Armenia ensure that all violations committed against them were investigated thoroughly and impartially.<sup>35</sup>

24. The Committee expressed concern about the undue legal restrictions on the exercise of freedom of peaceful assembly in the amendments to the law on freedom of assemblies. It recommended reviewing the amendments to the law to bring it into conformity with the Covenant, ensuring that victims had access to adequate remedies, and ensuring that the principles of necessity and proportionality were strictly adhered to in practice during the policing of demonstrations.<sup>36</sup>

25. While noting the efforts of Armenia to strengthen its democracy and improve the transparency of its electoral system, the Committee recommended that it bring its electoral regulations and practices into full compliance with the Covenant.<sup>37</sup>

26. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights expressed concern that the provisions of the Law on Trade Unions restricted workers from exercising their right to establish and join trade union organisations. It recommended continuing efforts to guarantee the right of all persons to form and join trade unions freely and to exercise their trade union rights, including the right to strike.<sup>38</sup>

27. The Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association noted that special means were part of the police gear used during assemblies, including rubber bullets and water cannons.<sup>39</sup> He further noted that amendments to the law on non-governmental organizations had introduced disproportionate reporting requirements, placing a heavy burden on smaller associations, and urged Armenia to reconsider them. Noting reports of attacks against and harassment of non-governmental organizations working on sensitive issues, such as sexual orientation, gender identity and minority rights, he urged Armenia to ensure the safe exercise of the right to peaceful assembly by groups that were

most at risk and to ensure that the security and safety of civil society actors was provided without unduly restricting their right of freedom of association.<sup>40</sup>

## **6. Right to privacy**

28. The Human Rights Committee expressed concern about reports that amendments to the laws on the legal regime of the state of emergency and on electronic communication did not afford sufficient safeguards against arbitrary interference with the privacy of individuals. It recommended that Armenia ensure that all surveillance activities and interference with privacy, both civilian and military, were governed by appropriate legislation and conducted subject to judicial authorization and to effective and independent oversight mechanisms.<sup>41</sup>

29. The Working Group on the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination recommended that Armenia consider a human rights-based and victim-centred approach when drafting the new law on cybersecurity and regulating the role of the private security industry in the context of cyberoperations; establish an independent and robust oversight mechanism to vet and monitor the activities of private military and security companies; and operationalize transparency regarding the contracting of private security support services for cyberoperations.<sup>42</sup>

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

30. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women noted with concern that there were no legislative measures in place to protect the rights of women in de facto unions and of the children resulting from such unions. It recommended that Armenia provide for the civil registration of all marriages and undertake legislative reforms aimed at protecting the rights of women in unregistered marriages and de facto unions, and of the children resulting from such unions.<sup>43</sup>

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

31. The same Committee expressed concern that Armenia remained a country of origin for trafficking in women and girls for the purposes of sexual and labour exploitation. It recommended ensuring that such victims of trafficking had access to adequate support services, including shelters and counselling services, and reintegration programmes, and providing exit programmes and alternative income-generating opportunities for women wishing to leave prostitution.<sup>44</sup>

32. The Human Rights Committee expressed appreciation for the efforts made to combat trafficking in persons. It recommended that Armenia improve its system for collecting data on trafficking cases in order to better evaluate the scope of the phenomenon and to assess the efficiency of the programmes presently being carried out; and strengthen the training of judges, prosecutors, law enforcement officers and immigration agents on trafficking, victim identification, protection, accountability and reparation.<sup>45</sup> The ILO Committee of Experts welcomed measures taken to ensure the early identification of victims of trafficking and provide them with protection, and the amendments to legislation to remove the age limit for victims to receive financial support.<sup>46</sup>

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

33. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights expressed concern about the high rate of unemployment and the lack of access to decent work, in particular among young people, women and persons with disabilities. It recommended increasing efforts to reduce unemployment and improve access to decent work.<sup>47</sup>

34. The same Committee recommended that Armenia ensure that the labour inspectorate was equipped with the capacity, resources and mandate necessary to conduct inspections more effectively in all workplaces across all sectors; adopt a comprehensive policy on occupational safety and health; and take measures to ensure that the national minimum wage applied to all workers and regularly adjust it to the cost of living.<sup>48</sup>

35. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) noted that the minimum age of employment under the Labour Code was not aligned with the end of compulsory education or, therefore, with the ILO Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138). It encouraged Armenia to raise the minimum age of employment to at least 15.<sup>49</sup>

36. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended that Armenia refocus its employment policies on the pursuit of gender equality and adopt legislation explicitly prohibiting sexual harassment in the workplace.<sup>50</sup>

37. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended that Armenia abolish the list of non-recommended occupations restricting women's access to certain occupations, ensure that the principle of equal pay for work of equal value was applied, promote women's access to managerial positions and higher-paid jobs in traditionally male-dominated professions and improve access to employment and training opportunities for disadvantaged and marginalized groups of women.<sup>51</sup> The ILO Committee of Experts raised similar concerns, and requested Armenia to review the list of jobs deemed dangerous or harmful.<sup>52</sup>

## **10. Right to social security**

38. While noting that Armenia had made efforts to expand the coverage of social security benefits, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights expressed concern about the fact that a significant number of the most disadvantaged and marginalized individuals and families did not receive social assistance. It recommended that Armenia ensure that persons in need of social assistance received social security benefits that afforded them a decent living, by allocating the necessary budget for social assistance, and expand the coverage of social security benefits.<sup>53</sup> The United Nations country team recommended increasing the coverage and effectiveness of social protection programmes to ensure access to adequate and nutritious food.<sup>54</sup>

39. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights expressed concern about the lack of progressivity in personal income taxes in the wider context of an unequal distribution of wealth. It recommended that Armenia review its tax policy and implement fiscal policy with a view to improving its redistributive effect in both rural and urban areas.<sup>55</sup>

## **11. Right to an adequate standard of living**

40. The same Committee expressed concern about the high rates of poverty among disadvantaged and marginalized individuals and families. It recommended that Armenia intensify efforts to combat poverty, through the adoption of concrete and targeted measures.<sup>56</sup>

41. The Committee expressed concern about the prevalence of food insecurity and the high rates of malnutrition and obesity. It recommended redoubling efforts to tackle food insecurity, obesity and malnutrition, and intensifying efforts to ensure that water resources were duly protected and that the mining industry did not jeopardize access to safe drinking water.<sup>57</sup>

42. The Committee expressed concern about the lack of availability of adequate housing, which had been worsened by the increasing influx of refugees. It recommended that Armenia redouble its efforts to ensure that its national housing policy prioritized the needs of marginalized and vulnerable groups who lacked access to adequate housing, allocate sufficient resources to the effective implementation of that policy and increase the availability of adequate and affordable housing.<sup>58</sup>

## **12. Right to health**

43. The United Nations country team noted ongoing efforts towards transformative, integrated and accountable health systems and universal health coverage. It recommended that Armenia ensure non-discriminatory access to quality health services and build capacity among policymakers on a rights-based approach to health.<sup>59</sup> The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights recommended that Armenia pursue its efforts to allocate sufficient resources to the healthcare sector to improve the accessibility, availability and quality of healthcare services.<sup>60</sup>

44. The United Nations country team noted that Armenia prioritized maternal health, reflecting its commitment in the national strategy on reproductive health improvement and action plan for 2022–2026. It recommended that Armenia allocate a budget for the procurement and distribution of contraceptives for vulnerable groups free of charge, establish robust implementation and monitoring mechanisms to ensure the quality of sexual and reproductive health services, and develop a new primary screening programme for human papillomavirus.<sup>61</sup> The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women noted with concern that abortion remained one of the main forms of birth control, and that access by women and girls to available and affordable modern contraceptives remained limited. It recommended that Armenia adopt measures to combat stigmatization of women living with HIV/AIDS, and ensure that they had access to adequate health services.<sup>62</sup>

45. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights expressed concern about reports of problems with the availability, accessibility and quality of mental healthcare services. It urged Armenia to intensify its efforts to ensure that mental healthcare was available and accessible.<sup>63</sup>

### **13. Right to education**

46. The same Committee expressed concern about shortcomings in the quality of school infrastructure and materials, the lack of resources and the insufficient number of teachers, in particular in rural areas. It recommended that Armenia improve the quality of education by allocating sufficient resources, strengthen measures to address access to education for children in disadvantaged situations and take urgent measures to reduce the high dropout rates, in particular among Molokan and Yazidi children.<sup>64</sup>

47. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women noted with concern the continued segregation of women and girls in education, persistent gender stereotypes, the barriers to school attendance faced by rural girls and the lack of adequate school infrastructure. It recommended that Armenia ensure that girls were enrolled at all levels of education, address the factors affecting school dropout rates among girls, including child and forced marriage and early pregnancy, and ensure that young mothers could return to school following childbirth.<sup>65</sup>

