



THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION
OF LGBT+ PEOPLE IN ARMENIA
DURING 2025



ANNUAL REPORT

The image on the cover features an image from one of the campaign posters dedicated to the healthcare rights of transgender people and gender affirmation practices.

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Annual Report: The Human Rights Situation of LGBT+ People
in Armenia During 2025

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Bisexual	■ A person who is emotionally and/or sexually attracted to persons of more than one gender.
CoE	■ Council of Europe
“Conversion practice”	■ Refers to any action taken by others with the intent of changing a person’s sexual orientation and/or gender identity from non-heterosexual to heterosexual or from a non-heteronormative gender identity and expression to a heteronormative one. It’s recommended to use this term in quotation marks.
CSO	■ Civil society organization
ECtHR	■ European Court of Human Rights
ECRI	■ European Commission against Racism and Intolerance
Gay	■ A man who has a set of deeply emotional, sensual, and intimate attractions, as well as a desire for sexual relation and/or relationships with another man.
Gender expression	■ The expression of a person’s own (or perceived) gender identity.
Gender identity	■ It is each person’s deeply felt internal and individual experience of gender, which is a category of social identity and refers to the identification of an individual as a man, woman, or another gender.
Heterosexual	■ A person who has a set of deeply emotional, sensual, and intimate attractions, as well as a desire for sexual relation and relationships with another gender.
Homophobia	■ The fear, unfounded anger, intolerance, and hatred towards homosexuality. It is an umbrella term and often includes transphobia (see below).
Homosexual	■ A person who has a set of deeply emotional, sensual, and intimate attractions, as well as a desire for sexual relation and relationships with the same gender.
Lesbian	■ A woman who has a set of deeply emotional, sensual, and intimate attractions, as well as a desire for sexual relation and/or relationships with another woman.
LGBT, LGBT+, LGBTI	■ Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (Intersex; plus is used to be inclusive of all types of non-heteronormative identities)

Queer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formerly used as an umbrella term encompassing individuals with non-heterosexual lifestyles. However, its meaning has evolved to represent an anti-identity associated with actions that defy accepted norms, legitimacy, and dominance. It now signifies a resistance to, rejection of, deconstruction of, and subversion of normality and heteronormativity, acting as a form of pressure against prevailing systems. It is currently also considered as a person's identity.
RA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Republic of Armenia
Sex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is the classification of a person as male, female, or intersex. A person's sex is a combination of bodily characteristics including chromosomes, hormones, internal and external reproductive organs, and secondary sex characteristics.
Sexual orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The totality of a person's deeply emotional, sensual, and intimate attractions, as well as a desire for sexual relation and/or relationships with another person.
SOGI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sexual orientation and gender identity and/or gender expression.
Trans or transgender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A person whose gender identity and gender expression differ from the sex assigned at birth. It can also be used as an umbrella term that includes other non-heteronormative gender identities.
Transphobia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Negative cultural and personal beliefs, opinions, attitudes, and behaviors based on prejudice against transgender people or gender identity and variations in gender expression, and are also based on disgust, fear, and hatred.
UPR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Universal Periodic Review

INTRODUCTION

Pink Human Rights Defender Non-Governmental Organization prepares an annual report on the human rights situation of LGBT+ individuals based on cases documented throughout the year by the organization's specialists, their analysis, as well as continuous monitoring of legislative initiatives, legal developments, related challenges, and public discourse. The report also presents measures undertaken by the organization during the reporting period to address systemic issues.

The first part of the report presents cases documented by the organization's lawyers and social worker, including analytical descriptions, illustrative examples, case developments, and the underlying problems reflected by these incidents. In 2025, the organization's social worker and legal team received 402 requests, from which cases involving rights violations were identified. All documented cases constitute human rights violations accompanied by discrimination based on sexual orientation and/or gender identity. The categorization of cases according to violated rights in this report is based on a preliminary assessment and may be revised following detailed examination. During the reporting year, violations were recorded particularly in relation to the right to be free from torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and the right to respect for private and family life. The former manifested, inter alia, through isolation, discrimination, and violence against individuals in military settings, while the latter was reflected in cases of domestic violence, physical, psychological, and sexual abuse, blackmail, dissemination of private information, as well as misuse of freedom of expression. Three additional cases concern violations of labor rights accompanied by discrimination.

Thus, a total of 56 cases were documented, of which 30 concerned domestic violence, including cases of ongoing abuse by family members and/or intimate partner, while 26 involved other types of violations. Notably, in only 8 of these cases did victims file complaints with law enforcement authorities, and only a portion of those resulted in formal proceedings, which are currently at the trial stage. In particular, one case of robbery has proceeded to investigation, however, the circumstance of the victim's vulnerability and the motive of intolerance toward the victim's identity were not examined separately. In two cases, the victims withdrew their complaints, while in the remaining cases no information was obtained regarding the status or outcome of the complaints.

The second part of the report provides a detailed examination of the treatment of LGBT+ individuals who have suffered violations motivated by discrimination and intolerance at the hands of law enforcement bodies, also referring to instances of abuse of authority. It presents the reasons why members of the LGBT+ community refrain from seeking legal remedies and outlines the main issues that contribute to a climate of distrust. Particular attention is devoted to this issue in this year's report, taking into account both the importance of reporting incidents to law enforcement authorities and the observed trend of a decreasing number of complaints compared to the number of documented cases recorded annually. In particular, this year saw the lowest number of reports submitted to law enforcement authorities compared to previous years. The section concludes with concrete recommendations aimed at restoring trust in law enforcement institutions and establishing a safe environment for victims.

The third part of the report concerns the progress of strategic litigation cases pursued by the organization, which saw certain developments during 2025. Strategic litigation constitutes an integral and significant component of our advocacy aimed at the comprehensive protection of the rights of LGBT+ persons, particularly given that such cases are largely based on high-profile incidents that clearly highlight systemic problems at both legislative and practical levels.

At the end of the report, as in previous years, recommendations are presented, taking into account specific situational developments, addressed to state bodies, international organizations, the media, and the Human Rights Defender. This approach is due to the fact that international bodies mandated to oversee human rights protection exert significant influence on state policy, while the Human Rights Defender holds clearly defined constitutional powers to monitor the level of respect for and protection of human rights by state authorities. The media, for their part, often serve as primary channels for the dissemination of speech that fosters intolerance and hatred, therefore, recommendations addressed to them are likewise of particular importance for minimizing, to the greatest extent possible, expressions in public discourse that infringe upon human dignity and private life.

This structure of the report makes it possible to draw comparisons with the situation recorded in previous years and to assess both positive and negative trends.

PART 1

VIOLATIONS OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF LGBT+ PEOPLE

STATE OBLIGATIONS TO PROTECT HUMAN RIGHTS AND PREVENT DISCRIMINATION

The Republic of Armenia (RA), as a state governed by rule of law, must ensure the unobstructed enjoyment and exercise by all persons present on its territory of their rights.

The state safeguards to the enjoyment of human rights imply not only oversight over various state bodies, prevention of human rights violations within these bodies, but also adequate response to violations committed by third parties.

The international human rights instruments, the judicial or extrajudicial bodies and other mechanisms operating on the basis of these instruments have developed through their practice actions that states must undertake in order to ensure the enjoyment of human rights. These actions entail both negative and positive obligations. The primary safeguard for the protection of human rights in the RA is the supreme law of the country, the Constitution, which stipulates that human rights apply directly.¹ The supremacy of human rights in Armenia is also recognized by international treaties and covenants ratified by the state.²

With its accession to international organizations, such as the United Nations (UN) and Council of Europe (CoE), and ratification of these organizations' key instruments, Armenia has committed to clear obligations, the implementation of which should be regularly reported to these international bodies. To be more specific, there are 10 human rights treaty bodies within the UN that were created based on various human rights covenants. These committees review national reports on treaty implementation, but also individual complaints from private individuals about violations of their rights. There are also special procedures and independent experts within the UN who are mandated to request information from national states on the human rights situation within their jurisdiction and measures taken by the states.

OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ISSUED DURING 2025 BY INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS BODIES CONCERNING THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF LGBT+ PERSONS IN ARMENIA

Following the fourth cycle of the United Nations Universal Periodic Review (UPR), recommendations submitted by other states to the Republic of Armenia aimed at improving the level of human rights protection were compiled and summarized.³

Pink NGO participated in the review process for the third time, presenting existing challenges related to the protection of the rights of LGBT+ persons, along with recommendations concerning the prevention of discrimination, hate crimes, violence and hate speech, as well as the legislative regulation of the healthcare needs of trans

¹ See RA Constitutions, amended in 2015, Article 3, Clause 3.

<http://parliament.am/parliament.php?id=constitution&lang=eng>

² Ibid, Article 5, Clause 3.

³ UPR Working Group Report. https://upr-info.org/sites/default/files/country-document/2025-09/A_HRC_60_11_E.pdf

persons.

It is noteworthy that for nearly a decade, international bodies and states have consistently recommended that Armenia adopt comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation that includes sexual orientation and gender identity among the protected characteristics and ensures effective protection of LGBT+ persons from discrimination manifested across various spheres of public life. At the same time, the draft Law on Ensuring Equality, despite having been discussed and revised on multiple occasions, still does not provide direct and explicit protection against discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and/or gender identity (SOGI).

The Government responded to the recommendations submitted within the framework of the UPR, stating that the RA draft Law on Ensuring Equality has been developed and submitted to the National Assembly for consideration.⁴ However, it should be noted that, according to the Action Plan derived from the National Human Rights Strategy, the adoption of this law had been scheduled for the second half of 2024. Nevertheless, information has since been received indicating that the draft will be submitted to the National Assembly in the first half of 2026.

Among the recommendations, particular emphasis was also placed on the need to ensure the effective investigation of crimes motivated by hatred on SOGI grounds, including through relevant legislative reforms. The Government accepted this recommendation, noting that the RA Criminal Code provides for the perpetrator's hate motive as an aggravating circumstance.

However, an analysis of the practical application of the provisions introduced by the new Criminal Code indicates that, to date, hate motive based on SOGI has not been recognized as an aggravating circumstance, and relevant cases have not been subject to adequate or effective investigation. In this context, it is important to underscore that the Government should not confine itself to statements regarding the existence of legislative reforms, but is obliged to take concrete steps to ensure the consistent and effective implementation of these provisions.

Within the framework of the UPR, it was also recommended that the requirement of mandatory gender reassignment for changing the gender marker in identity documents for trans persons be abolished, and that the procedure instead be grounded in the principle of self-determination. The Government did not reject this recommendation, however, it noted it without providing any clarification or action plan.

It should be noted that the number of recommendations concerning the protection of LGBT+ persons from discrimination, violence, and hate speech increased significantly during the fourth UPR cycle, reaching a total of 24. Such recommendations were put forward by a number of states, including Cuba, Sweden, Portugal, Czechia, Uruguay, Norway, Chile, Australia, the United Kingdom, Austria, Luxembourg, Ireland, Switzerland, Brazil, Montenegro, Malta, Canada, Belgium, Mexico, the Netherlands, Spain, and Colombia.

The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) published its annual report on hate crimes recorded during 2024, which also includes data documented in

⁴ Armenia's response to the submitted recommendations. https://upr-info.org/sites/default/files/country-document/2025-09/A_HRC_60_11_Add.1_E.pdf

the Republic of Armenia.⁵

According to the report, 49 cases of hate crimes were documented by civil society organizations in Armenia, whereas state authorities recorded only six cases. Of the six cases registered by law enforcement bodies, criminal proceedings were initiated in four, and only one of these resulted in a court judgment.

Among the cases reported by the state, one involved physical violence motivated by hatred against an LGBT+ person, two were allegedly motivated by racism, and one was motivated by antisemitism. The report notes that the higher number of cases previously reported by the state in earlier years was due to the fact that incidents involving calls for violence and incitement to hatred and discrimination had also been counted at that time, whereas such cases are no longer included within the same reporting framework.

