**ARMENIA**

**Information**

**to analyse progress made on responding to trafficking in persons in
women, peace and security action plans, programmes and transitional
processes for states emerging from conflict in order to assess
implementation of recommendations on better integration of a human
rights based approach to trafficking in persons in relation to the
Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000)**

* **National action plans on women, peace and security, which include measures to prevent trafficking in persons**

Armenia’s current National Action Plan for implementing UN Security Council Resolution 1325 covers the period of 2022-2024. The Action Plan emphasizes women's participation in decision-making, especially in crisis and conflict situations, and outlines measures to involve local self-governing bodies. It highlights the importance of international and domestic cooperation, aligning with other gender equality strategies and Armenia's international commitments, and establishes a monitoring mechanism to evaluate its effectiveness, ensuring it remains a dynamic and responsive document.

The 2022-2024 Action Plan seeks to address emerging issues, particularly those affecting women in border regions and Nagorno-Karabakh, whose lives and livelihoods have been severely impacted by military violence and displacement. It places strong emphasis on supporting the socio-economic rights of women and girls affected by conflict and includes comprehensive measures for conducting needs assessments. Based on these, the plan outlines the development of targeted socio-economic programmes that focus on ensuring employment and self-employment opportunities, thereby increasing the competitiveness of women in the labour market and, as such, reducing vulnerabilities, including those related to trafficking, forced labour and exploitation risks. Through programmes that are tailored to enhance skills and employability, the Action Plan aims to foster gender equality, economic independence and resilience among women, despite the adversities they have faced due to the conflict.

* **Trafficking in persons, enslavement and sexual slavery and transitional justice processes; Trainings for relevant personnel to identify, document and denounce situations with risks of trafficking, in particular in refugee camps or in IDP sites; National procedures for early identification, assistance and referral to protection services for victims or potential victims of trafficking including gender and child-sensitive measures in conflict and post-conflict settings, including in the context of forced displacement and forced migration**

Armenia’s counter-trafficking measures are governed by the Law on Identification and Assistance to Victims of Human Trafficking and Exploitation, which specifically addresses the support and protection of trafficking victims. According to the same law, the sole body authorized to recognize a person as a victim or a special category victim of trafficking in persons is the Commission for the Identification of Victims of Exploitation, whereby each recognized victim and special category victim is entitled to receive support and protection. The Inter-Ministerial Council for Combating Trafficking in Persons and Exploitation is tasked to develop a policy for combating trafficking in human beings and exploitation and provide general coordination of activities implemented by all relevant government agencies and civil society organizations involved in countering human trafficking.

Since 2004, a total of 7 national action plans have been carried out to increase public awareness, develop capabilities and enhance mechanisms for identifying, directing, supporting and responding to trafficking cases, as well as to improve the existing legislation. The 7th National Programme, 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 from other international partners.

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.

The legislative amendments enacted in 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 is committed to improving the processes for assessing the primary needs of populations affected by conflict, 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 centres and organizations offering social support services. In 2023, the authorities introduced a trilingual information sheet (available in the Armenian, English, and Russian languages) outlining the various types of assistance available to victims and potential victims of human trafficking and exploitation. The information sheet also details the support mechanisms in place for potential victims of human trafficking and exploitation.

In Armenia, support services for victims and potential victims of human trafficking or exploitation are provided through state-delegated services managed by non-governmental organizations (NGOs). These NGOs play a crucial role in offering immediate and comprehensive assistance to individuals affected by trafficking or exploitation. Victims can access these support services at any time, as the NGOs operate around the clock, ensuring that help is always available. This collaboration between the state and NGOs enhances the effectiveness and reach of support mechanisms, ensuring that victims receive timely and adequate care and protection.

Armenia’s ongoing efforts to counter human trafficking and exploitation place significant importance on the training and professional development of relevant actors involved in the process. In 2023, the training sessions engaged representatives from nearly multiple sectors, ranging from personnel in daycare facilities, child protection services, centres for the elderly or individuals with disabilities, community social workers, educators, guardianship authorities, to law enforcement officials, medical professionals, lawyers, and staff from public organizations.

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.

To address and mitigate the risks associated with online trafficking, Armenia has been consistently conducting awareness-raising activities, covering all regions of the country. To identify suspicious advertisements or recruitment patterns, law enforcement authorities employ a systematic approach to review and monitor digital spaces and address potential trafficking and/or exploitation threats.