48. UNESCO encouraged Armenia to introduce legislation to make pre-primary education free for at least one year, especially in view of the low participation rate at that level, and increase efforts to finance education.<sup>66</sup>

### **14. Cultural rights**

49. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights expressed concern about the lack of information on the practical measures adopted to preserve cultural and religious heritage sites. It recommended enhancing the protection and preservation of such sites, including by increasing financial support for cultural institutions and investment.<sup>67</sup>

### **15. Development, the environment, and business and human rights**

50. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women called for the realization of gender equality throughout the process of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.<sup>68</sup> The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights recommended that Armenia ensure the full enjoyment of the rights enshrined in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the national level.<sup>69</sup>

51. The United Nations country team recommended that Armenia adopt policies, enhance international cooperation, strengthen capacity-building and continue to share good practices in order to scale up efforts to ensure that the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment for all was protected and promoted at both the national and the local levels.<sup>70</sup>

52. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights expressed concern about the impact of the environmental consequences of climate change on the enjoyment of rights, the high level of air pollution and its impact on health conditions, and the adverse effects of mining and illegal logging activities on the environment. It recommended addressing

environmental desertification and land degradation, redoubling efforts to address air pollution, taking measures to stop practices of illegal logging and other non-sustainable uses of natural resources and promoting alternative and renewable energy sources.<sup>71</sup> The Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters requested Armenia to take the necessary legislative, regulatory, administrative or other measures to ensure that thresholds for activities subject to an environmental impact assessment procedure, including public participation, were set in a clear manner, and that it continued its efforts to raise awareness among the judiciary to promote the implementation of domestic legislation in accordance with the Convention.<sup>72</sup>

53. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights expressed concern about the lack of information on the regulatory framework to ensure that business entities respected the rights under the Covenant. It recommended developing and implementing a regulatory framework and adopting a national action plan on responsible business conduct and human rights.<sup>73</sup>

54. The same Committee noted the measures taken to combat corruption, such as the approval of an anti-corruption strategy for the period 2019–2022 and the related action plan and the establishment of the Anti-Corruption Court in 2021.<sup>74</sup> The Special Rapporteur on truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence recommended that Armenia advance implementation of the package of reforms aimed at improving efficiency, reducing corruption and increasing transparency in the processes and decisions of State institutions, and conduct a comprehensive vetting process on the human rights background of all officials serving in State institutions who had been accused of corruption or human rights abuses.<sup>75</sup>

55. The Human Rights Committee expressed particular concern about reports of weak enforcement of anti-corruption laws. It recommended that Armenia continue and strengthen its efforts to combat corruption and promote good governance, transparency and accountability; investigate and prosecute those responsible for corruption; allocate adequate resources to the Anti-Corruption Committee and the Anti-Corruption Commission; take measures to address cases involving conflicts of interests; and ensure that government permits granted for the exploitation of natural resources and mining projects were compliant with domestic legislation and that adequate environmental impact assessments were conducted.<sup>76</sup> The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights expressed concern about the inadequate legal framework for the protection of whistle-blowers, and recommended that Armenia strengthen its legal framework to combat corruption in the private sector.<sup>77</sup>

## **B. Rights of specific persons or groups**

### **1. Women**

56. The Human Rights Committee expressed particular concern about the widespread practice of sex-selective abortion, and recommended that Armenia ensure the implementation of legislation to eradicate that practice.<sup>78</sup>

57. While noting with appreciation the commitment of Armenia to advancing the political participation of women, two Committees and the United Nations country team expressed concern about low levels of representation of women in political and public life and the underrepresentation of women in leadership roles. They recommended stepping up efforts to achieve the full and equal participation of women in public and private life.<sup>79</sup>

58. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights expressed concern about the persistence of gender stereotypes, which resulted in women bearing a disproportionate burden of unpaid domestic and care work, and the concentration of women in traditionally female-dominated fields. It recommended that Armenia address gender disparities, increase the participation of women in the labour market and close the gender pay gap.<sup>80</sup>

59. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women noted with concern the absence of provisions criminalizing all forms of gender-based violence, with inadequate protection afforded to women and girls.<sup>81</sup> The Committee noted the failure of



Armenia to respond fully to the recommendation that it expedite the adoption of a comprehensive law specifically criminalizing gender-based violence, including femicide and marital rape, that would employ a victim-centred approach, provide for civil and criminal remedies and guarantee access to means of redress.<sup>82</sup>