At the same time, the report refers to certain positive steps undertaken by the state in the legislative and policy spheres. In particular, the 2023–2025 Action Plan derived from the National Human Rights Strategy envisages the development of guidelines for investigators, police officers, and prosecutors on the specificities of investigating cases involving hate crimes, hate speech, and discrimination. In addition, an amendment to the Criminal Code of the Republic of Armenia entered into force in 2024, which includes violence committed by a partner among the list of aggravating circumstances. This amendment creates the possibility of establishing more proportionate liability for crimes committed on the grounds of sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

Of the 49 cases documented by civil society organizations presented in the report, 46 involved victims who were LGBT+ persons. Certain cases were also classified as gender-based hate crimes, which indicates the multi-layered nature of discrimination and the systemic problems of violence directed at vulnerable groups. Thus, it may be concluded that discrepancies persist between state mechanisms and civil society approaches with regard to the collection of data on hate-motivated crimes and the identification of their grounds. This divergence prevents a unified understanding of the situation and hinders consistent monitoring and assessment of the effectiveness of legislative and institutional changes undertaken in this area.

⁵ OSCE/ODIHR Annual Hate Crime Report. <https://hatecrime.osce.org/incidents?country=AM&year=2024>

RIGHT TO BE FREE FROM DISCRIMINATION

The right to be free from discrimination is a fundamental and absolute human right that cannot be subject to any limitation, even in states of emergency. This right is enshrined in key international human rights instruments,⁶ as well as in the Constitution, where it is recognized as one of the cornerstones of a state governed by the rule of law. The prohibition of discrimination is not merely a legal norm but also a core value of democratic society, the violation of which leads to social exclusion, inequality, and the deepening of systemic injustice.

All the major human rights instruments unequivocally establish the principle that all rights and freedoms must be exercised without discrimination of any kind. This provision attests to the universal character of the right to be free from discrimination and to its particular significance as an integral element of human dignity.

In international law, discrimination is defined as any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference which is based on particular circumstances or features, and which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by all persons, on an equal footing, of all rights and freedoms.⁷ In other words, discrimination is the treatment of persons in analogous situations in a differentiated manner without any reasonable or objective ground.⁸ Such differential treatment is particularly dangerous when it assumes a systemic character and is reproduced through state policies, legislation, or practices.

International law distinguishes several forms of discrimination. Direct discrimination is defined as a form of discrimination, when an individual is treated differently from others in an analogous situation based on a particular personal, social, or other characteristic.⁹ Indirect discrimination is a seemingly neutral provision, standard, or practice whereby unfavorable conditions are set for individuals from a specific group compared to others.¹⁰ Another type of discrimination is associative discrimination – when, not having a protected characteristic, a person is associated with another person with such a characteristic, e.g. is their husband, mother, father etc., and is therefore subjected to discriminatory treatment.¹¹ These forms demonstrate that discrimination may manifest not only in overt ways, but also through concealed and complex patterns.

6 See, Charter of the United Nations, Articles 1(3) and 55; Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 7; International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Articles 2, 4(1), and 26; International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Article 2; Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 2; European Convention on Human Rights, Article 14, and Protocol No. 12 thereto.

7 See, HRC, General Comment No. 18, § 7. <https://www.refworld.org/docid/453883fa8.html>

8 See, ECtHR, Judgment of 23 July 1968, Case of Certain Aspects of the laws on the Use of Languages in Education in Belgium. *Willis v. United Kingdom*, No. 36042/97, § 48, ECtHR 2002-IV, *Virabyan v. Armenia*, No. 40094/05, 02/01/2013.

9 See, *Non-Discrimination in International Law - A Handbook for Practitioners*, 2011 Edition, p. 17-18. <https://www.interights.org/handbook/index.html>

10 See, Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin, (b) point of Article 2 (2). <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32000L0043>

11 See, *Molla Sali v. Greece* [GC], 2018; *Guberina v. Croatia*, 2016, § 78; *Škorjanec v. Croatia*, 2017, § 55; *Weller v. Hungary*, 2009, § 37.

Discrimination is based on a personal characteristic, which is called the ground of discrimination. Neither the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia and domestic laws, nor most international treaties directly mention SOGI as a protected ground against discrimination. Nonetheless, the list of protected grounds in Armenia's domestic law is non-conclusive, meaning that, other than the directly outlined characteristics, the legal acts do not preclude other circumstances of personal or social nature based on which a differentiated treatment may have occurred. This means that SOGI can and must be treated as personal and other social circumstances and must act as a protected ground on an equal footing as gender, race or disability. Human rights treaty bodies have repeatedly reaffirmed this assertion, stating that the SOGI fully fall under protected grounds.¹²

This being stated, the Republic of Armenia is obliged to respect a person's right to be free from discrimination. It should protect LGBT+ people from abuse committed by government officials, including government officers, police and investigators. Ensuring equality is not just about state bodies refraining from committing violations, the state must create an environment in which private individuals would not violate the rights of LGBT+ individuals on the grounds of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Moreover, such violations must be investigated in a due manner, and the perpetrators must be punished.

While a number of thematic legislative acts contain prohibition of discrimination,¹³ Armenia still does not have a separate law on non-discrimination which would define the notion and types of discrimination and would set out an effective remedy for the protection of groups most vulnerable to discrimination. A law with an effective remedy mechanism, should primarily:

- include sexual orientation and gender identity in the grounds protected against discrimination given the large number and scope of human rights violations based on this ground,
- lay out a comprehensive list of types of discrimination,
- prescribe legal standing for non-governmental organizations to seek protection for their beneficiaries in courts,
- lay out a mechanism of establishing an equality body with vested with a clear-cut mandate, outside the scope of the Ombudsperson,
- prescribe remedy mechanisms against discrimination committed by private entities,
- set forth a differentiated approach in laying the burden of proof in trials of discrimination cases by obliging alleged perpetrators to prove lack of a discriminatory motive.

The draft Law on Ensuring Equality and Protection from Discrimination has remained on the agenda for many years, however, it still does not comply with international standards

¹² See, *Identoba and Others v. Georgia*, 2015, § 96; *Salgueiro da Silva Mouta v. Portugal*, 1999, § 28; *Fretté v. France*, 2002, § 32; *Vejdeland and Others v. Sweden*, 2012, § 55; Committee Against Torture, General Comment No.2: Implementation of Article 2 by State parties, § 21, 22. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/general-comments-and-recommendations/catcgc2-general-comment-no-2-2007-implementation>

¹³ Study on whether a separate non-discrimination law is needed for the domestic legal system of Armenia, Vahe Grigoryan, Ara Ghazaryan. <https://epfarmenia.am/document/ls-it-expedient-to-adopt-separate-non-discrimination-law>

and, particularly from the perspective of protecting the rights of LGBT+ persons, remains incomplete. During 2025, discussions surrounding the draft effectively did not take place. It is known that the draft is scheduled to be submitted to the National Assembly at the beginning of 2026, yet its core shortcomings remain unresolved, including the exclusion of sexual orientation and gender identity from the list of protected characteristics, the absence of legal standing for organizations to bring cases before courts, and the ineffective status of the equality body. The draft is currently titled the “Law on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection from Discrimination,” which constitutes a positive development insofar as it explicitly frames its purpose as ensuring protection from discrimination as such, in line with internationally recognized definitions, rather than addressing the issue only partially through the lens of equality.

The human rights violations presented in this report are discriminatory in nature, as they are directly or indirectly conditioned by the victims’ SOGI. In the examples set out below, the offenses are classified according to the rights violated, however, in all cases referenced in the report, the element of discrimination is present as the primary motive and underlying cause of these violations.

Cases of Discrimination not Involving Violence Recorded During 2025

Three cases were documented in which individuals’ labor rights were violated on the basis of their SOGI. Article 57 of the RA Constitution guarantees every person the right to freely choose employment and to protection against unjustified dismissal.¹⁴ Everyone has the right to choose any profession and engage in work of their preference. Relations between employer and employee are based on the principle of stability, therefore, where an employee is dismissed without valid grounds, they may seek judicial protection of their rights. As a safeguard for the stability of labor relations, the state does not leave the determination of grounds for dismissal to the discretion of the parties, in order to prevent arbitrariness, but instead regulates them under the RA Labor Code.¹⁵

A combined analysis of the documented cases, together with a comparison to similar cases recorded in previous years, indicates that discrimination in employment relations on the grounds of SOGI in Armenia has a persistent and systemic character. Such violations manifest both at the recruitment stage and during already established employment relationships, resulting in dismissal, professional isolation, and the deepening of socio-economic vulnerability.

The cases demonstrate that individuals are denied employment on the basis of gender identity or gender expression without any professional or functional justification. Such practices effectively create a dead end, particularly for trans persons, for whom the labor market becomes nearly inaccessible. This constitutes a violation of equal opportunities in the exercise of the right to work and contributes to social exclusion.

In another case, following the disclosure of information relating to an individual’s sexual orientation or private life, the employment relationship was artificially strained and

¹⁴ See, RA Constitution, Article 57. <http://parliament.am/parliament.php?id=constitution&lang=eng>

¹⁵ See, Labor Code of the Republic of Armenia, Articles 109–114, <https://www.arlis.am/documentview.aspx?docid=146722> (Armenian)

ultimately terminated without proper justification, prior notice, or lawful procedure. This practice indicates disregard for the requirements of labor legislation and the adoption of arbitrary decisions driven by discriminatory motives.

Discriminatory treatment in the workplace often manifests not only through direct refusal or dismissal, but also through sustained psychological pressure, abusive conduct, and humiliating remarks. Such a hostile environment forces individuals out of the workplace and effectively undermines the right to decent work.

In another case, an employer unlawfully interfered in an employee's private life by assessing their relationships or conduct outside working hours as "incompatible" with the reputation of the workplace. Such an approach runs contrary to the fundamental principles of the right to respect for private life.

A characteristic feature of the documented cases is that victims do not resort to legal protection mechanisms. This is due to several factors operating simultaneously, including:

- the absence of comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation,
- the burden of proof resting entirely on the victim, which in practice often renders it extremely difficult to demonstrate discrimination, particularly given that employers typically possess greater resources and can invoke a wide range of ostensibly legitimate grounds for refusal to hire or dismissal,
- a lack of trust in courts and law enforcement authorities, encompassing both doubts about the effectiveness of investigative and judicial processes and concerns regarding the possible disclosure of personal information.

Violations of labor rights also entail immediate socio-economic consequences.

The loss of income, prolonged unemployment, and the risk of social insecurity further exacerbate the vulnerability of LGBT+ persons and increase their dependence on informal or hazardous forms of employment.

These cases once again underscore that the existing labor legislation and mechanisms for monitoring employers are insufficient to prevent and sanction discrimination. The absence of SOGI as explicitly protected characteristics contributes to employer impunity and legal uncertainty.

RIGHT TO BE FREE FROM TORTURE OR INHUMAN, DEGRADING TREATMENT

Torture is any act by which a state official or a person acting in an official capacity, or by their incitement and knowledge or tacit consent, intentionally inflicts severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, to gather information or a confession from a person or a third party related to a crime committed by that person or a third party, as well as intimidation or coercion of a person or a third party, or for any other reason based on discrimination of any kind. A person's freedom from torture and ill-treatment is an absolute right and cannot be subject to limitation. If the ill-treatment is to fall within the scope of violation of the above-stated right, it must attain a minimum level of severity. It must consider the circumstances of the case,¹⁶ such as the nature of ill-treatment, the context within which it occurred, the duration of the treatment, its physical and mental effects, and, in some cases, the sex, age, and state of health of the victim.¹⁷ It is essential to make a distinction between torture, inhuman treatment, and degrading treatment, wherein torture is qualified by the intention of the perpetrator and the intensity of suffering, i.e. it is the deliberate inhuman treatment that causes very serious and cruel suffering. Ill-treatment is the treatment that causes the person to feel fear, threatened or in danger, and debasement,¹⁸ harms the agency and reputation of the person, their human dignity and makes the person act against their will or conscience.¹⁹ When causing physical or mental suffering has not attained a minimum severity or did not pursue an intention as defined by torture, then the act is inhuman treatment. In some cases, discrimination and threats based on SOGI can be considered degrading treatment.²⁰ In these cases, it is not necessary to establish the intent on behalf of the state to recognize the violation of the right to be free from inhuman or degrading treatment.²¹

Cases of Discrimination and Violence Recorded in the Military Involving Violations of This Right

In one case, after an individual's sexual orientation was disclosed, he was transferred to a mental health center, where he underwent treatment for several months. At home, the applicant was also subjected to violence and psychological pressure by his father.

16 *Pretty v. The United Kingdom*, ECtHR Judgment No. 2346/02, §4.

17 *Price v. UK*, ECHR ruling No 33394/96, *Costello-Roberts v. UK* ECHR ruling No. 13134/87, §30.

18 *Aydin v. Turkey*, No23178/94.

