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NETWORK WOMEN'S PROGRAM
VAW MONITORING PROGRAM

V I O L E N C E
A G A I N S T
W O M E N

DOES THE GOVERNMENT CARE
IN
A R M E N I A ?

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and Fact Sheets

from
Central and Eastern Europe,
the Commonwealth of
Independent States,
and Mongolia

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Preface

“...states have an obligation to exercise due diligence to prevent, investigate and punish acts of violence, whether those acts are perpetrated by the state or private persons, and provide protection to victims...”

(Recommendation No. R (2002) 5 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to member states on the protection of women against violence)

Violence against women is a global epidemic, constituting the serious violation of women’s human rights and fundamental freedoms. Combating this phenomenon has been one of the main priority areas of the Network Women’s Program (NWP) of the Open Society Institute since its establishment in 1998.

NWP’s main activities in this field included initiating, managing and supporting several international projects,¹ by acquiring and transferring knowledge throughout the regions where OSI has traditionally worked.² The activities of NWP in the field of violence against women were transformed into a separate program, the Violence against Women (VAW) Monitoring Program, which operated until the end of 2006.

A main focus of the Program was introducing and managing the Stop Violence Against Women (STOPVAW) website,³ and establishing the National Violence against Women (VAW) Monitor Network. The website was developed by Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights in 2003, with the support of NWP and UNIFEM. Subsequently, in May 2004 NWP initiated the National VAW Monitor Program by

¹ Such as the “16 Days” Campaigns against Gender Violence, and the Coordinated Community Response to Violence against Women (Duluth Program). The “16 Days” Campaigns Against Gender Violence program supported NGOs in 19 countries of the Soros foundations network to organize national public awareness campaigns on violence against women. NWP and the OSI Network Media Program provided grants, along with training workshops, in order to build the capacity of women’s NGOs and media experts, and to improve the quality of the media campaigns. Grants were offered exclusively for cross-country cooperation in 2003.

In introducing the Duluth Model, an innovative community-coordinated strategy, NWP organized several training workshops for national teams from 16 countries as well as special training for police officers and other law enforcement professionals, and supported the adaptation of the model for several years.

² These are the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

³ See: www.stopvaw.org.

establishing a network of NGOs from 24 countries. Non-governmental organizations in the fields of violence against women and gender equality take on the role of National VAW Monitors and facilitate the continued development and maintenance of the English and national-language Country Pages of the STOPVAW website.

The responsibilities of the National Monitors include the monitoring of government compliance with international obligations and the distribution of information to the international community about the successes and failures of their governments in combating violence against women. The website and the Network are active forums for information sharing, knowledge transfer, and advocacy work.

At the end of 2005 a new, comprehensive Survey to Monitor Violence against Women was initiated by NWP, inviting the National VAW Monitors and other experts to map the situation on violence against women in their respective countries, with special regard to state responses. The survey methodology prepared for the Monitors and experts to follow built upon the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers' Recommendation No. R (2002) 5 on the protection of women against violence. The goal was to collect concise and comparative information from those who are in the field, as a basis for further analysis and update. Another aim was to contribute to the Council of Europe Campaign to Combat Violence against Women, including Domestic Violence.

By following the words and spirit of the Recommendation of the Council of Europe, the examined fields include, among others:

- responsible government bodies and their mandates regarding violence against women;
- action plans and their implementation;
- state budgets to combat violence against women, including support for NGOs;
- laws, regulations, and codes of conduct;
- services and assistance to victims (shelters, hotlines, crisis centers, legal aid, etc.);
- training and education at all levels;
- role of the media;
- awareness-raising activities; and
- research and statistics.

As a result of the monitoring survey, Country Fact Sheets and Country Monitoring Reports were prepared. These Fact Sheets and Country Reports issue a non-

governmental assessment of the countries' situation in the above fields, and formulate clear recommendations to the governments.⁴

Data collection for the monitoring survey was closed on December 1, 2006. Updated information on further developments in the efforts to combat violence against women in the countries concerned is available on the STOPVAW website.

We hope that both the Fact Sheets and Country Reports will be useful advocacy tools at the national and international levels, and that, by generating legal and policy changes, they will urge the states to fully meet their international commitments to combat violence against women.

