

## Information

**Measures to address trafficking in women and girls, as per resolution A/RES/77/194, including on efforts to prevent and address the root causes that lead to all forms of exploitation of women and girls including through addressing demand.**

In the Republic of Armenia, the measures to address trafficking of women and girls are part of the comprehensive counter-trafficking efforts carried out in accordance with the Law "On the Identification and Support of Persons Exposed to Human Trafficking and Exploitation" and the National Programme for the Organization of the Fight against Human Trafficking or Exploitation in the Republic of Armenia.

As part of measures to counter human trafficking or exploitation, the Government of the Republic of Armenia has adopted and launched a total of 7 national action plans aimed at increasing public awareness of the problem, developing the capabilities of representatives of state bodies involved in the process, and modernizing the mechanisms for identifying, directing, supporting and responding to cases, as well as to improving the existing legislation.

The 7th National Programme on Combating Human Trafficking or Exploitation (hereinafter the National Program), which covers the period from 2023 to 2025, has been formulated as a result of the analysis and evaluation of the previous national programmes, with a view to address the problems and challenges that arose during their implementation.

During the development of the Plan, consideration was given to the recommendations of the 2022 report of the Group of Experts on Combating Human Trafficking (GRETA) on Armenia's implementation of provisions of the Council of Europe Convention against Human Exploitation (Trafficking), as well as the 2023 report of the US State Department's on human trafficking. The Plan also integrated evaluations and proposals of other international partners.<sup>1</sup>

The 7th National Program consists of the following sections:

1. improvement of legislation against human trafficking or exploitation,
2. prevention of human trafficking or exploitation,
3. prevention of child trafficking or exploitation,
4. detection, protection and support of persons subjected to human trafficking or exploitation,
5. international cooperation,
6. conducting studies,
7. monitoring and evaluation.

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<sup>1</sup> See Armenia's Counter-Trafficking Situation and Response: Landscape Assessment Report, December 2021 <https://www.data4impactproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/ARMENIA-LANDSCAPE-REPORT-FINAL-SR-21-154-D4I-1.pdf>

The legislative amendments enacted in October 2022 introduced a definition of the term "compulsory or forced labour" within Armenia's Labour Code, in accordance with the requirements of Article 57, Article 5 of the Constitution, Part 29 of the International Labour Organization "On Forced or Compulsory Labour," and the Council of Europe Convention "On the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms." At the same time, the Labour Code of Armenia explicitly prohibits mandatory or forced labour. In May 2023, provisions were added to the Labour Code of Armenia to prohibit violence or sexual harassment in the workplace.

The amendments also introduced legal definitions for violence in the workplace or any other location where work duties are performed, as well as sexual harassment, which previously did not have legal definitions in Armenia's Labour Code, whereby prohibition of sexual harassment against employees was established as a basic principle of labour legislation.

Armenia's ongoing efforts to counter human trafficking and exploitation place significant importance on the training and professional development of employees within the primary agencies involved in the process. In 2023, the training sessions engaged representatives from nearly all relevant sectors addressing the issue, ranging from personnel in day care facilities, child protection services, and centers for the elderly or individuals with disabilities to community social workers, educators, guardianship authorities, law enforcement officials, medical professionals, lawyers, and staff from public organizations offering social support services to persons subjected to human trafficking or exploitation.

Various operational guidelines and manuals have been developed and disseminated to prevent instances of human trafficking or exploitation:

- «Indicators of compulsory or forced labour in the Republic of Armenia».
- «Guideline of Migration Service for Identification of Suspected Victims of Human Trafficking or Exploitation»,
- Guidelines developed for social workers in accordance with sectoral indicators of human trafficking or exploitation,
- Separate guidelines for judges, prosecutors, investigators and police officers on ensuring trauma awareness and victim-centred approaches when working with trafficked or exploited persons.

In 2023, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of Armenia developed a trilingual (Armenian, English, Russian) manual, which offers comprehensive information on all forms of assistance available to victims and potential victims of human trafficking and exploitation.

### **Impacts of conflict, crisis, COVID, climate change or other emergency contexts on the trafficking of women and girls and specific measures undertaken to address these risk factors:**

Armenia is committed to improving the processes for assessing the primary needs of individuals during conflicts, crises, and emergency situations, as well as to enhancing mechanisms for rapid response to urgent issues. On 19 September 2023, the primary needs registration platform

<https://e-soc.am/> was launched to assess the primary needs of the ethnic Armenian population forcibly displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh. The evaluation of primary needs was conducted through applications filled out personally by employees of the unified social service, community social workers, and forcibly displaced persons themselves. Notably, the list of primary items includes essential goods intended for women and girls. Guidelines have been formulated for social workers to facilitate accurate and effective communication with beneficiaries, enabling the identification of their needs, issues, and potential risks during emergency or crisis situations. Additionally, an information guide has been developed for individuals forcibly displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh, containing comprehensive information about centers and organizations offering social support services.