19 *East African Asians v. United Kingdom*, ECtHR Judgment No. 4715/70, 4783/71, 4827/71.

20 *Smith and Grady v. United Kingdom*, ECtHR Judgment No. 33985/96, 33986/96.

21 *Pears v. Greece*, ECHR ruling N 28524/95, as well as UN Special Rapporteur on Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment 2001 Report, UN Doc No A/56/156, 2001.

In another case, a video depicting a same-sex intimate relationship involving a serviceman was circulated within the military unit. Following this, he was transferred from the unit. Subsequently, fellow villagers arrived at the military base, verbally abused him, and threatened that he should not return to the village after demobilization, warning that he would be harmed if he did so.

In both cases, the victims declined to apply to law enforcement authorities, which indicates a deep-seated lack of trust arising from discriminatory treatment, ineffective responses, and fear of secondary victimization.

Thus, during military service, a person's sexual orientation is treated not as part of private life but as a "problem," a "deviation," or a "risk" to military discipline. This is reflected in several interrelated practices. This conclusion is based not only on the two cases documented during the current year, but also on similar cases recorded in previous years. These include:

- the isolation of individuals following the disclosure of their sexual orientation,
- psychological and social pressure exerted against them,
- the de facto equating of homosexuality with a mental health condition. Referring homosexual individuals to mental health institutions indicates the persistence of outdated and discriminatory approaches within the medical sphere that are inconsistent with international medical and human rights standards,
- the unprotected circulation and dissemination of personal data within the military environment. The distribution of videos and the circulation of information about sexual orientation within military units demonstrate the absence of effective mechanisms for the protection of personal data.

Moreover, these approaches are also evidenced by attempts during the conscription process to release individuals from military service. In particular, the disclosure of a person's sexual orientation prior to demobilization may lead to the initiation of procedures for discharge from military service on the grounds of a supposed mental health condition. During this period, typically until the end of the service term, the individual is generally kept within the premises of a military hospital, in conditions characterized by isolation and discrimination. Although homosexuality has long since ceased to be classified as a mental health disorder in Armenia, it may reasonably be inferred that discharging individuals from military service under various pretexts serves the purpose of relieving military command of what is perceived as an additional "burden."

Such practices violate fundamental principles of human dignity, respect for private life, and equal treatment. The military system lacks clear policies and mechanisms aimed at preventing discrimination on the grounds of SOGI. As a result, discriminatory treatment becomes not an exception, but a tacitly tolerated practice.

Moreover, these cases present a high level of risk at both the individual and systemic levels. In particular:

At the individual level, as reflected in the above examples:

- Transfer to a mental health institution without medical justification may result in serious psychological consequences, including loss of self-worth and other forms

of trauma.

- The dissemination of a video depicting intimate relations not only violates the right to private life, but also creates an ongoing risk of persecution, threats, and physical violence.
- The absence of security for individuals after completion of service, including the impossibility of returning to their communities, effectively prolongs the impact of violence beyond the period of military service.

At the systemic level:

- Such practices within the armed forces foster an environment of fear and silence in which members of vulnerable groups refrain from seeking assistance or accessing protection mechanisms.
- The use of psychiatric institutions as a temporary solution constitutes a dangerous practice that may legitimize coercive “treatments,” unlawful interventions, and the formation of harmful misconceptions within society.
- The failure to ensure the protection of personal data increases the risk of the chain dissemination of violence, including beyond the military environment.

The ECtHR has affirmed that inaction or discriminatory treatment by state authorities toward individuals on the grounds of sexual orientation constitutes a violation of the right to be free from torture and from inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, taken in conjunction with the right to be free from discrimination.²²

Sexual orientation cannot be regarded as a social or medical problem requiring “management” or the isolation of an individual. The unprotected use of information relating to a person’s sexual life may, first and foremost, result in a violation of the right to respect for private and family life, and often leads to more serious consequences, such as violence and discrimination. The state is obliged to ensure the effective protection of personal communications and data, particularly in vulnerable environments.²³

In conditions of military service, where an individual is under complete state control, the state’s positive obligations with respect to data protection are heightened, and the harm caused to the individual as a result of inaction is correspondingly more severe.

Article 3 of the ECHR guarantees an absolute right and prohibits torture and inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment under all circumstances, including considerations of national security or the particularities of military service.

The ECtHR has affirmed that, in situations involving violence and threats against LGBT+ persons, the state is under an obligation to conduct an effective investigation.²⁴ Manifestations of hatred based on sexual orientation require heightened vigilance and prompt response by state authorities.²⁵ In this context, threats to harm the victim if he returned to his village after completing military service indicate that the state failed to fulfil its positive obligation to ensure the individual’s safety following discharge from service.

The Court has emphasized that the aim of ensuring “discipline” or “combat readiness”

22 ECtHR Judgment No. 73235/12, *Identoba and Others v. Georgia*.

23 ECtHR Judgment No. 61496/08, *Bărbulescu v. Romania*.

24 ECtHR judgment No. 12060/12, *M.S. and A.S. v. Romania*.

25 ECtHR judgment No. 41288/15, *Beizaras and Levickas v. Lithuania*.

within the armed forces cannot, in itself, serve as justification for discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation.²⁶

In light of international standards and the ECtHR case-law, the cases presented should be regarded as:

- discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation,
- inhuman and degrading treatment,
- violations of the rights to privacy and data protection,
- failures by the state to fulfil its positive obligations during and after military service.

These circumstances require not only the investigation of individual cases, but also systemic reforms within the armed forces and in the relevant law enforcement state bodies.

²⁶ ECtHR Judgments No. 31417/96 and 32377/96, Lustig-Prean and Beckett v. the United Kingdom.

RESPECT FOR PRIVATE AND FAMILY LIFE

The right to private and family life defines the right of every person to recognition before the law, as well as the right to privacy.²⁷ It includes the duty of the state to recognize the person's accepted sex and gender identity as a means of ensuring the exercise of the person's right to private life.²⁸ "Private life" is a broad concept, which includes the physical and psychological integrity of the person. In some cases, it includes aspects of a person's physical or social identity. Circumstances, such as gender identity, name, sexual orientation, and sex life, fit in the context of protections of the right to privacy and family life.²⁹

In a number of its judgments, the ECHR has taken the position that state authorities bear a positive obligation in relation to the protection of the right to physical and mental integrity from assaults by private individuals to create and ensure an adequate framework of legal norms that enable protection of private individuals from violent acts.³⁰

Despite the fact that internationally declared human rights are guaranteed by the Constitution, their effective operation is ensured by mechanisms provided in legislative acts. In Armenia, intentional physical injury to a person is a set of offences punishable under the Criminal Code.³¹ Punishment is prescribed for offences of physical influence (injury) of various degrees of graveness and various types of injury. At the same time, it is necessary to distinguish harm, which is considered a violation of the right to private life, from such influence, which can be considered inhumane, degrading treatment, and up to torture.

This subsection includes:

- cases of domestic violence,
- cases of physical, sexual, and psychological violence perpetrated by third parties, including threats to life or health, as well as instances of extortion and the dissemination of information relating to private life,
- abuse of freedom of expression.

In many cases, of course, these acts may occur concurrently, for example, when domestic violence follows the disclosure of information relating to a person's SOGI, or when physical violence is accompanied by threats, and so forth.

27 See, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966, Article 16.

28 See, Articles 16 and 17, HRC General Comment 16.

29 See, *Pretty v. The United Kingdom*, ECtHR Judgments No. 2346/02, §49.

30 See, *Osman v. the United Kingdom*, §§ 128-130; *Bevacqua and S. v. Bulgaria*, § 65; *Sandra Janković v. Croatia*, § 45; *A v. Croatia*, § 60; *Đorđević v. Croatia*, §§ 141-143; *Söderman v. Sweden* [GC], § 80.

31 RA Criminal Code: Article 194, 195, as well as crimes against health. <https://www.arlis.am/documentview.aspx?docid=153080> (Armenian)

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The documented cases of domestic violence concern discrimination and ongoing violence against gay and trans persons manifested within intimate partnerships, families, and the domestic environment. These cases involve both adults and minors and were recorded across diverse social, age, and family contexts. **Of the 30 documented cases of domestic violence, 20 occurred against adults, primarily perpetrated by parents.** In five of the cases, the victims were minors. Another five cases concerned violence perpetrated by a partner. One additional case of domestic violence was recorded as having been committed by the individual's maternal aunt. This categorization of domestic violence cases is due to legislative and practical shortcomings that create additional obstacles both to reporting incidents to law enforcement authorities and to ensuring an appropriate response and follow-up by those authorities. This issue will be discussed in greater detail below.

It should be noted that these quantitative data do not include cases in which parents used manipulative methods to exert pressure on an individual's decisions, for example, by claiming that the person's mother would die if they continued their lifestyle (referring to same-sex conduct), or that family members would develop serious psychological problems as a result. Below are several examples of the documented cases in order to provide a clearer understanding of their nature.

In one case, after a gay man's family members became aware of his sexual orientation, they began to strictly control his appearance, clothing, and social interactions. He was subjected to ongoing psychological pressure, insults, and threats. His freedom of movement was restricted by the family, and after some time, he was expelled from the home without access to alternative safe accommodation. The individual did not contact law enforcement authorities, fearing secondary victimization and further violence from his family.

In another case, family members of a lesbian woman confiscated her mobile phone without her consent, read her private correspondence, and circulated photographs of her and her partner within the family. This was followed by physical violence, verbal abuse, and prolonged restrictions on her freedom of movement. Ultimately, she was expelled from the home and completely deprived of family support.

A case was documented in which a gay man's brother attempted to strangle him, accompanying the act with threats against his life. The violence was motivated by the brother's awareness of the individual's sexual orientation. The victim did not report the incident to the police, fearing an escalation of the situation and an ineffective response from law enforcement authorities.

A minor who is gay was subjected for years to physical and psychological violence by his parents. After he contacted the police, law enforcement authorities treated the abuse as a matter of "discipline" and failed to implement effective protective

measures. The minor was transferred to a care center, where he also encountered discriminatory treatment and restrictions on his movement, ultimately forcing him to return to the same environment of violence.

A trans woman was subjected to discriminatory treatment in a domestic setting on account of her gender identity, including the segregation of household items, isolation, and degrading remarks. When she reported the incident to the police, law enforcement authorities failed to respond to the discriminatory aspects of the case and confined themselves to formal explanations, without ensuring the protection of her rights.

Thus, in the majority of cases, the underlying cause of violence and discriminatory treatment was the disclosure of the individual's SOGI, or assumptions made in that regard. Following such disclosure, family members employed various mechanisms of control, pressure, and punishment aimed at restricting the individual's behavior, appearance, social interactions, and self-expression.

Various forms of domestic violence were documented, including psychological, physical, and economic abuse. Insults, degrading remarks, threats, accusations, and pressure rooted in notions of "shame" were frequent. In several cases, the violence assumed a physical character, involving beatings and other forms of physical assault, the infliction of bodily injuries, and threats directed against life and health.

Cases were also recorded in which family members, without the individual's consent, accessed private messages, confiscated mobile phones, disseminated photographs and correspondence, and disclosed information regarding the person's sexual orientation to third parties.

In numerous cases, family members sought to "correct" or "change" the individual's SOGI through various forms of pressure, psychological interference, consultations with fortune-tellers, or other non-professional methods. Such interventions were accompanied by practices that undermined the individual's dignity and caused harm to their mental health. Evidence from previously conducted research indicates that the use of such methods may amount to inhuman and degrading treatment:³²

Cases were also documented involving expulsion from the home, as well as situations in which individuals were left temporarily or permanently without shelter, and instances of restrictions on freedom of movement. A number of individuals were compelled to leave their place of residence for safety reasons, without having access to alternative safe accommodation or state support.

In nearly all cases, victims did not seek assistance from law enforcement authorities, fearing secondary victimization, discriminatory treatment, or the disclosure of information relating to their private lives. In the only case in which a complaint was filed, the response of the law enforcement authorities was ineffective, and the discriminatory element in the ill-treatment of the victim was disregarded. Similar treatment had also been encountered by individuals who had previously contacted law enforcement, or

³² Pink Human Rights Defender NGO. Research on Implementation of Conversion Practices and Therapies in Armenia, 2020. <https://pinkarmenia.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/conversion-therapy.pdf> (Armenian)

by acquaintances known to them who had done so, which served as a basis for their reluctance to seek assistance again.