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⁴ The reports are available online at www.soros.org/women and www.stopvaw.org/Country_Pages.

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1. STATE MECHANISMS OF COMBATING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

1.1 National institutions or government bodies responsible for policy coordination and implementation

Gender related issues in the Republic of Armenia are regulated by the Women's Issues Division of the Family, Women and Children Issues Department at the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs. There is also the Interagency Commission on Gender Issues and the Women's Council Adjunct to the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia (RA), which are public bodies. There are no special tasks in the field of violence against women allocated to these bodies.

The Women's Issues Division of the Family, Women and Children Issues Department of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs was been established in 1997. The activity of the Division and the Department are based on annual working plans that are approved by the minister. The department reports to the minister who, in turn, reports to the government.

The department's staff is composed of ten people, while the division's staff consists of three people.

The goals of the department are:

- to implement policy aimed at the social protection of family, women and children in the Republic of Armenia;
- to implement legal acts regulating the field of women's and children's issues;
- to elaborate and realize state target projects aimed at the social protection of family, women and children; and
- to improve the work of the Institute of Social Work.

Among the functions of the department are:

- participating in the elaboration of the main directions of the state policy on family in the Republic of Armenia;
- drafting legislation on the issues of family, women and children and elaborating recommendations to perfect current legislation;
- studying the issues of family, women and children, and elaborating projects to solve these issues;
- elaborating and realizing state projects of social assistance to beggars and homeless people, including children;

- providing necessary scientific method and counseling assistance to organizations working in the field;
- elaborating and realizing new mechanisms of social protection of family, women and children;
- cooperating with NGOs and international organizations which deal with the issues of family, women and children;
- implementing the means to improve the status of women and enhance their role in society; and
- organizing symposiums, seminars and other events on family, women's and children's issues.

On June 20, 2006, an Interagency Commission on Gender Issues was established by Decree No. N117-A/1 of the Minister of Labor and Social Affairs. The commission was established by a Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs and UNDP. The commission consists of representatives of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Finance and Economics, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Trade and Economic Development, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the National Institute of Labor and Social Research under the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, the National Statistics Agency; the NGO Association of Women with University Education; the NGO Center, and the NGO Civil Society Development.

The goal of the commission is to reconsider and adopt the government's proposed strategy and methods aimed at realizing and monitoring obligations on gender equality issues, as well as reforms in the field. This work also includes the coordination of strategies and means, as well as human and financial resources the government needs in order to fulfill its obligations.

The commission, with the help of its working groups, will implement the project called National Standards of Gender Equality and, based on discussions, will prepare a strategic draft project on realizing and improving the coordination of gender equality obligations.

The work of the commission is coordinated by the Deputy Minister of Labor and Social Affairs who, in turn, reports every month to the Minister of Labor and Social Affairs about the activity of the commission. There is no budget allocated for the activity of the commission.⁵

⁵ Armine Tanashyan, Head of the Women's Issues Division of the Family, Women and Children Issues Department of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs. E-mail: arminet@mss.am.

The Women's Council Adjunct to the Prime Minister was created by a Decree of the Prime Minister dated December 29, 2000. The objective of the council is to conduct comprehensive studies of women's issues and to seek effective solutions. The council has 23 members, among whom are representatives of NGOs and creative unions, as well as officials of the government staff, the respective ministries, and agencies (mainly women's). According to the charter of the council, its main goals are to coordinate the work aimed at solving women's problems in the Republic of Armenia, to provide for equality of women.

The council's functions are:

- elaborating methods aimed at the development of gender policy;
- elaborating methods aimed at strengthening families;
- elaborating and realizing projects of social assistance to socially insecure families and parentless children;
- elaborating the means to raise the level of women's education and professional qualification;
- elaborating projects aimed at raising the employment rate of women;
- elaborating recommendations to assist businesswomen;
- elaborating methods to provide accessibility of medical aid, medical service and education to women and children;
- elaborating the means aimed at promoting the representation of women on the state management and decision making level;
- elaborating and realizing the means aimed at cultural integration and preservation of the potential of women in the cultural sphere;
- elaborating projects to preserve reproductive health;
- elaborating of methods to integrate disabled women and children into society, and for their cure;
- collecting and analyzing statistical data on women's social status;
- highlighting the situation of women in the Republic of Armenia by the mass media;
- elaborating methods to provide women subjected to criminal action with social-psychological assistance;
- elaborating methods to provide women prisoners with social-psychological assistance; and
- elaborating methods to enable the social-psychological rehabilitation of women set free from prisons.