60. The United Nations country team recommended that Armenia ensure monitoring and accountability of service provision and evidence-based policymaking on gender-based and domestic violence, ensure institutionalized capacity enhancement for service providers and undertake legislative reforms and capacity enhancement to address the lack of sufficient services for the clinical management of rape.<sup>83</sup>

61. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights expressed concern about the prevalence of domestic and sexual violence, and recommended redoubling efforts to combat sexual and domestic violence and ensuring effective enforcement of the legal framework.<sup>84</sup> The Human Rights Committee noted with concern that the law on domestic violence prioritized family unity and reconciliation over preventive and protective measures, and recommended ensuring that all cases of violence against women were promptly and thoroughly investigated and that perpetrators were prosecuted and punished.<sup>85</sup>

62. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women expressed concern about the status of women and girls, especially those who had limited access to education, employment, healthcare and housing.<sup>86</sup> It also expressed concern that 82 per cent of women in rural areas worked informally as unpaid contributing family members to maintain household plots and farms. It recommended integrating a gender perspective into agricultural and rural development strategies.<sup>87</sup>

## 2. Children

63. The United Nations country team noted that the Government was developing a draft comprehensive programme on the protection of children's rights. It recommended accelerating the adoption of the legal packages on social assistance and child protection and ensuring assessment and allocation of resources; increasing the budget allocated to social sectors and addressing disparities related to children's rights; improving the availability and quality of services for children and ensuring access to needs-based services; and ensuring mandatory reporting of violence against children by professionals, followed by prompt investigations, prosecution and due sanctioning of perpetrators and reparations and support for victims of all types of violence and abuse.<sup>88</sup>

64. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights expressed concern about the prevalence of child labour and the lack of legislative provisions to address it. It recommended adopting provisions to combat it, increasing inspections in the informal economy, strengthening inspection mechanisms and ensuring that employers were held accountable for violations.<sup>89</sup> The ILO Committee of Experts urged Armenia to take all measures necessary to ensure that all children could enjoy the protection afforded by the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138).<sup>90</sup>

65. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women noted with concern the high level of child marriage, in particular within the Yazidi community, the lack of data on and procedures for identifying forced marriages, and the lack of prevention programmes related to early marriage.<sup>91</sup> UNESCO encouraged Armenia to amend its legislation to ensure that the minimum age of marriage was 18.<sup>92</sup> Two Committees recommended combating child marriage by addressing the root causes, encouraging reporting, ensuring that those responsible were prosecuted and adequately punished, and ensuring access to effective remedies for victims.<sup>93</sup>

## 3. Older persons

66. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women noted with concern the lack of implementation of the strategy for overcoming the consequences of population ageing for the social protection of older persons for the period 2021–2026. It recommended effectively implementing the strategy, with a view to protecting older women who faced abuse, neglect and exploitation at home and in institutions.<sup>94</sup>

#### 4. Persons with disabilities

67. The United Nations country team recommended creating an environment that fostered the establishment of organizations of persons with disabilities and ensured their participation in decision-making, while implementing targeted social assistance programmes that addressed individual needs; and ensuring environmental accessibility, particularly in public and political life.<sup>95</sup>

68. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women expressed concern that women with disabilities continued to face systemic barriers to access to healthcare services, and discriminatory treatment with regard to sexual and reproductive health services. It recommended addressing such intersecting forms of discrimination by revising the annual employment programme and addressing gender-based violence against women and girls with disabilities, particularly those living in institutions.<sup>96</sup>

69. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights recommended continuing to expand inclusive education opportunities for children with disabilities, including by improving educational infrastructure to ensure accessibility and the availability of therapeutic, pedagogical and psychological support.<sup>97</sup>

#### 5. Minorities

70. The same Committee expressed concern that current language policies might have a discriminatory effect on minorities, and recommended revising them to promote the teaching of minority languages and ensuring that they did not give rise to discrimination against persons belonging to minority groups or impede their employment prospects or educational performance.<sup>98</sup> The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination recommended ensuring that freedom of expression, especially for minorities, was fully respected.<sup>99</sup>

#### 6. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons

71. The Human Rights Committee expressed concern about reports of harassment, discrimination and violence against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons, and particularly about the lack of prompt and effective investigations into such cases and of prosecution and punishment of perpetrators. It recommended providing effective protection against all forms of discrimination and violence on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.<sup>100</sup> The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended adopting measures to combat gender-based violence and discrimination against lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women.<sup>101</sup>