Overall, the documented cases indicate that for gay and trans persons, the family and domestic environment often become spaces of discrimination and violence, while state mechanisms for protection and support remain insufficient or inaccessible.

Although the overwhelming majority of cases recorded during the year involve domestic violence, only a very small number are reported to law enforcement authorities, and even when complaints are filed, few result in effective investigation.

Thus, a comparison of the cases documented during the current year with the situation recorded in previous years has revealed the following systemic issues requiring urgent attention:

- insensitive treatment of victims, including secondary victimization and ridicule,
- legal limitations on the provision of support to minor victims,
- the de facto inaccessibility of shelters for LGBT+ persons,
- the absence of practices for needs assessment and referral to specialized support services.

Insensitive Treatment of Victims, Secondary Victimization, and Ridicule

The low rate at which survivors of domestic violence report incidents to law enforcement authorities is primarily linked to a lack of trust in the police and investigative bodies. In all cases, police officers, who are responsible for the initial response following the submission of a complaint and, at the subsequent stage, investigators, largely determine through their conduct and approach toward the victim the effectiveness of the investigation, including the victim's willingness to cooperate and their continued trust in the process. Victims report that when approaching law enforcement authorities without the involvement of human rights defenders or legal counsel, they are typically met with ridicule, insults, and dismissive treatment. Domestic violence cases are also characterized by accusatory attitudes toward victims for filing complaints against family members, which further exacerbates their psychological distress. It should also be noted that although the legislative gap concerning the investigation of violence perpetrated by a partner has been removed, individuals in same-sex relationships continue to avoid contacting law enforcement in situations of violence, primarily to avoid degrading treatment and ridicule, as well as the possible disclosure of information relating to their private lives.

Thus, another factor contributing to the lack of trust in law enforcement authorities is the dissemination of personal information, which results from unprofessional and insensitive conduct on the part of police officers or investigators.

Legal Limitations on Support for Minor Victims

From the perspective of access to legal protection mechanisms, minors are particularly vulnerable when their legal representative is the perpetrator of the abuse. As a result of insensitive treatment and unprofessional approaches by police officers, a pedagogue, who should be involved as a representative safeguarding the interests of the minor victim, is often not engaged; instead, attempts are made to reconcile the family and return the minor to the same environment of violence. The ability of civil society organizations (CSOs) to protect minors and represent their interests is limited, given that a lawyer may be engaged only upon authorization by the minor victim's legal representative. In this regard, cooperation between the police and civil society organizations is essential to ensure proper protection for minors affected by domestic violence and to create a safe environment for victims. At the same time, in cases involving minors for whom returning to the family is unsafe, a comprehensive assessment of the situation is required, including consideration of state-provided support. In certain instances, LGBT+ minors subjected to domestic violence are transferred to care centers for children in difficult circumstances. Cases of discrimination and ill-treatment within these institutions have also been documented by Pink NGO. This issue likewise requires the attention of the relevant ministry, both in terms of ensuring prompt and appropriate responses in individual cases and, in cooperation with the competent state authorities, addressing existing shortcomings at the policy level.

Limitations or De Facto Inaccessibility of Shelters

Survivors of domestic violence often lack the means to secure even minimum living conditions independently, including housing, which places them in a position of dependence on the perpetrator. Shelters provided by CSOs represent resources that are vastly insufficient in comparison to existing needs. Moreover, given that such shelters frequently rely on short-term project funding, they cannot be regarded as long-term solutions. In this regard, LGBT+ persons are particularly vulnerable, as both the number of organizations working to protect their rights and the available resources remain limited. Accordingly, the state should also consider measures to ensure access to safe accommodation for individuals subjected to domestic violence in order to prevent further abuse. In this respect, cooperation with civil society organizations is essential both to prevent further discriminatory treatment of victims within shelters and, to the extent possible, to ensure the provision of support.

Absence of Practices for Needs Assessment and Referral to Specialized Support Services

As the primary first responder, the police should also be prepared to assess victims' needs and, where necessary, refer them to appropriate specialists. Given the nature of domestic violence and its psychological and social consequences for victims, the provision of services by psychologists and social workers at the earliest stage is

particularly important. In this regard, cooperation between the police and civil society organizations can significantly ease the financial burden on the state while also ensuring sensitive and experienced professional support for victims. At the same time, considering the limited resources of civil society organizations, where specialists are engaged by the state, training should be provided on working with LGBT+ persons and on ensuring a sensitive and informed approach.

PHYSICAL VIOLENCE

Seven cases of physical violence were documented, affecting both trans and gay individuals, including minors. It is noteworthy that in nearly all cases, the perpetrators were unknown to the victims and had no apparent personal motives other than those related to the victims' identity.

An examination of the cases indicates that acts of violence against both trans and gay persons demonstrate a consistent and systemic pattern, with the primary motive being the individual's SOGI. The incidents involved not only physical assaults, threats, and degrading treatment, but also the explicit targeting of LGBT+ persons, accompanied by offensive language and publicly humiliating conduct. This confirms that LGBT+ persons in Armenia continue to constitute a high-risk group, both due to prevailing societal attitudes and the lack of effective protection by the law enforcement system.

However, in nearly all cases, the response of law enforcement authorities has failed to meet the state's obligations. The police have not recorded, examined, or have simply disregarded the possible existence of a hate motive. Moreover, in certain instances, tolerance of vigilantism by police officers, the ignoring of insulting expressions, or discriminatory treatment toward victims not only contravene professional standards of conduct, but may also be regarded as state acquiescence in inhuman treatment. This significantly undermines LGBT+ persons' willingness to trust state institutions and seek legal protection, compelling them to refrain from filing complaints or to avoid contacting law enforcement even in cases of serious attacks.

Incidents of violence have also occurred against minors.

For example:

A minor who identified as gay was subjected to violence by children living in the same courtyard. During an argument, the boys told him, "How many times have we told you that people like you should not come out into the yard and should not be in this neighborhood?" They then struck him on various parts of his body with their hands and feet, causing bodily injuries, including a broken nose. The victim filed a complaint with the police, however, after some time, his mother withdrew the complaint, stating that they had reconciled with the perpetrators.

The case of violence against a minor reveals another serious shortcoming on the part of the state, namely, inadequate child protection, where even after a crime had been

reported, the complaint was withdrawn by a parent and the police failed to continue proceedings on their own initiative, despite this being legally required in cases involving violence against minors. This constitutes a dangerous precedent, as it allows perpetrators to remain unpunished while enabling discriminatory treatment to become embedded in community practices, thereby becoming normalized.

A trans woman filed a complaint with the police, reporting that she had met an unknown man for the purpose of engaging in sexual relations, after which they continued their journey by taxi. While in the vehicle, the man called an acquaintance and stated that he was bringing someone with him, which caused the woman to feel threatened. She asked the driver to stop the car, indicating that she wished to get out and did not want to engage in sexual relations with him. When she exited the vehicle, the man also got out and struck her on various parts of her body with his hands and feet. He then took her mobile phone and attempted to flee, however, the woman managed to retrieve it, after which the man resumed beating her. When bystanders attempted to assist the trans woman, the perpetrator stated, "She's a faggot, that's why I'm beating her." Even after being taken to the Kentron police station, the perpetrator continued, in the presence of police officers and the investigator, to direct insults at the trans woman, repeating that she was a "faggot" and that this was the reason for the assault, and using sexually explicit slurs referring to her gender identity. As a result of the physical violence, the trans woman sustained multiple bodily injuries. The case is currently pending before the court, however, the hate motive has not been considered as an aggravating circumstance.

A trans woman met with a 21-year-old man in her apartment for the purpose of providing sexual services. Around midnight, she accompanied the young man to the entrance of the building. Upon reaching the entrance, he turned toward her and struck her several times with his fist on various parts of her body. He then directed sexually explicit insults at the trans woman, stating in particular that "people like you should disappear from this country," and fled the premises. The trans woman reported the incident to the police, and criminal proceedings were initiated under the article concerning physical assault. However, no further information has been received regarding the progress of the case.

The individual was engaged in sex work and, during a meeting with a client, the latter took her phone. When she attempted to retrieve it, he struck her, breaking her teeth and nose. She reported the incident to the police. At the police station, the perpetrator continued shouting and hurling insults at her, however, the officers merely told him to be quiet.

The documented cases also demonstrate that trans women and gay men engaged in sex work are particularly vulnerable to violence, while the conduct of the police at times further exacerbates this vulnerability. Police inaction and indifference contribute to a climate of impunity, which in turn encourages further acts of violence and leaves the community in a state of persistent risk.

At the same time, a number of cases clearly reveal risks of retaliation, harassment, threats, and the disclosure of an individual's identity, which gravely undermine the confidentiality of private life and may result not only in severe psychological consequences, but also in loss of employment, domestic violence, and social exclusion.

In one of the documented cases, a same-sex couple was standing outside when a man approached them and loudly told them in Russian to "get out of here." He then grabbed and pushed them, again demanding that they leave the area. During the incident, he used derogatory language and asked whether they were "boys or girls." As the confrontation escalated and other people gathered nearby, the couple got into their car in order to leave. At that moment, the man shouted after them that they would be followed. Approximately ten days later, unknown individuals again pursued them outside, although they were able to escape. The victims did not wish to contact law enforcement authorities.

The harassment of a gay couple and the repeated attacks against them further demonstrate that violence driven by homophobic motives often has a systematic character and may pose a long-term threat to victims.

Overall, these cases reveal systemic shortcomings in the state's obligations to protect individuals from violence and to prevent discrimination. As a result, a climate of impunity and selective application of the law emerges, which is particularly dangerous for groups that are already among the most vulnerable in society. This chain of violent incidents targeting the LGBT+ community not only threatens the rights of individual persons, but also affects the overall security environment of the community, deepening a climate of fear and isolation that may, in the long term, undermine social cohesion and the institutional framework for the protection of human rights.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Two cases of sexual assault were documented, both of which occurred in hostels and involved foreign nationals who had sought asylum in Armenia due to persecution based on their sexual orientation. In both instances, the perpetrator persistently attempted to engage in sexual relations with the victim against their will. In one of the cases, the victim has a disability, which places them in a situation of compounded vulnerability. The victim was mocked both for having a disability and for their gender expression. Only one of the victims reported the incident to the police, however, no interpretation was provided, and as a result the victim was unable to understand the proceedings and was once again subjected to mocking, aggressive, and intimidating treatment, this time by police officers, who did not pursue the complaint.

Thus, foreign nationals who regarded Armenia as a safe country and fled there to avoid persecution and violence on the basis of their sexual orientation instead encounter further violence, now in an even more vulnerable position due to language barriers and an unfamiliar environment. In this situation, the state not only fails to provide shelter

or other forms of support, but also fails to ensure protection for individuals who have experienced violence and ill-treatment within its territory.

EXTORTION

Unlike in previous years, when cases of extortion constituted a significant portion of recorded incidents, only one such case was documented this year. In the recorded case, an unknown individual filmed a same-sex couple walking hand in hand in a secluded area of the city and then threatened to disseminate the video unless they paid him money on a regular basis. He also took the victim's chain and did not return it. The victim did not wish to contact law enforcement authorities, fearing that information about his sexual orientation would be disclosed to his parents, which could lead to violence and other obstacles in his daily life. The very fact that victims of violence are afraid to contact law enforcement places them in an even more vulnerable position and allows perpetrators to act with greater confidence and impunity.

DISSEMINATION OF MATERIALS RELATING TO PRIVATE LIFE

Given the vulnerability and lack of protection experienced by LGBT+ persons, cases are also recorded in which their right to private life is violated in the expectation that no accountability will follow.

In one documented case, a gay man discovered that an individual with whom he had engaged in sexual relations was selling a video of that encounter for money. The victim submitted a report to the RA Prosecutor General's Office. Criminal proceedings were initiated, after which the perpetrator deleted the video and returned the money, and the victim withdrew the complaint. Notably, in this case, the investigative body did not terminate the proceedings despite the withdrawal of the complaint and instead referred the case to court with an indictment. That is, when the alleged offender was also presumed to be a gay man, the law enforcement authority did not rely on the withdrawal of the complaint as grounds to discontinue the criminal prosecution, a course of action that has been taken in other cases both this year and in previous years.

THREATS AND OTHER FORMS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL VIOLENCE

The documented cases of threats and psychological coercion demonstrate the diverse and interrelated manifestations of discrimination on the grounds of SOGI. The cases indicate that discrimination in Armenia is not only interpersonal in nature, but also systemic, deeply rooted in societal prejudice, gaps in legal protection, and a lack of trust in law enforcement authorities.