The council is a public structure and holds meetings at least once every three months. The council reports to the Prime Minister.⁶

All of these bodies tackle social, health-related, and employment concerns, however, they do not have sufficient resources or power to either develop or carry out an effective policy to implement women's issues and to ensure equal rights and opportunities for women and men.

Thus, it is necessary to either create a new institution or to give more powers to an existing one to carry out long-term projects aimed at addressing women's issues, to coordinate and oversee activities of executive authorities in areas related to women's situation, to come up with recommendations on the legal regulations, and to collaborate with legislative and judicial authorities and non-governmental organizations. This approach would also adhere to international standards and complies with the international commitments undertaken by the Republic of Armenia.⁷

The governmental bodies and coordinating institutions in charge of the implementation of measures to combat trafficking in persons are: the Interagency Commission against Trafficking in Armenia; and the Migration Agency of the Ministry of Territorial Administration.

The Interagency Commission against Trafficking in Armenia was created in October 2002 by Decree No. 591-A of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia. The staff of the commission consists of the head, the coordinator and the secretary of the commission. The purpose of the creation of the commission was to develop a national doctrine on trafficking and to implement the *National Action Plan for Prevention of Trafficking in Persons for 2004–2006*. The Interagency Commission consists of representatives of various governmental, non-governmental, and international structures which deal with the issue. The Interagency Commission against Trafficking in Armenia reports directly to the government and presents its recommendations on combating trafficking in Armenia. The commission deals not only with trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation, but also with labor trafficking. The budget allocated for the activity of the commission is \$11,000 (appr. 8,500 euros) for three years.⁸

In May 2005, under the doctrine of the Department for Migration and Refugees of the government, established in 1999, the Migration Agency of the Ministry of Territorial

⁶ Government of the Republic of Armenia. Official website: www.gov.am (Armenian, partially in English and Russian.)

⁷ *National Action Plan of the Republic of Armenia on Improving the Status of Women and Enhancing Their Role in Society, 2004–2010* (in Armenian and English).

⁸ Interview with Valeri Mkrtoumian, Head of the Department of International Organizations of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Chairman of the Interagency Commission against Trafficking in Armenia (v.mkrtoumian@mfa.am), e-mail interview made on June 26, 2006.

Administration was created. There is a Migrants' Support Center and hot line at the agency. Together with the representatives of the Russian Migration Service, the agency organized campaigns in the regions of Armenia to raise the population's awareness on illegal migration and trafficking. The agency cooperates with the Armenian mission of the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR). The agency also works toward signing readmission agreements with different countries. The staff participated in TV and radio programs on trafficking, IOM's seminars and meetings. According to information on the work of the Department for Migration and Refugees by the Government in 2005 provided by the Deputy Head of the Agency, a draft of the "Preventive Means Aimed at Combating Illegal Migration and Trafficking" project and a government decree on the subject have been elaborated and presented to the Government. The budget of the Migration Agency for the current year is about \$185,000 (appr. 142,000 euros).⁹

In 2005, the Department of Combating Illegal Drug Circulation and Trafficking was established under the Main Department of Fighting Organized Crime at the Police; and the Division on Anti-trafficking and Illegal Migration in Human Beings of the Investigative Department of the General Prosecutor's Office was also created.

The budget allocated for the activity of the commission is \$11,000 (appr. 8,500 euros) for three years.¹⁰

There are no coordinating institutions or governmental bodies in charge of implementation of measures to combat domestic violence (as this term does not exist in the legislation), sexual harassment or sexual assault. These issues are regulated by the police and are viewed in the context of crimes against human beings in general.