72. The latter Committee expressed concern about the absence of provisions regulating gender reassignment surgery and gender marker change. It recommended ensuring that transgender persons could exercise the right to change the gender marker in identity documents, and that lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women could freely participate in political and public life by exercising their right to freedom of peaceful assembly without intimidation or reprisals.<sup>102</sup>

73. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights recommended ensuring that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons and persons living with HIV/AIDS had access to healthcare without discrimination, including by combating stereotyping and stigmatization.<sup>103</sup>

#### 7. Refugees and asylum-seekers

74. The Special Rapporteur on truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence noted that more than 115,000 residents of the Nagorno-Karabakh region had been displaced to Armenia. The displaced population faced numerous challenges as a result of their sudden forced relocation, including loss of means of livelihood, employment, property, material and intangible cultural heritage, family ties and access to vital records and registries.<sup>104</sup> He recommended that Armenia ensure that registration processes for employment schemes and social services for displaced persons were monitored and, where necessary, reviewed to ensure their proper implementation, irrespective of citizenship status.<sup>105</sup>

75. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations country team welcomed the favourable legal framework and liberal regulations allowing access to Armenia, although non-ethnic Armenian refugees struggled to access services. They urged improved reception mechanisms amid rising asylum applications.<sup>106</sup> The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights expressed concern about insufficient access to basic services and the high level of poverty among asylum-seekers and refugees.<sup>107</sup> The United Nations country team recommended adopting a comprehensive State integration and inclusion strategy for refugees.<sup>108</sup> UNHCR recommended continuing to strengthen the institutional capacities and resilience of the asylum system by establishing operational standards and indicators, and consider subspecialization within the judiciary to strengthen the efficiency of the judicial review of asylum cases.<sup>109</sup>

76. The Human Rights Committee expressed concern that asylum-seekers continued to be detained for irregular entry and stay. It recommended ensuring that asylum-seekers were exempted from criminal liability for crossing borders irregularly, and reviewing the Criminal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure to strengthen procedural safeguards against refoulement in cases of extradition.<sup>110</sup> The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination urged Armenia to ensure that asylum-seekers were not returned or removed to a country or territory where they were at risk of being subjected to serious human rights violations, including by strengthening the safeguards for non-penalization of irregular entry by asylum-seekers.<sup>111</sup>

## 8. Internally displaced persons

77. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights stated that the rights of internally displaced people and of those in a refugee-like situation must be fully upheld. He recommended prompt, independent and transparent investigations into reported violations of human rights or international humanitarian law to ensure accountability and redress for victims.<sup>112</sup>

78. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended that Armenia address the specific needs of internally displaced women and girls and ensure adequate access for them to justice, education, healthcare, food, shelter and other rights.<sup>113</sup>

## 9. Stateless persons

79. UNHCR noted significant progress with the implementation of international commitments on the reduction and prevention of statelessness, and the Government had undertaken steps to develop a draft law on stateless persons.<sup>114</sup> It recommended establishing a designated statelessness determination procedure regulated by detailed legislative provisions, and implementing a targeted strategy to identify and protect stateless persons, aiming to reduce the number of stateless individuals and facilitate access to legal pathways for acquiring nationality.<sup>115</sup>

### Notes

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

<sup>2</sup> E/C.12/ARM/CO/4, para. 65; and CEDAW/C/ARM/CO/7/Rev.1, para. 58.

<sup>3</sup> CCPR/C/ARM/CO/3, para. 16 (d); E/C.12/ARM/CO/4, para. 40; and CEDAW/C/ARM/CO/7/Rev.1, para. 26 (b).

<sup>4</sup> See

[https://normlex.ilo.org/dyn/nrmlx\\_en/f?p=1000:13100:0::NO:13100:P13100\\_COMMENT\\_ID,P13100\\_COUNTRY\\_ID:4318054,102540](https://normlex.ilo.org/dyn/nrmlx_en/f?p=1000:13100:0::NO:13100:P13100_COMMENT_ID,P13100_COUNTRY_ID:4318054,102540).

<sup>5</sup> CEDAW/C/ARM/CO/7/Rev.1, para. 36 (g).