In one recorded case, the father of the individual's partner issued threats to disclose information about the person's sexual orientation or relationship, as well as to file a false complaint with the police. These actions were aimed at intimidating the individual and suppressing their free will.

In this case, several layers of fear are formed for the individual, including:

- psychological pressure related to sexual orientation, placing the individual in a state of severe emotional distress and compelling them to refrain from making autonomous decisions concerning their private life,
- the threat of violation of the right to privacy, particularly through the disclosure of information regarding sexual orientation, which may lead to serious consequences such as family violence and exclusion, as well as discrimination and violence in other social contexts,
- the threat of using law enforcement authorities as a tool of pressure. Of particular concern is the fact that legal mechanisms are presented not as instruments of protection, but as levers of discriminatory coercion.

The second case concerns psychological violence and pressure within an educational institution, illustrating the nature of discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation in such settings. Due to the applicant's appearance, the disclosure of his sexual orientation resulted in threats, harassment, and a real risk of physical violence. The threats were ongoing in nature and involved the participation of third parties, indicating elements of collective targeting.

The case points to the following issues:

- the absence of effective mechanisms to prevent discrimination within the educational environment,
- the normalization of insults, psychological pressure, and threats based on sexual orientation,
- a lack of trust in law enforcement authorities, which impedes the effective exercise of legal protection.

The deterioration of the applicant's psychological condition demonstrates that discrimination is not limited to a single incident, but rather produces long-term harmful consequences.

In a third case, threats were directed against a minor who identified as gay, targeting not only his dignity but also his life and health. Particularly concerning is the threat involving the exploitation of official connections, namely, the claim that the perpetrator's brother worked in the prosecutor's office and could use that position to create problems for the victim. This was clearly intended to intensify an atmosphere of fear and to deter the victim from seeking assistance from law enforcement authorities.

This case demonstrates:

- the particular vulnerability of minor LGBT+ persons, since minors objectively have more limited access to legal protection mechanisms, while threats involving the participation or influence of an official appear more credible and can place the individual in a state of heightened psychological distress and fear,

- the risks of unlawful use of personal data and violations of confidentiality; that is, as in other cases involving threats or extortion, the disclosure of information concerning a person's sexual orientation is perceived as an act carrying significant risks and the potential for violence.

The fourth case concerns degrading and insulting speech directed at a trans woman, accompanied by threats against her life. Unlike in a number of other cases, the applicant reported the incident to the police, however, she received no information regarding the progress of the proceedings, which may indicate either inaction or a lack of transparency.

This case highlights two key issues:

- the particular intensity of hatred directed against trans persons, which may manifest in any public setting and be perpetrated by unknown individuals, especially given the greater visibility of gender expression among trans persons,
- the absence of effective investigation and communication by law enforcement authorities, which further deepens distrust in the system.

The fifth case concerns sexually explicit threats directed against a gay man, specifically threats to disseminate a video depicting sexual relations. The threat to distribute materials recorded during sexual activity constitutes a form of severe psychological pressure and may be regarded as an element of sexual violence.

The applicant's decision not to contact the police was based on prior experiences of discriminatory treatment, which points to a systemic problem:

- discriminatory conduct within the law enforcement system results in secondary victimization of survivors,
- it obstructs the effective realization of legal protection.

In the sixth case, an individual who had undergone gender-affirming surgery four months earlier was harassed by a former classmate living nearby. After learning about the person's transition and change in appearance, the perpetrator began repeatedly harassing both the individual and their family. He regularly intruded into the person's apartment or confronted them outside, directing various insults, threats, and degrading remarks, while insisting that the trans person leave the neighborhood. The victim reported the incidents to the police several times, however, no measures have yet been taken.

Two recorded cases of psychological violence not involving explicit threats also occurred within an educational institution, which is particularly alarming given the institution's complete inaction both in preventing such situations and in addressing them when they arise.

These and other cases of violence demonstrate the existence of an environment of ongoing abuse against minors within the school setting. This environment manifests, in particular, through isolation, ridicule, humiliation, and other forms of systematic bullying, which in this case, as well as in previously documented incidents, has led the individual to be compelled to leave school.

These cases indicate:

- the absence of anti-discrimination policies within educational institutions, or their ineffective implementation,

- the lack of an adequate response by teachers and school administration,
- the long-term social consequences of discrimination, including the effective exclusion of individuals from education.

The cases further demonstrate that insults, threats, humiliation, and psychological violence directed against LGBT+ persons are often perceived across various segments of society as “acceptable” or “justified” behavior. Discriminatory conduct frequently manifests openly and without fear of accountability, thereby facilitating its continued reproduction. This reflects the absence of comprehensive public policies aimed at preventing discrimination and fostering tolerance at the societal level.

The analyzed cases clearly reveal a systemic failure to ensure individuals’ safety. Threats, harassment, and dangers directed against life and health frequently remain without an adequate response or preventive measures. This is particularly acute for groups facing heightened vulnerability, including minors and trans persons, for whom the absence of a safe environment entails serious and long-term consequences.

Manifestations of discrimination within educational institutions indicate the absence of clear anti-discrimination policies, early response mechanisms, and professional capacity. The persistence of bullying and psychological violence leads to the effective exclusion of individuals from education, which, beyond interfering with the right to private life, constitutes a violation not only of the right to equality but also of the right to education.

The cases indicate that threats of forced disclosure of information relating to SOGI are widely used as a means of coercion. The ineffective protection of private life, confidentiality, and personal data deepens vulnerability and increases the risks of violence and blackmail.

The cases once again confirm the necessity of comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation that would clearly define the concept and forms of discrimination, as well as mechanisms of protection and types of liability. The exclusion of SOGI from the list of protected characteristics contributes to legal uncertainty and practical lack of protection.

The continuing impact of discrimination manifests in serious psychological consequences, including fear, self-isolation, stress, and exclusion from education or public life. At the state level, there is an absence of targeted psychological support programmes that would take into account the specific needs of LGBT+ persons who have experienced discrimination.

ABUSE OF FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION: HATE SPEECH

Freedom of expression is one of the fundamental rights of a democratic society. At the same time, freedom of expression is not an absolute right and may be subject to limitations for the purpose of protecting the rights and dignity of others. It cannot encompass hate speech, which violates the rights of others and may lead to discrimination, hostility, or violence.

There is no single universal definition of hate speech around the world, however, in practice, international treaty bodies do provide provisional interpretations. All forms of expression that promote, incite, encourage, or justify racial hatred, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, or other forms of hatred that are based on intolerance, including intolerance and hatred expressed by extreme nationalism, ethnocentrism, discrimination and hostility against minorities, immigrants, persons of migrant origin, count as hate speech.³³ ICCPR guarantees freedom of expression on the one hand, while on the other obliges states to prohibit by law any speech that incites discrimination, hostility, or violence.³⁴

The assessment of the severity of hate speech is carried out through a combined analysis of several factors, including the context of the speech, the role and influence of the speaker, its intent, content, means of dissemination and audience, as well as the presence of actual harm or a risk thereof. This approach is reflected in the Rabat Plan of Action, which proposes a six-part test to assist states in determining whether liability should be imposed.³⁵

In Armenia, where public attitudes toward LGBT+ persons are predominantly negative, hate speech, even when seemingly harmless in content, may deepen social polarization and contribute to violence. It is particularly dangerous when such speech is delivered by public officials, as this fosters a climate of impunity. Despite this, such cases rarely lead to accountability in practice.

At the domestic level, criminal legislation provides for liability for the most severe manifestations of hate speech, particularly public incitement to violence or the justification thereof.³⁶ However, these provisions are not applied effectively in practice in cases involving hate speech directed against LGBT+ persons. Law enforcement authorities often assess such expressions as an exercise of freedom of expression or as posing no real threat.

In 2025, Pink NGO conducted a study on the application of Article 330, which criminalizes public calls for violence, the justification of violence, and propaganda thereof, in order

33 See, Recommendation No. R (97) 20 of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on "Hate Speech", 1997.

34 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966), Article 19(2). <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-civil-and-political-rights>

35 Rabat Plan of Action. https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Opinion/SeminarRabat/Rabat_draft_outcome.pdf

36 Criminal Code of the Republic of Armenia, Article 330. <https://www.arlis.am/documentview.aspx?docid=153080> (Armenian)

to identify cases recorded since 2020, examine the progress of their investigation, and assess the practice and effectiveness of applying this provision for the protection of LGBT+ persons.³⁷

Within the framework of that study, an official inquiry was submitted to the Investigative Committee of the Republic of Armenia to determine how many proceedings had been initiated over the past five years under Article 226.2 of the former Criminal Code and Article 330 of the current Code, how many of those had developed into criminal cases, how many had been referred to court with indictments, and in how many cases convictions had been issued. The response provided by the Investigative Committee indicated that no comprehensive data are collected regarding the application of these provisions and that no statistics are maintained.

An examination of information available on public judicial platforms revealed that these cases relate to political commentary. In particular, the overwhelming majority concerned statements directed against Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan or his political team. Only one case involved expressions directed against activists that had been made by a political figure, however, the proceedings were terminated on the grounds that the statute of limitations for liability had expired. In another instance, the expressions were directed against former Presidents Robert Kocharyan and Serzh Sargsyan and their political teams; in that case, the defendant admitted guilt and, within the framework of a plea agreement procedure, was fined.

Thus, it may be concluded that no cases of hate speech, public incitement to violence, or the justification or promotion thereof on the grounds of SOGI have been recorded by law enforcement authorities or, at the very least, have not reached the stage of judicial examination.

Particular attention should be paid to the courts' approach to the protection of political speech. In a number of cases, courts have referred to the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights, emphasizing that political speech is subject to a higher level of protection and that even sharp or harsh criticism in a political context may be protected by freedom of expression, provided it does not contain incitement to violence or hatred. However, as a result of misinterpretation, this position has served as a basis for the inconsistent application of the law in cases where the authors of such speech were political or public figures. Thus, the protection of political speech has been construed not as protection of criticism of a political nature, but as protection of speech delivered by politicians themselves.

This approach may create a dangerous precedent, as the enhanced protection afforded to freedom of expression concerns not the identity of the speaker, but rather the nature of the speech and its addressee.

At the same time, during the year another high-profile incident involving hate speech directed against LGBT+ persons occurred, which did not receive any assessment by law enforcement authorities. In particular, on 30 March 2025 in Gyumri, Vardan Ghukasyan, who had been nominated as a candidate for mayor, made the following statement during an online press conference attended by numerous journalists: "If you are also disgusted by LGBT people, come stand by my side and you

³⁷ "Pink" Human Rights Defender NGO, Application of the Article Providing for Liability for Public Calls to Violence in 2020–2025 https://pinkarmenia.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/hatespeech-report_20-25.pdf (Armenian)

will see what I will bring down on the heads of LGBT people. And let me say one more thing: if the Armenian Church ever, like the Europeans, conducts a same-sex marriage, I say this out loud—then I will shoot that priest in the church.”³⁸

Nevertheless, despite the fact that reports of a crime were submitted in connection with this incident by three different organizations, the investigative authority issued a decision stating that the speech did not contain incitement to or advocacy of violence.

Vardan Ghukasyan was subsequently elected mayor and continued to make discriminatory statements against women and LGBT+ persons, which, however, elicited no response from state authorities.

Thus, cases involving calls for violence, the justification thereof, or propaganda on the grounds of SOGI have not been addressed by law enforcement authorities, and the few preliminary proceedings that have been initiated have not proceeded to court with indictments.

The practice of law enforcement authorities is influenced by the political stance of the authorities, which in practice does not demonstrate a genuine commitment to protecting the rights of LGBT+ persons. Although overt hate speech by state officials has decreased since 2018, the continued inaction in response to such speech, as well as the political instrumentalization of LGBT+ issues, leads to the same consequences, namely, the absence of effective legal protection mechanisms and the persistence of unsafe living conditions for LGBT+ persons.

In these circumstances, it is essential that state authorities themselves provide proper legal assessments of all manifestations of hate speech and convey a clear message to law enforcement bodies to ensure full, comprehensive, and objective investigations of such cases.