1.2 National action plans and other policy documents

The *National Action Plan of the Republic of Armenia on Improving the Status of Women and Enhancing Their Role in Society, 2004–2010* (hereinafter "NAP") was adopted by the government on April 8, 2004. The implementation of the NAP is coordinated by the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs. The NAP defines the principles, priorities, and key targets of the public policy that is to address women's issues in the Republic of Armenia.

⁹ Interview with Lyalya Aslanyan, Deputy Head of the Migration Agency of the Ministry of Territorial Administration (infoprogram@dolphin.am), e-mail interview made on July 11, 2006.

¹⁰ Interview with Valeri Mkrtyoumian, Head of the Department of International Organizations of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Chairman of the Interagency Commission against Trafficking in Armenia (v.mkrtyoumian@mfa.am), e-mail interview made on June 26, 2006.

The responsible actors for various aspects of violence against women are: the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Culture and Youth Affairs, and the Ministry of Health.

The NAP contains eight sections, two of which deal with violence against women. Extracts from Sections 5 and 6 are presented below. The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (the coordinator of the NAP), said that, in the beginning, they were told the government would provide them with \$10,000 (appr. 7,700 euros), but they did not receive the sum. The remainder of the funding for the NAP is provided by other parties involved (ministries, state structures, bodies of local government, international organizations), so it is difficult to say what comprises the total budget of the NAP.

Section 5 of the NAP on “Eliminating violence against women” lists among the challenges “lack of statistics and social and scientific research; inadequacy of the legislative framework; and lack of an efficient system of moral and sexual education for adolescents and youth.” As a response, the same section recommends the following strategies and measures:

- 5.1 Ensuring research into the phenomenon of violence, and generating concise information;
- 5.2 Developing effective arrangements to protect the rights and lawful interests of women and girls;
- 5.3 Facilitating the prevention of prostitution and sexual exploitation; and
- 5.4 Developing arrangements and methods to address the consequences of violence in the families of victims of violence.

Measures

- 5.1.1 Carrying out research aimed at detecting cases of violence in various areas of social life and analyzing the causes;
- 5.2.1 Developing a set of indicators defining violence which should be incorporated into statistical reports;
- 5.2.2 Harmonizing the provisions of the national legislation with the requirements of the international treaties of the Republic of Armenia;
- 5.2.3 Studying successful experiences of other countries in addressing this issue;
- 5.3.1 Organizing comprehensive educational and training courses for social workers, health and education experts, and law enforcement personnel, in dealing with women who are victims of violence;

5.3.2 Institutionalizing professional services (hotlines) for reporting and preventing violence in appropriate urban and rural institutions of the country (hospitals, police units, and social service centers); and

5.4.1 Creating professional facilities to address the consequences of violence in relevant urban and rural institutions of the country with the aim of providing medical services, legal assistance and social-psychological rehabilitation assistance to the victims of violence.

Section 6 of the NAP on “Elimination of trafficking in women and girls” discusses the extent of trafficking in Armenia and states that the actions for eliminating trafficking will be planned in a separate *National Action Plan for Prevention of Trafficking in Persons for 2004–2006*.¹¹

Below are extracts from the report on the results of realization of the *National Action Plan of the Republic of Armenia on Improving the Status of Women and Enhancing Their Role in Society, 2004–2010*.

According to point 4.3 (“Increasing access to health care by means of broadening the scope of government subsidized services”) of the NAP, it will be free of charge for women victims of trafficking and women subjected to violence to be examined and treated by medical professionals. The institution responsible to implement this point is the Ministry of Health.

According to points 5.1.1 and 5.1.2 (“To carry out research aimed at detecting cases of violence in various areas of social life and analyzing their reasons and to develop a set of indicators defining violence, which should be incorporated in statistical reports”) a working group has been created, which is currently collecting and analyzing data. The responsible institution is the police of the Republic of Armenia.

Successful experiences of other countries were examined in order to develop a set of indicators for violence, which should be incorporated into statistical reports, and into

¹¹ On June 5, 2002 the US Secretary of State published the *2001 Annual World Report on Human Trafficking*. In the report, Armenia was placed within Tier 3, which is the most unfavorable one. According to the report, Armenia is considered to be a country of origin of girls and women.