Individuals believed to be victims of human trafficking or exploitation, especially those in need of socio-psychological rehabilitation services for sexually abused individuals or one-time financial assistance, can access appropriate support and information by contacting the hotline numbers of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, the Ministry of Internal Affairs Police, or by reaching out to the regional center of the Unified Social Service located in their area of residence.

In Armenia, support services for victims and potential victims of human trafficking or exploitation are offered through state-delegated services operated by non-governmental organizations. Individuals believed to be victims of human trafficking or exploitation can also reach out to non-governmental organizations that operate around the clock for assistance. Armenia's counter trafficking efforts have involved a pilot program implemented in three regions of the country, where state-delegated services managed by non-governmental organizations work to uncover cases of human trafficking or exploitation.

### **Impacts of technology and digitalization on the trafficking of women and girls and specific measures undertaken to address these risk factors:**

With the advancement of technology and digital systems, the risks associated with online trafficking are growing, necessitating targeted measures for prevention, detection, and raising awareness of online trafficking cases. In this regard, Armenia has been consistently conducting awareness raising activities, covering all regions of the country. Awareness campaigns are conducted annually from July 30 to December 2 as part of the "Blue Heart" international awareness campaign against human trafficking.

In formulating policies to combat human trafficking and exploitation, special emphasis is placed on women and young girls, through efforts to enhance their professional skills through training and education. In 2023, a digital literacy development course was created and implemented for women residing in rural areas through collaborative efforts between the state authorities and international partners. The project aimed to improve the digital literacy skills of

approximately 1000 women by providing them with knowledge of basic digital devices and software, principles of digital content creation, and creative use of digital technologies.

Armenia continues to rely on various methods of information dissemination, presentation, and coverage in the fight against human trafficking and exploitation. The website <http://antitrafficking.am/> has been operational since 2003, offering diverse informational materials and programs related to human trafficking and exploitation.

### **Measures to increase access to justice and to strengthen detection, protection of victim-survivors and prosecution of perpetrators:**

The support services for victims and potential victims of human trafficking or exploitation are funded through the state budget and implemented by designated public organizations. In 2020, the Government of the Republic of Armenia doubled the budget for providing support to victims and potential victims of human trafficking and exploitation to approximately 40 million AMD.

Under the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On Identification and Support of Persons Exposed to Human Trafficking and Exploitation," the following services are offered to potential victims and victims of human trafficking and exploitation:

- 1) emergency medical care
- 2) provision of temporary shelter for the duration of the pre-identification phase, including for the legal representative and children under care
- 3) provision of basic education
- 4) first aid in kind
- 5) primary psychological aid
- 6) general consultation
- 7) provision of care

Support for victims of human trafficking and exploitation and special categories of victims may include:

- 1) provision of shelter
- 2) in-kind aid
- 3) provision or recovery of necessary documents
- 4) medical care and service
- 5) psychological aid
- 6) advisory assistance
- 7) legal assistance
- 8) provision of care, including in relevant facility
- 9) interpretation and translation services
- 10) provision of basic education
- 11) providing access to secondary education or initial vocational education
- 12) employment provision
- 13) organization of safe and voluntary return

#### 14) one-time monetary compensation

The Law of the Republic of Armenia "On the Identification and Support of Persons Exposed to Human Trafficking and Exploitation" provides a clear definition of the status of a special category victim. According to this law, a special category victim is defined as an individual who has been subjected to human trafficking and/or exploitation and was either a child or mentally incapacitated at the time of discovery. This includes individuals who were unable to fully comprehend the nature and significance of their actions or control them, and who have been officially recognized as such by the decision of the Commission for the Identification of Victims of Human Trafficking and Exploitation.

Support for victims falling within this special category aims to address the disruptions caused by human trafficking and/or exploitation in their lives and facilitate their full social reintegration into society.

#### **Information on multi-sectoral services for victim-survivors of trafficking including any available data on access to such services.**

In Armenia, measures to counter human trafficking and exploitation are implemented through close collaboration between the relevant government bodies and non-governmental organizations working in the field. This collaborative approach involves the provision of multi-sectoral services and various types of support to victims and potential victims. The authority of recognizing individuals as victims or special category victims lies with the Identification Commission for Victims of Human Trafficking and Exploitation, which is led by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Republic of Armenia.