At the same time, as in previous years, the current year has also seen instances of political instrumentalization, whereby both representatives of the ruling political force and opposition political and public figures, as well as media outlets, have attempted to portray being LGBT+ or being associated with the community as a negative attribute, with the aim of discrediting individuals. Pink NGO has repeatedly been compelled to issue public statements calling upon state authorities to refrain from speech that fosters hatred and intolerance in society and to ensure an appropriate response to hate speech expressed by others, including, where necessary, providing a proper legal assessment.

³⁸ I will shoot that priest in the church; I say it out loud,” Vardan Ghukasyan on so-called LGBT propaganda, 31.03.2025 (in Armenian) <https://armtimes.com/hy/article/310901> (Armenian)

The organization documented two cases involving abuse of authority by law enforcement officials, as well as a case in which an asylum seeker was subjected to ridicule by employees of the migration service.

In one case, an individual who had been brought in on suspicion of drug possession was required to open his personal social media accounts. As a result, the officers learned that he had engaged in same-sex relations or social interactions with other men, after which they began making discriminatory and insulting remarks. Having established that the individual had no connection to narcotics, they released him several hours later. The individual reports that, while at the police station, he was given three documents to sign, the contents of which he was unable to review. His rights and obligations, as well as the content of the documents, were not explained to him.

When seeking legal advice, the individual stated that he had been afraid to request any explanation from police officers regarding his rights or the contents of the documents he had signed, fearing that doing so would lead to worse consequences, harsher treatment, or the disclosure of information about his private life to others, particularly family members.

An analysis of these cases, together with the reasons given by victims in the situations described in the previous section for not contacting law enforcement authorities, reveals a deeply troubling situation: manifestations of discriminatory treatment on the grounds of SOGI by state bodies and officials. This circumstance adds particular gravity to the violations, as it concerns institutions that are obliged to ensure the protection of human rights and the rule of law.

The cases indicate that certain representatives of state authorities not only fail to refrain from discriminatory conduct, but also use their official position to engage in ridicule, humiliation, and questioning that undermines human dignity. Such behavior confers a semblance of “legitimacy” on discrimination and reinforces societal perceptions that degrading treatment of LGBT+ persons is permissible. At the same time, it deepens LGBT+ persons’ distrust of the system, thereby reinforcing fears about reporting incidents of violence and discrimination to law enforcement authorities.

Ridicule and humiliation based on appearance or gender expression in the provision of public services are contrary to the principles of equality and the rule of law. Such treatment creates barriers to accessing legal protection mechanisms and effectively restricts individuals’ right to use public services freely and safely.

As in previous years, documented instances of abuse of authority and manifest disrespect for fundamental rights and human dignity have taken the form of sexually explicit questioning by law enforcement officials directed at victims, unlawful intrusions into details of private life, sexual insinuations, and degrading remarks, which may reach the threshold of inhuman or degrading treatment.³⁹ Questions concerning private life, sexual conduct, and intimate relationships, as well as propositions of a sexual nature, serve no legitimate purpose and cannot be considered proportionate or necessary. Under international standards, such treatment is absolutely prohibited and cannot be justified under any circumstances, including considerations of national security or administrative objectives.

39 UN Human Rights Committee, General Comment No. 20 on Article 7, HRI/GEN/1/Rev.9 (Vol. I), §3.

Nevertheless, the existence of such cases demonstrates the arbitrariness of state interference and the ineffectiveness of oversight mechanisms.

The analysis demonstrates the absence of effective mechanisms for preventing, documenting, and sanctioning discriminatory conduct by employees of state bodies. The lack of clear systems for internal oversight, independent investigation, and accountability contributes to the persistence of a culture of impunity.

The cases further indicate a profound lack of awareness and the presence of prejudice regarding SOGI among certain state officials. This reflects the absence of mandatory and continuous training on human rights, the prohibition of discrimination, and professional ethics.

When discriminatory treatment emanates directly from state authorities, it has a deeper and more enduring impact. Such cases create an environment of fear in which individuals avoid interaction with public institutions, refrain from exercising their rights, and do not resort to complaint mechanisms due to fear of secondary humiliation or retaliation.

Accordingly, a review of the reasons given for refraining from filing complaints with law enforcement authorities reveals a range of structural, psychological, and social barriers that undermine LGBT+ persons' trust in the law enforcement system and diminish their willingness to approach the police or other authorities.

The underlying issues can be grouped into three main categories: A. lack of trust, B. prior experience of ineffective investigations, and C. failure to take measures aimed at preventing further violence. The combination of these factors creates a situation in which approaching law enforcement authorities is perceived by LGBT+ persons not as a means of protection, but as a risky step.

A. DEEP-SEATED DISTRUST TOWARD THE POLICE

Distrust of the law enforcement system among LGBT+ persons is the result of years of accumulated experience, encompassing not only individual encounters but also shared community experience. In particular, accounts of inappropriate and at times biased treatment by police officers are widely circulated within the LGBT+ community. Even when an individual has not personally experienced such conduct, these shared narratives contribute to the formation of a general climate of distrust.

LGBT+ persons often fear that, if they report an incident, their SOGI will become the subject of scrutiny. In practice, they are frequently asked questions relating to their private lives, including inquiries about their sexual experiences, especially when victims attend questioning without a representative. Such questions typically bear no relevance to the effective investigation of a case and instead serve merely to satisfy the personal curiosity of the law enforcement official, thereby violating the individual's right to respect for private life. This lack of sensitivity also discourages victims from trusting authorities with the details of what has happened to them. In addition, there is concern that police may display bias or even assign blame to the victim.

LGBT+ persons often make decisions based on the experiences of those around them. If a perception is widespread within the community that the police are ineffective or

exhibit persecutory attitudes, that perception becomes decisive, even for individuals who have not personally encountered such a situation. People frequently report that their friends have sought assistance and were treated poorly, such accounts foster fear and distrust. In this way, a practice of mutual advising develops within the community that discourages seeking recourse to law enforcement authorities.

Concern About Seeking Assistance a Second Time After an Initial Complaint

An analysis of documented cases shows that if an individual has already approached authorities once and encountered ineffectiveness, neglect, or discriminatory treatment, they will usually refrain from doing so again. This demonstrates systemic ineffectiveness both at the level of responses required by official duties and in terms of human treatment. Even a single negative experience may have long-term consequences, discouraging further attempts to seek assistance.

Fear of Disclosure of Personal Information

Distrust is linked not only to experiences of ill-treatment, but also to the risk of disclosure of information concerning victims' sexual orientation or gender identity. Practice shows that such information often reaches the victim's family, leading to a continuation of the cycle of violence in the form of domestic abuse. This issue is particularly acute in cases involving minor victims, where informing parents is effectively carried out within the framework of the law, as they are considered the minor's legal representatives.

The risk of disclosure of personal information is especially high in regional communities, where social ties are closer due to the size and lifestyle of the city or village. In smaller communities, police officers often maintain personal or social relationships with residents, which further complicates the professional fulfillment of their official duties.

B. INEFFECTIVENESS OF CASE INVESTIGATIONS

Experience shows that even in cases where victims do approach law enforcement authorities, a full, comprehensive, and objective investigation is not carried out. In particular:

- incidents are not recorded in their entirety or documented in a standardized format, based on international practice, for acts committed with a hate motive, consequently, insufficient attention is paid to identifying indicators that may serve as a basis for assessing motive and to specifying circumstances of evidentiary significance;
- during the legal classification of the act, the perpetrator's motive, namely intolerance toward LGBT+ persons, is not taken into account, which results in essential evidence and factual data being overlooked, leading to incomplete investigations and, consequently, unjust decisions;

- the duration of investigations often exceeds reasonable time limits, as a result of which perpetrators may come to regard themselves as justified, while victims lose the opportunity to have their rights restored, in many cases, the statute of limitations expires and perpetrators remain unpunished;
- due to homophobic attitudes present both in society and within law enforcement bodies, crimes committed against LGBT+ persons are frequently justified, a tendency that is also reflected in the approaches of law enforcement authorities, who in particular do not treat such acts with sufficient seriousness and lack the motivation to hold perpetrators accountable.

C. ABSENCE OF MEASURES AIMED AT PREVENTING FURTHER VIOLENCE

This issue places victims in closed institutions in a particularly difficult situation. As evidenced both by cases recorded in 2025 and by those documented in previous years within the armed forces, in none of these instances were victims willing to seek legal protection, as they lacked confidence that filing a complaint would not worsen their situation by deepening the impact of violence or discrimination on their physical and/or psychological integrity.

Mechanisms for protection against further violence are especially important in cases of domestic violence, given that victims often return to environments of abuse and frequently lack the means to secure housing and social support independently.

Particular Vulnerability of Minors

The situation of minor LGBT+ persons is especially sensitive:

- They are reluctant to contact care institutions, fearing a new and unfamiliar environment, discrimination, disclosure of personal information, or adverse conditions.
- Given that, in cases of domestic violence, parents are often the primary perpetrators, this legislative framework constitutes an obstacle to ensuring the full protection of a minor's rights. In practice, a lawyer is merely permitted to be present during questioning. This diminishes their sense of protection, as legal safeguards are not comprehensive and trust in the process is further undermined.
- Many minors simply have no alternative place to live, which intensifies their dependence on their fears and discomfort and prevents them from approaching the police, even when the danger is real.

When an entire vulnerable group loses trust in the law enforcement system, a persistent climate of insecurity emerges in which violence becomes predictable yet neither punished nor prevented. This undermines the state's fundamental obligation to ensure the safety of all citizens and to provide effective means for their protection.

CONSEQUENCES OF DISTRUST TOWARD THE LAW ENFORCEMENT SYSTEM

Consequences of Distrust Toward the Law Enforcement System

Self-Perpetuating Cycle of Impunity

When victims do not seek legal protection, and when the cases of those who do come forward are not investigated effectively, perpetrators do not face serious consequences. Impunity becomes normalized, encouraging further acts of violence. In effect, the state loses control over its own legal order.

Unequal Access to Legal Protection Mechanisms

If a particular group of citizens is deprived of a real opportunity to obtain protection, equality before the law effectively ceases to function. This undermines the institutional legitimacy of the state, as differing levels of protection emerge among citizens, anchored in their identity.

Undermining of Human Dignity

The right to security, respect, and dignity becomes merely nominal when LGBT+ persons feel isolated, disregarded, and psychologically unprotected. Fear of approaching the police means that they live under a constant sense of threat, without either institutional or familial security.

Double Vulnerability of Minors

When minors are unable in practice to exercise their right to independent legal assistance, their physical and psychological safety is placed at risk. This may result not only in immediate harm, but also in long-term trauma affecting their development, self-perception, and social integration. In such circumstances, the state fails to fulfil its special and primary obligations to protect children.

Risk to Public Health and Social Cohesion

Distrust and silence drive the community toward isolation, the development of self-protective mechanisms that are not always healthy, and withdrawal from public life. This deepens social polarization and contributes to the growth of hate speech and hate-motivated crimes.

Institutionalization of Fear

When a citizen's first reaction to violence is resignation rather than seeking protection from the state, the country loses the foundation of its security. Fear becomes the regulating force instead of the law.

Taken together, this means that the problem is not merely individual or community-based; it is systemic and concerns the state's capacity to guarantee the fundamental rights of all its citizens.

If this environment is not transformed into one grounded in trust, accountability, and effective protection, violence, discrimination, and impunity will remain self-perpetuating norms, placing at risk not only LGBT+ persons but the integrity of the entire human rights system.

RECOMMENDATIONS AIMED AT INCREASING TRUST IN LAW ENFORCEMENT AUTHORITIES

The proposed measures are intended to address the root causes that have led to distrust among LGBT+ persons toward law enforcement authorities, ranging from negative experiences to the effectiveness of legal mechanisms.

The primary objective is to ensure that LGBT+ persons see that their safety and rights are a priority for the law enforcement system, rather than a secondary concern.

Training of Law Enforcement Officers and Increasing Sensitivity

- Organize mandatory training on the rights of LGBT+ persons, the prohibition of discrimination, and peculiarities of work with vulnerable groups.
- The training should include real-life testimonies, practical case studies, and instruction on professional ethics.

Establishing Liaison Mechanisms or Specialized Personnel

- A dedicated liaison officer or focal point within the police could be established to facilitate communication with the LGBT+ community. This person would also conduct regular consultations with civil society organizations in order to better understand key challenges and take appropriate measures for rapid response and problem-solving.
- Ensure a safer and non-discriminatory environment and introduce rapid response mechanisms, including referral to professional support services and, where appropriate, to civil society organizations.