The Republic of Armenia has already undertaken steps for rectifying this situation. On January 15, 2004 the government adopted Decision No. 58-N on the *National Action Plan for Prevention of Trafficking in Persons from the Republic of Armenia for 2004–2006*. The main activities of the plan are directed towards the elimination of trafficking of girls and women. The main direction of the program is legislation and implementation of the laws, research, prevention, protection, and support.

National Action Plan of the Republic of Armenia on Improving the Status of Women and Enhancing Their Role in Society, 2004–2010. Extracts (in Armenian and English).

the institutionalization of professional services (hotlines) for reporting and preventing violence in appropriate urban and rural institutions of the country (hospitals, police units, and social service centers). Relevant suggestions were made which were reflected in the Law on Social Assistance. The responsible institution is the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs. The experience of other countries in eliminating the consequences of violence in families has been studied and recommendations have been developed which are partially reflected in the Law on Social Assistance. The responsible institution is the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs.¹²

The main conclusions of the activity of the Interagency Commission against Trafficking in Armenia in the framework of the *National Action Plan for Prevention of Trafficking in Persons for 2004–2006* are as follows (the full report on the fulfillment of the action plan and the activity of the commission will be available by the end of the year):

- The government continued taking steps in three main directions regarding the struggle against trafficking by prevention, protection of victims and prosecution of criminals.
- In the past year the number of criminal cases, according to the corresponding article of the Criminal Code, has grown more than ten times compared to the previous year.
- The new, modified version of Article 132 of the Criminal Code, the aim of which is to define the crime of trafficking more distinctly and exhaustively, has already become effective.
- A draft law on trafficking is being discussed at the suggestion of international organizations and several NGOs.
- In the reporting year, an exchange of information and the organization of regional cooperation have been considered priorities in the policy on combating trafficking.
- Effective cooperation with NGOs has been established, which was particularly aimed at organizing surveys and studies on the volume and other dimensions of trafficking.
- Among the steps aimed at prevention of trafficking has been the dissemination of booklets, leaflets and other informative materials on measures taken by the international community in the field of combating trafficking.
- Special issues of television and radio programs have been broadcast.

¹² Protocol of Government Session. Extracts (in Armenian), March 9, 2006.

- Special attention has been paid to the establishment of partnerships in the field of combating trafficking, particularly with Georgian colleagues.
- The problem of trafficking continues to be the priority of cooperation among the government and UNDP, OSCE, IOM and other international organizations and local NGOs.
- The perspective of the organization of legal labor migration and the development of a corresponding legal field with the EU countries is being discussed with IOM.
- The www.antitrafficking.am website has been updated.
- The joint project of the Government of Armenia and UNDP's Anti-Trafficking Program "Capacity Building Support and Victims Assistance" has been launched.
- Special attention has been paid to the activities of the diplomatic and consular institutions of the Republic of Armenia aimed at the identification of victims of trafficking and returning them home.
- The legislative, socio-economic and health fields are a top priority of the government's agenda on combating trafficking.¹³

As a part of its ongoing efforts to assist Armenia in addressing the problem of trafficking in human beings, in June 2006 the OSCE Yerevan office organized a roundtable on the implementation of the current *National Action Plan for Prevention of Trafficking in Persons from the Republic of Armenia for 2004–2006* and the development of a new national action plan, and invited international experts to participate in it. At present, the Interagency Commission, in cooperation with international organizations and local NGOs, is elaborating a new *National Action Plan for Prevention of Trafficking in Persons* (the previous one ends on December 31, 2006), based on international experience and action plans of other countries. The current action plan provides concrete actions with responsible actors and deadlines. The new plan will be ready by the end of the year.¹⁴

1.3 State monitoring of existing legislation and policies

There is no systematic review mechanism by the State of the existing legislation and policies concerning violence against women, except for trafficking. Legislation and

¹³ Information from the Interagency Commission against Trafficking in Armenia (in Armenian), June 26, 2006.

¹⁴ Interview with Valeri Mkrtoumian, Head of the Department of International Organizations of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Chairman of the Interagency Commission against Trafficking in Armenia (v.mkrtoumian@mfa.am), e-mail interview made on June 26, 2006.

policies concerning trafficking in human beings are reviewed by the Interagency Commission against Trafficking in Armenia (See Section 1.2).