<sup>6</sup> See OHCHR, *United Nations Human Rights Report 2020, United Nations Human Rights Report 2021 and United Nations Human Rights Report 2023*; and <https://www.ohchr.org/en/about-us/funding-and-budget/our-donors>.

<sup>7</sup> CEDAW/C/ARM/CO/7/Rev.1, para. 19; and E/C.12/ARM/CO/4, para. 9.

<sup>8</sup> CEDAW/C/ARM/CO/7/Rev.1, para. 19.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., para. 20; and E/C.12/ARM/CO/4, para. 10.

- <sup>10</sup> A/HRC/57/50/Add.2, para. 10.
- <sup>11</sup> E/C.12/ARM/CO/4, para. 4. See also <https://extranet.who.int/countryplanningcycles/planning-cycle-files/programme-government-armenia-2021-2026>.
- <sup>12</sup> United Nations country team submission for the universal periodic review of Armenia, para. 37.
- <sup>13</sup> E/C.12/ARM/CO/4, paras. 21 and 22. See also E/C.12/ARM/CO/2-3, para. 11.
- <sup>14</sup> CERD/C/ARM/CO/12-14, para. 6.
- <sup>15</sup> CEDAW/C/ARM/CO/7/Rev.1, paras. 13 and 14.
- <sup>16</sup> Ibid., paras. 23 and 24.
- <sup>17</sup> United Nations country team submission, para. 7. See also CCPR/C/ARM/CO/3, paras. 9 and 10.
- <sup>18</sup> CCPR/C/ARM/CO/3, para. 9.
- <sup>19</sup> Ibid., para. 10.
- <sup>20</sup> CERD/C/ARM/CO/12-14, paras. 6, 9 and 10.
- <sup>21</sup> United Nations country team submission, p. 9.
- <sup>22</sup> CCPR/C/ARM/CO/3, para. 21.
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid., para. 22.
- <sup>24</sup> United Nations country team submission, para. 9 and p. 10.
- <sup>25</sup> CCPR/C/ARM/CO/3, paras. 25 and 26.
- <sup>26</sup> See <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2023/09/azerbaijan-armenia-comment-un-human-rights-chief-volker-turk>.
- <sup>27</sup> A/HRC/57/50/Add.2, para. 12. See also *ibid.*, paras. 8, 20 and 64.
- <sup>28</sup> CCPR/C/ARM/CO/3, paras. 31 and 32.
- <sup>29</sup> CEDAW/C/ARM/CO/7/Rev.1, paras. 15 and 16.
- <sup>30</sup> United Nations country team submission, para. 10 and p. 10. See also E/C.12/ARM/CO/4, paras. 7 and 8.
- <sup>31</sup> CCPR/C/ARM/CO/3, paras. 23 and 24.
- <sup>32</sup> A/HRC/57/50/Add.2, paras. 13 and 16.
- <sup>33</sup> Ibid., para. 18.
- <sup>34</sup> CCPR/C/ARM/CO/3, para. 36.
- <sup>35</sup> Ibid., paras. 37 and 38. See also E/C.12/ARM/CO/4, paras. 13 and 14.
- <sup>36</sup> CCPR/C/ARM/CO/3, paras. 39 and 40.