Ensuring Confidentiality

- Introduce additional oversight measures to prevent the disclosure of personal data without a duly justified legal procedure.
- In any instance of the transfer of personal information, initiate an internal review under the supervision of the liaison officer or communication specialist mentioned in the previous section.

Clear and Protective Procedures for Minors

- Introduce legislative amendments allowing minors, through the guardianship and trusteeship authority, to authorize a representative of a human rights organization to represent their interests in cases where the violence has been committed by their legal representative.

- Establish safe shelters or cooperate with specialized centers to ensure that LGBT+ persons whose return to their family environment is unsafe have access to accommodation and are not deterred from filing complaints.
- Make psychological support a mandatory component when minors who have experienced domestic violence are interviewed by the police.

Monitoring the Effectiveness of Case Investigations

- Introduce an independent monitoring mechanism for cases reported as offences accompanied by discrimination. Such a mechanism would contribute to improving the effectiveness of investigations and help restore trust.

Official Messages on Non-Discriminatory Treatment

- Law enforcement authorities should clearly and publicly state that homophobic and transphobic acts are unacceptable and that LGBT+ persons are protected by law. This would send a clear message to officers within the system that it is their duty to ensure the full and impartial investigation of complaints submitted by LGBT+ persons.

Accessible and User-Friendly Reporting Channels

- Establish an online platform for submitting complaints, as well as the possibility of submitting anonymous reports, allowing individuals to report incidents without direct contact.

PART 3

STRATEGIC LITIGATION

Strategic litigation plays an important role in the field of human rights protection, as it aims not only to restore the violated rights of an individual but also to identify and address systemic problems in the protection of human rights. Such cases are typically selected where there is a legal gap, a discriminatory approach, or a harmful practice, and where a single case can contribute to resolving a broader issue.

Strategic litigation contributes to the development of judicial precedents that may subsequently be applied in similar cases, ensuring legal predictability and equal protection. It also serves as an important tool for exercising oversight over the actions or inaction of state authorities, requiring law enforcement bodies to act in accordance with human rights standards, and promoting legislative or institutional reforms.

Beyond legal outcomes, strategic litigation also plays an important role in raising public awareness by drawing attention to human rights violations, fostering public debate, and contributing to the reduction of discrimination and intolerance. Thus, it serves as a comprehensive and impactful mechanism for human rights protection, particularly in cases where violations affect vulnerable or marginalized groups and require a systemic response.

Pink NGO has been using this tool for many years, and the first results were recorded in the case of *Oganezova v. Armenia*,⁴⁰ the examination of which lasted for nearly a decade but ultimately resulted in a precedent-setting ECtHR judgment concerning violations of the rights of LGBT+ persons in Armenia.

The judgment of the European Court, in particular, obliges the state to take measures not only at the individual level to restore the rights of the person affected in the specific case, but also at the general level, through legislative or practical measures, aimed at addressing systemic problems. As a result of this and ongoing advocacy with international bodies, several developments have taken place:

- provisions providing for harsher liability for crimes committed with a hate motive were introduced in the new Criminal Code, making it possible to classify hate crimes on the grounds of SOGI accordingly;
- training sessions are regularly conducted for police officers, investigators, and prosecutors on hate crimes and hate speech. Though these have not yet produced visible results in terms of the protection of LGBT+ persons' rights, they may contribute to creating a favorable environment for positive change;
- data on hate crimes are being collected, although a proper mechanism for recording such cases has not yet been introduced and, accordingly, no comprehensive statistics are maintained.

In other words, it can be noted that although deeply rooted problems persist, strategic litigation, alongside other advocacy measures, can nevertheless serve as an effective means of prompting the state to undertake certain positive measures.

The following sections present several ongoing strategic litigation cases.

40 ECtHR judgment, *Oganezova v. Armenia*. <https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng?i=001-217250>

MINASYAN AND OTHERS V. ARMENIA

On 7 January 2025, the ECtHR **delivered its judgment in the case of Minasyan and Others v. Armenia**, finding that Armenia had violated fundamental human rights.⁴¹

The case concerns an article published by the newspaper Iravunk on 17 May 2014 entitled “They Serve the Interests of the International Homosexual Lobby: The Blacklist of the Enemies of the Nation and the State,” as well as subsequent publications of a similar nature. In these articles, the newspaper included a number of individuals on a “blacklist,” accusing them of promoting “homosexual propaganda,” while simultaneously calling for zero tolerance toward them and for restricting their opportunities both in their professional activities and in other areas of public life.

The publications were prompted by an interview with Armenia’s representatives at the Eurovision Song Contest 2014, Inga and Anush Arshakyan. During the interview, while expressing their views on LGBT+ persons, particularly regarding the transgender artist Conchita Wurst who represented Austria, they used highly offensive and stigmatizing language, comparing such phenomena to mental illness. In addition to containing insulting and discriminatory assessments, the newspaper’s publications also disclosed the personal data of the targeted individuals, accompanied by calls for discrimination and intolerance toward them.

The 14 targeted individuals, having failed to obtain effective legal protection before domestic courts in Armenia, applied to the ECtHR. The Court found that Armenia had violated the applicants’ right to respect for private and family life, considered in conjunction with the right to be free from discrimination. The Court emphasized in particular that the prohibition of discrimination enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia, as well as the remedies against insult provided by the Civil Code, were insufficient to ensure effective protection against homophobic hate speech.

According to the assessment of the European Court, the harm inflicted on the psychological integrity, human dignity, and reputation of the individuals targeted by the publications was of such a nature and extent that it could not be effectively remedied through the existing civil-law mechanisms. At the same time, the state failed to present substantiated evidence demonstrating that the existing legal regulations are applied in practice in an effective and systematic manner.

Thus, by its judgment, the European Court of Human Rights imposed an obligation on the state to take appropriate legislative, policy, and practical measures to ensure effective protection against hate speech, including incitement to discrimination, and to establish mechanisms for its prevention.

⁴¹ ECtHR judgment No. 59180/15, Minasyan and Others v. Armenia.

PINK V. ARMENIA

This case concerns the refusal by the RA Ministry of Culture to recognize informational materials on the human rights of LGBT+ persons as social advertising, as well as the courts' endorsement of the Ministry's discriminatory reasoning during the examination of appeals against that refusal.

In 2017, Pink NGO applied to the RA Ministry of Culture requesting that three posters and video materials it had produced be recognized as social advertising. The materials were aimed at increasing the visibility of LGBT+ persons, promoting equality and tolerance, and raising public awareness in the field of human rights.⁴² The application was rejected by order of the Minister of Culture, based on the opinion of the Republican Commission. The Commission stated that the submitted materials did not address any issue of public importance and did not contain elements of social awareness-raising. It further emphasized that society was already sufficiently informed about such topics and that no additional awareness-raising was necessary, while also claiming that the materials in fact promoted specific organizations.

Pink NGO filed a claim before the Administrative Court contesting the refusal, arguing that the decision lacked a legal basis and was manifestly discriminatory. However, the Administrative Court of First Instance dismissed the claim, interpreting the concept of social advertising in an excessively narrow manner and concluding that the submitted materials could not be considered social advertising because they did not relate to all possible social issues provided for by law. In 2020, the Court of Appeal found that the court of first instance had misinterpreted the law and returned the case for a new examination.

Following the remittal, however, the court of first instance again dismissed the claim, stating that the materials were not directed at any area of public importance and did not aim to protect a specific human right or to inform broad segments of the public about any significant issue. The court also concluded that the Ministry's decision was not based on sexual orientation or discriminatory treatment, and that the applicant had failed to prove the existence of differential treatment.

In 2024, the Court of Appeal upheld this position, while the Court of Cassation dismissed the applicant's complaint on purely technical grounds without addressing the merits of the case.

During the proceedings, it was established that during the same period other materials had been recognized as social advertising, including those related to the prevention of domestic violence and environmental protection, which contained clear value-based and ideological messages. Subsequent inquiries also revealed that in recent years nearly all applications for social advertising concerned environmental topics and were mostly approved.

On 18 April 2025, after nearly seven years of ineffective proceedings before domestic courts, an application was submitted to the ECtHR seeking recognition of the

⁴² "The advertisements on LGBT topics are not social," the Ministry of Culture stated. <https://pinkarmenia.org/en/news-events/lgbt-ads-are-not-social-ministry-of-culture/>

discrimination exercised by the state, based on the following grounds:

The state violated the prohibition of discrimination enshrined in Article 1 of Protocol No. 12 to the European Convention on Human Rights, through both the actions and decisions of the Ministry of Culture and the courts. In particular, the decision not to recognize the videos and posters as social advertising was not based on their failure to meet legislative requirements, but rather on the fact that the submitted materials concerned the rights and equality of LGBT+ persons.

The reasoning provided by the Ministry of Culture, as well as its subsequent endorsement by the courts, demonstrates an approach grounded in prejudice against LGBT+ persons. As a result, the applicant was subjected to differential and less favourable treatment on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity, which cannot be considered objectively and reasonably justified.

The Law of the Republic of Armenia “On Advertising” and the relevant Government decision grant the Ministry of Culture and the commission operating under its authority discretionary power to approve or reject social advertising. At the same time, these regulations do not establish clear criteria or safeguards that would prevent the arbitrary or discriminatory exercise of that discretion.

In the present case, the Minister of Culture did not provide an independent legal assessment in the decision, limiting the reasoning to a reference to the opinion of the commission. That opinion itself contained discriminatory justifications, including:

- the characterization of LGBT+ persons as having a “non-traditional sexual orientation”,
- the claim that such materials “promote” or “advertise” homosexuality,
- the position that there is no need for public awareness regarding the existence and rights of LGBT+ persons,
- as well as the assumption that such information may have a harmful impact on minors.

These justifications not only lack a basis in the applicable legislation, but also clearly reflect homophobic and transphobic prejudice. The legal framework governing social advertising does not provide for requirements such as “public interest” or “acceptability to the broader public,” nor does it allow for refusal on the grounds that society is allegedly already sufficiently informed about the topic in question.

The materials submitted by Pink NGO were non-commercial in nature and aimed at raising public awareness in the field of human rights, which corresponds to the legislative definition of social advertising. The equality and dignity of LGBT+ persons are recognized as matters of human rights under international and regional law.

Despite this, the Ministry of Culture refused to recognize these materials as social advertising, while at the same time approving other social advertisements, including those related to the prevention of domestic violence, which also contained value-based and ideological messages. This circumstance demonstrates differential treatment in comparable situations, based solely on SOGI.

In cases of differential treatment, the burden of proof lies with the state to demonstrate that the distinction pursues a **legitimate aim and is proportionate**. In the present case,

neither the Ministry of Culture nor the courts subsequently provided any legitimate aim that could justify the refusal to recognize social advertising addressing LGBT+ issues.

Alleged considerations relating to the protection of minors, public morality, or the preservation of “traditional values” cannot be regarded as legitimate aims, as international law and the case-law of the ECtHR clearly establish that such justifications cannot warrant differential treatment on the grounds of sexual orientation.

The courts of first instance and appeal failed to address the substantive issue of discrimination and did not exercise effective scrutiny over the Ministry’s decision. In practice, the courts reaffirmed the same discriminatory reasoning advanced by the Ministry, accepting the position that raising awareness about the rights of LGBT+ persons does not constitute a matter of public importance and is not relevant to the broader public.

Such an approach runs counter to the fundamental values of a democratic society - pluralism, tolerance, and the protection of minority rights, as well as to the objectives of the ECHR.

ATTACK IN SHURNUKH VILLAGE

On 3 August 2018, nine young people vacationing in Shurnukh village in the Syunik region of Armenia, including LGBT+ activists, were subjected to physical assault and psychological violence by more than twenty residents of the same village and the nearby city of Goris. The perpetrators demanded that the victims leave the village and attacked them with stones, as well as with their hands and feet.⁴³ A criminal case was initiated only under the provision concerning battery, and no individual was formally charged. Those who admitted their guilt in their testimonies were granted amnesty, and the criminal proceedings were terminated. Criminal prosecution was not pursued against the majority of the perpetrators, as the investigating authority concluded that their actions did not constitute a criminal offence. In December 2019, the decision to terminate the criminal proceedings was overturned following a complaint by the victims, and the investigation was reopened. In 2020, as a result of two additional complaints filed in the case, the courts found that the investigative authority had conducted an incomplete investigation. Despite the reopening of the proceedings, no charges were brought against any individual. The provision of the Criminal Code establishing liability and punishment for discrimination was not examined during the investigation. In February 2021, the investigative authority again decided to terminate the criminal proceedings, this time on the grounds that the statute of limitations for criminal liability had expired. This decision was contested before the superior prosecutorial authority and subsequently before the courts. In 2022, the court granted the victims' complaint, finding that the investigative authority had conducted an incomplete investigation. This decision was appealed by the Prosecutor's Office; however, the Criminal Court of Appeal of the Republic of Armenia dismissed the appeal.