1.4 State budget earmarked for combating violence against women

There is no budget line item in the state and municipality budget for combating violence against women or its different forms. Similarly, there is no budget line for combating violence against women or its different forms in the central budget of Family and Child Protection Services, the health care system, the court system, or the Prosecutor's Office. The police has no such budget line either, but there are financial contributions of international organizations for the realization of measures in the NAP (See Section 1.2).

There is support for NGOs (no matter what field they work in) from the state distributed in the form of grants through the NGO Center for Public Dialogue and Development (CPDD).¹⁵ However, CPDD has not yet given a grant to any NGO working in the field of violence against women.

1.5 State financing system to compensate victims

There is a financing system to compensate victims, which applies to all citizens in general, regardless of whether they are victims of violence against women or not. If a person causes someone damage and the victim has a ward someone under her guardianship, the perpetrator is obliged to compensate them financially.

1.6 Recommendations of the UN CEDAW Committee to the state and their implementation

The main concerns in connection with violence against women in the last Concluding Comments of CEDAW Committee are as follows:

“46. The Committee expresses concern at the prevalence of violence against women and that the current legislation on violence does not include any specific provisions on domestic violence. It is concerned that the current penalties for rape are very light and can suggest to the community that this infringement of human rights is not a serious crime. [...]

48. While noting the establishment of the Migrants Service Point as part of an anti-trafficking strategy, the Committee is concerned at the absence of a comprehensive policy, including legislation, to combat trafficking in women

¹⁵ See: www.cpdd.am.

and girls. The Committee is also concerned that current legislative provisions to address components of trafficking may exacerbate the situation of victims, rather than discourage perpetrators. [...]

50. The Committee expresses concern at the lack of information in the report and in the responses on prostitution and that the State party has not made sufficient efforts to address the issue of exploitation of prostitutes.”¹⁶

The next periodic CEDAW report of Armenia will be submitted to the Committee by the end of 2006.

For a previous assessment of Armenia’s compliance with its obligations under CEDAW, see the research of the American Bar Association’s Central European and Eurasian Law Initiative’s (ABA/CEELI) CEDAW Assessment Tool Report for Armenia cited in Section 9.1 on Research.

2. LAWS FOR THE PROTECTION OF WOMEN FROM ALL FORMS OF VIOLENCE

2.1 Laws addressing violence against women or its different forms. Restraining or protection orders

Armenia has ratified/joined the following international documents regarding gender equality and violence against women:

- June 9, 1993: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, adopted by the UN General Assembly on 18 December 1979.
- December 21, 1993: Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, adopted by the International Organization for Migration on June 25, 1958.
- December 21, 1993: Remuneration Convention, adopted by the International Organization for Migration on June 29, 1951.
- March 16, 1994: Convention on the Nationality of Married Women, adopted by the UN General Assembly on January 29, 1957.
- March 16, 1994: Convention against Discrimination in Education, adopted on December 14, 1960.

¹⁶ Concluding Comments of the CEDAW Committee to the second periodic report of Armenia. www.bayefsky.com/html/armenia_t4_cedaw.php (in English).

- March 25, 2003: UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, as well as the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, and the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Air and Sea, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.
- December 25, 2003: Revised European Social Charter of May 3, 1996.
- May 23, 2006: Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.¹⁷
- May 16, 2005: Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, which is to be ratified by the end of 2006.¹⁸

There is no special law on violence against women or on different forms of violence against women. A draft Law on Trafficking is being developed by an expert group composed of representatives of the National Assembly, the Prosecutor General's Office and NGOs. This initiative is being supported by UNDP Armenia.

There are no restraining, protective or barring orders in the legal system of Armenia. However, in some light cases, the police may require the offender to sign a statement that he will not repeat his actions, and if he does, he will be subjected to a corresponding responsibility according to his deeds.