- <sup>37</sup> Ibid., paras. 41 and 42.
- <sup>38</sup> E/C.12/ARM/CO/4, paras. 33 and 34. See also [https://normlex.ilo.org/dyn/nrmlx\\_en/f?p=1000:13100:0::NO:13100:P13100\\_COMMENT\\_ID,P13100\\_COUNTRY\\_ID:4379663,102540](https://normlex.ilo.org/dyn/nrmlx_en/f?p=1000:13100:0::NO:13100:P13100_COMMENT_ID,P13100_COUNTRY_ID:4379663,102540).
- <sup>39</sup> A/HRC/50/23/Add.3, para. 18.
- <sup>40</sup> Ibid., paras. 21 and 25.
- <sup>41</sup> CCPR/C/ARM/CO/3, paras. 33 and 34.
- <sup>42</sup> A/HRC/54/29/Add.2, paras. 71, 72 and 81 (a).
- <sup>43</sup> CEDAW/C/ARM/CO/7/Rev.1, paras. 53 and 54.
- <sup>44</sup> Ibid., paras. 27 and 28.
- <sup>45</sup> CCPR/C/ARM/CO/3, paras. 27 and 28.
- <sup>46</sup> See [https://normlex.ilo.org/dyn/nrmlx\\_en/f?p=1000:13100:0::NO:13100:P13100\\_COMMENT\\_ID,P13100\\_COUNTRY\\_ID:4120580,102540](https://normlex.ilo.org/dyn/nrmlx_en/f?p=1000:13100:0::NO:13100:P13100_COMMENT_ID,P13100_COUNTRY_ID:4120580,102540) and [https://normlex.ilo.org/dyn/nrmlx\\_en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:13100:0::NO:13100:P13100\\_COMMENT\\_ID,P13100\\_COUNTRY\\_ID:4116662,102540:NO](https://normlex.ilo.org/dyn/nrmlx_en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:13100:0::NO:13100:P13100_COMMENT_ID,P13100_COUNTRY_ID:4116662,102540:NO).
- <sup>47</sup> E/C.12/ARM/CO/4, paras. 27 and 28.
- <sup>48</sup> Ibid., paras. 30 and 32.
- <sup>49</sup> UNESCO submission for the universal periodic review of Armenia, paras. 5 and 15.
- <sup>50</sup> CEDAW/C/ARM/CO/7/Rev.1, para. 36. See also United Nations country team submission, paras. 20–22 and p. 12.
- <sup>51</sup> CEDAW/C/ARM/CO/7/Rev.1, para. 36.
- <sup>52</sup> See [https://normlex.ilo.org/dyn/nrmlx\\_en/f?p=1000:13100:0::NO:13100:P13100\\_COMMENT\\_ID,P13100\\_COUNTRY\\_ID:4369313,102540](https://normlex.ilo.org/dyn/nrmlx_en/f?p=1000:13100:0::NO:13100:P13100_COMMENT_ID,P13100_COUNTRY_ID:4369313,102540).
- <sup>53</sup> E/C.12/ARM/CO/4, paras. 35 and 36.
- <sup>54</sup> United Nations country team submission, p. 14.
- <sup>55</sup> E/C.12/ARM/CO/4, paras. 17 and 18.
- <sup>56</sup> Ibid., paras. 47 and 48.
- <sup>57</sup> Ibid., paras. 49 and 50.
- <sup>58</sup> Ibid., paras. 45 and 46.
- <sup>59</sup> United Nations country team submission, para. 13 and pp. 10 and 11.
- <sup>60</sup> E/C.12/ARM/CO/4, para. 52.