In 2023, the decision to terminate the criminal proceedings and not to initiate criminal prosecution was overturned by the Prosecutor of the Syunik Region. The case was returned to the Syunik Regional Investigative Department of the Investigative Committee of the Republic of Armenia with instructions to continue the pre-trial investigation and remedy the violations of the victims' rights.

In 2025, however, another decision was issued not to initiate public criminal prosecution against the suspected individuals. The decision was appealed to the higher prosecutor but was rejected on the grounds that the incident had arisen from mutual insults and from the victims' allegedly "immoral and anti-social behavior," rather than from their sexual orientation or gender identity. It was further claimed that the violence had not been motivated by discrimination or by an intention to cause psychological suffering, and therefore that neither the elements of discrimination motivated by hatred nor the relevant criminal offences were present.

The Court of First Instance of General Jurisdiction of the Syunik Region upheld the complaint filed by the victims' representatives and overturned the prosecutor's decision not to initiate criminal proceedings. At the same time, the court ordered the

⁴³ Details of the incident that took place in the village of Shurnukh. <https://pinkarmenia.org/en/news-events/shurnukh-case/>

investigative authority to ensure a proper, comprehensive, prompt, and non-delayed pre-trial investigation.

The court found that the pre-trial investigation had produced contradictory factual evidence, and that these contradictions were significant from the standpoint of establishing or refuting the facts subject to proof in the proceedings, as well as other circumstances relevant to the case. The court also disagreed with the prosecutor's assertion that the incident was unrelated to the victims' gender identity and that, consequently, the case could not concern a violation of the equality of individuals.

The court also expressed disagreement with the legal classification of the act, which had disregarded the interest in protecting the victims' constitutional rights, particularly with regard to the violation of equality. It further noted that the victims' sexual orientation, their gender identity, and the circumstances preceding and accompanying the alleged incident had not been properly assessed, including the discriminatory remarks directed at them, which indicate that the act may have been motivated by hatred.

In addition to identifying these and other violations committed during the investigation, the court emphasized that the investigating authority had failed to observe reasonable time limits and had not conducted a proper investigation. The pre-trial investigation in the case is currently ongoing.

ATTEMPTED MURDER OF A TRANS WOMAN

In 2018, an attempted murder of a trans woman occurred, which generated significant public attention but was not subject to an effective investigation.⁴⁴ In particular, a trans woman, J.A., had provided sexual services to a male client. The man later suggested having sexual intercourse again, but after being refused, he became angry and started an argument with the trans woman in the apartment. He then went out onto the stair landing and, acting deliberately, grabbed the victim and pushed her down the stairs. He subsequently struck her with his hands on the head and various parts of her body, attempting to kill her.

Afterwards, he returned to the apartment and, in order to eliminate traces of the crime he had committed, set the apartment on fire and left the scene. During questioning by the investigative authority, the perpetrator stated that he had believed he was meeting a woman and had come to have sexual relations. Upon learning that the woman was transgender, he became angry, which led to the incident. As a result of the violence, the trans woman sustained life-threatening injuries. Due to the incomplete investigation of the arson and the concealment of evidence, the investigative authority did not take these circumstances into account when classifying the offence. The indictment was sent to court on charges of causing grievous bodily harm.

As a result, the accused was sentenced to three years and six months of imprisonment; however, an amnesty was applied, and he did not serve a prison sentence. The individual who attempted to kill the trans woman was not held accountable in a manner proportionate to his actions, and thus did not face consequences sufficient to acknowledge that his conduct constituted a crime. Despite numerous complaints, the perpetrator has not been properly held accountable. After exhausting all available domestic remedies, the victim's legal representative – Pink NGO's lawyer, submitted an application to the ECtHR. To date, no communication has been received.

⁴⁴ A transgender person was beaten in Yerevan, then their apartment was burned; the victim has been hospitalized <https://tert.am/am/news/2018/02/28/Transgender/2626572> (Armenian)

CONCLUSION

The findings of this report demonstrate that incidents of discrimination and violence against LGBT+ persons have not decreased in number. The nature and patterns of the violations recorded during the reporting period largely mirror those documented in previous years. In particular, the continued predominance of domestic violence among documented cases remains deeply concerning, including cases involving minors. The analysis also shows that vulnerability to violence and discrimination often varies depending on gender and social context. Lesbian and bisexual women most frequently encounter violence within the family environment. Such violence may manifest in different forms, ranging from psychological and economic abuse to more severe forms such as physical and sexual violence, including attempts to “change” a person’s sexual orientation. In practice, rigid expectations regarding women’s gender roles are often reinforced within families, where non-conformity to these norms may trigger coercion, control, and abuse.

At the same time, gay and bisexual men are more likely to face violence in public spaces. Gender expression that does not conform to dominant social expectations of masculinity - through appearance, behavior, or mannerisms, often becomes a trigger for hostility from certain groups in society. As a result, they are frequently subjected to physical violence by strangers in public settings, as well as discrimination and harassment in workplaces, educational institutions, and other social environments. For men, additional risks arise in the context of military conscription and service, where various forms of discrimination and abuse may occur. Cases of extortion and blackmail involving threats to disseminate intimate images or information about a person’s private life are also more commonly reported among men. This is partly linked to the widespread use of dating platforms among gay men, which enable perpetrators to initially remain anonymous, obtain information about a person’s sexual orientation, and subsequently expose the individual’s identity. At the same time, threats to disclose information about a person’s sexual orientation create vulnerability for individuals of all sexes and gender identities. Such disclosure often triggers a chain of violence and discrimination in both family settings and broader social relations.

Trans women remain among the most vulnerable groups with regard to both discrimination and violence. Individuals with visibly non-conforming gender identities may face barriers to education and employment, which often results in social marginalization and economic hardship. As a consequence, many trans women are pushed into precarious forms of employment, including sex work, which significantly increases their exposure to violence both in public and private settings.

At the same time, the state has demonstrated a more cooperative approach toward international mechanisms responsible for monitoring human rights protection. However, no visible improvements have occurred at the legislative level, in public policy, or in public communication with regard to the protection of LGBT+ persons’ rights. Nevertheless, we positively note the responses provided by state reporting authorities to international bodies indicating that certain measures are being taken to protect individuals from discrimination and hate crimes, although these measures are not explicitly directed at the LGBT+ community.

As described in detail in Part 2 of this report, systemic problems persist in the approaches and practices of law enforcement authorities, significantly affecting LGBT+ persons’ trust in legal protection mechanisms. Although these problems are rooted in deeply

entrenched intolerance, discriminatory attitudes, and prejudice, as well as legislative barriers, we believe that meaningful progress in addressing them is possible if sufficient political will is demonstrated.

It is also concerning that violations of LGBT+ persons' rights receive virtually no public response from state authorities, particularly in cases involving hate speech and expressions that promote intolerance. During the reporting period, both opposition and ruling political actors, as well as media outlets affiliated with them, disseminated materials targeting LGBT+ persons and individuals associated with them, seeking to exploit homophobic and transphobic sentiments within society in order to discredit specific individuals. In other words, the authorities not only refrain from condemning such political manipulation but also at times engage in similar practices themselves, which risks further exacerbating intolerance toward LGBT+ persons among different segments of society.

The recommendations presented below are based on the experience and studies of Pink Human Rights Defender NGO and are aimed at addressing both the legislative and practical issues identified in this report. Their effective implementation, and the resulting improvement in the level of protection for LGBT+ persons, ultimately depend on the political will of the highest state authorities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To ensure maximum protection of the rights of LGBT+ persons in the Republic of Armenia, we recommend the following:

State Bodies and Political Forces

- Layout actions towards prevention of discrimination and violence in various spheres of public life on the grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity in the action plan of the National Strategy for Human Rights Protection.
- Adopt a comprehensive anti-discrimination law, which will define discrimination, its types, procedural features of the investigation of discrimination cases, provide a comprehensive list of protected grounds, legal standing for non-governmental organizations in cases of protection of public interest, as well as a procedure for the formation and operation of an independent equality body.
- Revise the RA legislation prohibiting hate crimes, in particular, provide for a crime committed against a person on the motive of sexual orientation and/or gender identity as an aggravating circumstance of criminal punishment and liability.
- Revise the RA legislation prohibiting hate speech, define the concept of “hate speech,” and make an addition to the provision of the RA Criminal Code providing for liability for calls to violence, including sexual orientation and gender identity as a protected feature.
- Document and maintain statistics on hate crimes in RA, including crimes committed on the grounds of a person’s SOGI, enhancing the visibility of the issues around hate crimes in Armenia.
- Ensure access to justice for victims of hate crimes, in particular, by providing effective remedies that will exclude the risk of double victimization of the person, ensure the security of the person and set comprehensive mechanisms for redress.
- Demonstrate political will to effectively enforce existing legislation against sexual orientation and/or gender identity-based hate crimes and hate speech.
- When referring to the violations of human rights of LGBT+ people, provide clear assessments, and do not avoid condemning human rights violations.
- Carry out training for law enforcement bodies on the substantive, legal and procedural aspects of the investigation of crimes committed on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity to ensure a complete, objective and comprehensive investigation.
- Organize and conduct continuous training with law enforcement bodies on specificities of work with victims and witnesses of hate crimes.
- Cooperate with human rights non-governmental organizations to obtain more detailed information about the systemic aspects of human rights violations of LGBT+ persons.
- Promote the ideas of tolerance and equality among employees of state bodies, in particular, parliamentarians of the RA National Assembly, representatives of the RA Government and other officials.

- Advocate for the ideas of tolerance and equality in society; in particular, make public statements advocating tolerance and condemn any manifestation of violence and intolerance.
- Conduct periodic training for the administration and teaching staff of educational institutions on sexuality, on a sensitive approach towards LGBT+ people, and supporting self-recognition and self-expression at a difficult age for them.
- Conduct monitoring of cases of school dropouts or transfers to identify causes and possible instances of harassment.
- Monitor the sensitive treatment of LGBT+ persons by law enforcement agencies in case of domestic violence.
- Maintain statistics on cases of domestic violence based on sexual orientation and/or gender identity.
- Refrain from exploiting LGBT+ issues in order to discredit political opponents, as well as from targeting LGBT+ persons.
- Condemn the promotion of intolerance toward LGBT+ persons by political actors and media outlets, as well as the targeting of individuals based on their perceived sexual orientation or their activities related to the protection of LGBT+ rights.

Mass Media

- Stop publications that incite hatred and intolerance towards LGBT+ persons; instead, supply the public with materials that are knowledge-based, ethically acceptable and respect LGBT+ human rights.
- Not to misuse any topic related to LGBT+ persons and refrain from inciting unnecessary intolerance and hatred in society.
- Not to disseminate speech containing hatred, intolerance, hostility, calls for violence or discrimination, or justifications made by officials and other figures.

International and Regional Organizations

- Properly monitor Armenia's fulfillment of its international obligations regarding the rights of LGBT+ persons.
- Make official statements in support of the importance and priority of protecting the rights of LGBT+ persons in Armenia.
- Address, in international human rights reports, the established practice of violations of the rights of LGBT+ persons described in this report.
- Urge the state to provide clear information regarding the investigation process of the worrisome cases provided by NGOs and the measures taken.

Office of the Human Rights Defender

- Raise public awareness of discrimination against LGBT+ persons and its negative implications, the importance of non-discrimination and the principles of equality.
- Raise public awareness of hate speech and the illegality of its propaganda.
- Advocate for the development and adoption of an effective law on the prevention and protection from discrimination, as well as for laying out effective legal remedies for LGBT+ persons in other legal documents.
- In known cases of violations of the human rights of LGBT+ persons, issue public condemnation statements and properly respond to raised alarms.

About the Organization

Pink Human Rights Defender Non-Governmental Organization was founded in 2007, which is a community-based LGBT+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and other people with non-heteronormative identities) organization, established by the LGBT+ community, serves and supports the needs of the community, and promotes the protection of the human rights of LGBT+ persons, advocating for changes in public policy around LGBT+ issues.



ARMENIA

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