2.2 Applicable provisions in criminal law

2.2.1 Criminal offences

Trafficking in women, domestic violence, sexual harassment and sexual assault are regulated by the Criminal Code, and therefore are viewed in the context of general crimes against life and health, crimes against human freedom, honor and dignity and crimes against sexual immunity and sexual freedom, respectively. There is no distinction in the Criminal Code between the commission of the above-mentioned crimes against men and women, or in the family or outside the family. Cases of violence are measured by the degree of damage to health.

The Criminal Code contains the following article on trafficking:

Article 132. Recruitment, transportation, transfer, concealment or receipt of persons for the purpose of exploitation

¹⁷ National Report of the Republic of Armenia to the 49th Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, New York, February 28–March 11, 2005 (in Armenian and English).

¹⁸ Legal Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

(1) Recruitment, transportation, transfer, concealment or receipt of persons for the purpose of exploitation, by means of the threat or use of violence not dangerous for health or life or by other means of compulsion, of kidnapping, of fraud, of using vulnerable state, or by giving or receiving money or goods in order to receive consent of the supervising person, is punishable by imprisonment of three to six years.

(2) The same act committed: 1) against persons under 18; or 2) against persons who cannot fully or partially understand the nature and significance of their actions or control the actions as a result of mental illness is punishable by imprisonment of seven to ten years.

(3) The act envisaged by part 1 or part 2 of this article that was committed: 1) against two or more people; 2) by a group of persons, by an organized group; 3) by using official position; or 4) by using violence dangerous for life or health or threat of using violence is punishable by imprisonment of seven to ten years.

(4) The act envisaged by part 1 or part 2 of this article that was committed 1) by an organized group or 2) caused the death of the aggrieved by negligence or other grave consequences is punishable by imprisonment of seven to 15 years.

(5) In this Article exploitation of persons shall mean involvement of another person into prostitution or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or state similar to it, harvesting parts of the body or tissues of persons.¹⁹

Article 168 of the Criminal Code contains further provisions on child trafficking. It is punishable by imprisonment of three to seven years.²⁰

In 2006, the OSCE Yerevan office conducted a legislation gap analysis on Armenian anti-trafficking legislation. The analysis was aimed at outlining the main recommendations for further legislative reform efforts. The OSCE Yerevan office regularly cooperates with the OSCE Office ODIHR in the field of anti-trafficking. One of the efforts in this direction was the facilitation of an expert review made by ODIHR on the amendments to relevant articles of the Armenian Criminal Code concerning trafficking in human beings.²¹

The Criminal Code also contains provisions on rape, violent sexual actions, and forced violent sexual acts:

¹⁹ Criminal Code (effective as of August 1, 2003), unofficial translation.

²⁰ Criminal Code, unofficial translation.

²¹ OSCE Yerevan Office, correspondence on July 24, 2006 (in English).

Article 138. Rape

Rape, sexual intercourse of a man with a woman against her will, using violence against the latter or some other person, with threat thereof, or taking advantage of the woman's helpless situation, is punishable by imprisonment for the term of three to six years. Rape committed by a group of persons; against the aggrieved or other person with particular cruelty; against a minor; causing the death of the aggrieved or bringing about heavy consequences by negligence; or committed by a person previously convicted under Articles 138 and 139 of this Code is punishable by imprisonment of four to ten years. The actions mentioned in part 1 or 2 of this Article, against an aggrieved person under 14 years of age, is punishable by imprisonment of eight to 15 years.

Article 139. Violent sexual acts

Homosexual, lesbian or other sexual actions against the aggrieved by using force against the latter or other persons, or threat of using force, or by taking advantage of the aggrieved person's helplessness, are punishable by imprisonment of three to six years.

The same actions committed by a group of persons; against the aggrieved or other person with particular cruelty; against a minor; causing the death of the aggrieved or bringing about heavy consequences by negligence; or committed by a person previously convicted under Articles 138 and 139 of this Code is punishable by imprisonment four to ten years. The actions mentioned in part 1 or 2 of this Article, committed against an aggrieved person under 14 years of age, is punishable by imprisonment of eight to 15 years.

Article 140. Forced violent sexual acts

Forcing a person to sexual intercourse, homosexuality, lesbianism or other sexual actions, by means of blackmail, threats to destroy, damage or seizure of property, or using the financial or other dependence of the aggrieved, is punishable by a fine in the amount of 200 to 300 times the minimal salary or correctional labor for up to two years, or with imprisonment of up to one year.