- 61 United Nations country team submission, para. 15 and p. 11. See also [CEDAW/C/ARM/CO/7/Rev.1](#), para. 38.
- 62 [CEDAW/C/ARM/CO/7/Rev.1](#), paras. 37 (a) and 38 (b).
- 63 [E/C.12/ARM/CO/4](#), paras. 53 and 54. See also [CEDAW/C/ARM/CO/7/Rev.1](#), paras. 37 and 38.
- 64 [E/C.12/ARM/CO/4](#), paras. 55 and 56.
- 65 [CEDAW/C/ARM/CO/7/Rev.1](#), paras. 33 and 34.
- 66 UNESCO submission, paras. 6 and 15.
- 67 [E/C.12/ARM/CO/4](#), paras. 61 and 62.
- 68 [CEDAW/C/ARM/CO/7/Rev.1](#), para. 7.
- 69 [E/C.12/ARM/CO/4](#), para. 66.
- 70 United Nations country team submission, p. 14.
- 71 [E/C.12/ARM/CO/4](#), paras. 11, 12, 43 and 44.
- 72 Economic Commission for Europe submission for the universal periodic review of Armenia, p. 3.
- 73 [E/C.12/ARM/CO/4](#), paras. 15 and 16.
- 74 *Ibid.*, para. 19. See also [A/HRC/57/50/Add.2](#), para. 54.
- 75 [A/HRC/57/50/Add.2](#), para. 73 (s) and (w).
- 76 [CCPR/C/ARM/CO/3](#), paras. 7 and 8. See also [E/C.12/ARM/CO/4](#), paras. 19 and 20.
- 77 [E/C.12/ARM/CO/4](#), paras. 19 and 20.
- 78 [CCPR/C/ARM/CO/3](#), paras. 17 and 18. See also [CEDAW/C/ARM/CO/7/Rev.1](#), paras. 23 and 24.
- 79 [CEDAW/C/ARM/CO/7/Rev.1](#), paras. 29 and 30; [CCPR/C/ARM/CO/3](#), paras. 13 and 14; and United Nations country team submission, paras. 20–22 and p. 12. See also [E/C.12/ARM/CO/4](#), paras. 25 and 26.
- 80 [E/C.12/ARM/CO/4](#), paras. 25 and 26.
- 81 [CEDAW/C/ARM/CO/7/Rev.1](#), para. 25.
- 82 See [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT%2FCEDAW%2FFUL%2FARM%2F41605&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT%2FCEDAW%2FFUL%2FARM%2F41605&Lang=en). See also [CEDAW/C/ARM/CO/4/Rev.1](#), para. 23; and [CEDAW/C/ARM/CO/5-6](#), para. 17.
- 83 United Nations country team submission, p. 11.
- 84 [E/C.12/ARM/CO/4](#), paras. 39 and 40.
- 85 [CCPR/C/ARM/CO/3](#), paras. 15 and 16.
- 86 [CEDAW/C/ARM/CO/7/Rev.1](#), para. 11.
- 87 *Ibid.*, paras. 41 and 42.
- 88 United Nations country team submission, para. 26 and p. 13.
- 89 [E/C.12/ARM/CO/4](#), paras. 41 and 42.
- 90 See [https://normlex.ilo.org/dyn/nrmlx\\_en/f?p=1000:13100:0::NO:13100:P13100\\_COMMENT\\_ID,P13100\\_COUNTRY\\_ID:4116644,102540](https://normlex.ilo.org/dyn/nrmlx_en/f?p=1000:13100:0::NO:13100:P13100_COMMENT_ID,P13100_COUNTRY_ID:4116644,102540).
- 91 [CEDAW/C/ARM/CO/7/Rev.1](#), para. 53. See also [E/C.12/ARM/CO/4](#), para. 37; and UNESCO submission, paras. 4 and 15.
- 92 UNESCO submission, paras. 4 and 15. See also [CEDAW/C/ARM/CO/7/Rev.1](#), para. 54.
- 93 [CEDAW/C/ARM/CO/7/Rev.1](#), paras. 54; and [E/C.12/ARM/CO/4](#), paras. 38.
- 94 [CEDAW/C/ARM/CO/7/Rev.1](#), paras. 45 and 46.
- 95 United Nations country team submission, pp. 12 and 13. See also [https://normlex.ilo.org/dyn/nrmlx\\_en/f?p=1000:13100:0::NO:13100:P13100\\_COMMENT\\_ID,P13100\\_COUNTRY\\_ID:4369313,102540](https://normlex.ilo.org/dyn/nrmlx_en/f?p=1000:13100:0::NO:13100:P13100_COMMENT_ID,P13100_COUNTRY_ID:4369313,102540).
- 96 [CEDAW/C/ARM/CO/7/Rev.1](#), paras. 43 and 44.
- 97 [E/C.12/ARM/CO/4](#), para. 56 (b).
- 98 *Ibid.*, paras. 63 and 64.
- 99 [CERD/C/ARM/CO/12-14](#), para. 16.
- 100 [CCPR/C/ARM/CO/3](#), paras. 11 and 12. See also [CEDAW/C/ARM/CO/7](#), paras. 49 and 50.
- 101 [CEDAW/C/ARM/CO/7/Rev.1](#), para. 50.
- 102 *Ibid.*, paras. 49 and 50.
- 103 [E/C.12/ARM/CO/4](#), para. 52 (c).
- 104 [A/HRC/57/50/Add.2](#), paras. 57 and 58. See also Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) submission for the universal periodic review of Armenia, pp. 1 and 2.
- 105 [A/HRC/57/50/Add.2](#), para. 73 (cc).
- 106 UNHCR submission, pp. 1 and 4; and United Nations country team submission, paras. 30 and 32 and p. 15. See also [CERD/C/ARM/CO/12-14](#), paras. 23 and 24.
- 107 [E/C.12/ARM/CO/4](#), para. 23.
- 108 United Nations country team submission, p. 15.
- 109 UNHCR submission, pp. 3 and 4.
- 110 [CCPR/C/ARM/CO/3](#), paras. 29 and 30.

<sup>111</sup> [CERD/C/ARM/CO/12-14](#), para. 22.

<sup>112</sup> See <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2023/09/azerbaijan-armenia-comment-un-human-rights-chief-volker-turk>.

<sup>113</sup> [CEDAW/C/ARM/CO/7/Rev.1](#), para. 12.

<sup>114</sup> UNHCR submission, p. 5.

<sup>115</sup> UNHCR submission, pp. 5 and 6. See also [CCPR/C/ARM/CO/3](#), para. 30 (c).

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