The Criminal Code does not specifically prohibit sexual harassment, although it addresses lewd acts and indecent behavior. According to societal norms cases of sexual harassment are not worthy of legal action. Although there were no official statistics, sexual harassment appears to be widespread.²² The Labor Code contains provisions on equality between men and women, as well as sexual harassment. Namely, Article 221(4)(2) on Gross violation of labor discipline states that violating the equal rights of women and men, or sexually harassing co-workers, subordinates or beneficiaries, is considered a gross violation of labor discipline. There is no sanction prescribed for this

²² US Department of the State Country Reports on Human Rights Practices (2005) www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2005/index.htm (in English).

behavior, because the Criminal Code contains no provisions that would prohibit sexual harassment.

Violence is penalized if perpetrated or condoned by the state or its officials is regulated by the relevant article of the Criminal Code, which, however, does not specify the place of the crime (prisons, detention centers, psychiatric institutions, etc.).

Article 309. Exceeding official authority

(1) Actions willfully committed by an official which obviously exceed his authority and cause essential damage to the rights of citizens, organizations, state or legal interests (in case of property loss, the amount (value) exceeding 500 minimal salaries), are punished with a fine in the amount of 300 to 500 times minimal salaries, or with deprivation of the right to hold certain posts or practice certain activities for up to five years, or with arrest for the term of two to three months, or with imprisonment for the term of up to four years.

(2) Same actions committed with violence, weapons, or special measures, are punished with imprisonment for the term of two to six years, with deprivation of the right to hold certain posts or practice certain activities for up to three years.

(3) The same act, if negligently causing grave consequence, is punished with imprisonment for the term of six to 10 years, with deprivation of the right to hold certain posts or practice certain activities for up to three years.

2.2.2 Criminal procedures and prosecution

There are no special procedures, or procedural provisions (possibility of quick, out-of-turn procedures etc.) for cases of violence against women.

The main impetus for starting a criminal proceeding with the police is the application of the victim, but in the framework of the current laws, measures are also being taken to investigate the crime. All of the applications received by the police are registered and appropriate actions are taken according to the order of the Head of the Police of December 24, 1999 on the Order of discussing suggestions, applications and complaints of citizens. Cases of violence against women are registered and investigated together with all other cases.²³

The Criminal Code generally presents a gender-neutral approach toward the different crimes. There are no aggravating circumstances with regard to violence against women concerning punishment. However, crimes committed against an obviously pregnant woman and crimes committed against children are considered aggravating

²³ Republic of Armenia Police, official letter dated September 7, 2006 (in Armenian).

circumstances as well, based on Article 63 on “Circumstances aggravating the liability and punishment” of the Criminal Code.²⁴

2.3 Applicable provisions in civil and family law for cases of violence against women

There are no special provisions in the Family and Civil Codes for cases of violence against women. The Family Code contains provisions on children’s rights: namely support paid to children when they are taken care of by a parent, rights of children without parental custody, etc.

2.4 Victim protection and protection of witnesses

There is no special law in Armenia on victim protection and protection of witnesses. The issue is regulated by Articles 86–87 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

Currently, a Draft Law on State Protection of Persons Participating in Criminal Proceedings is being elaborated by an expert group composed of representatives of the National Assembly, the Prosecutor General’s Office and NGOs. This initiative is supported by UNDP Armenia.

There are limited procedural protection measures in the Armenian Code of Criminal Procedure. Article 99 of the Code of Criminal Procedure provides for two measures which can be categorized as procedural, i.e. (a) official admonition by the court or prosecutor on criminal liability for threatening a protected person, and (b) restricted access to the information on the protected person. The usefulness of this admonition as a safeguard against witness intimidation in general, and in the context of trafficking and organized crime is particular, is highly debatable. Also, the law provides for the possibility of an *in camera* trial when the protection of public morals, public order or state interests so require. Article 99 of the Code of Criminal Procedure provides for non-procedural protection measures such as the physical protection of a person and/or

²⁴ Circumstances aggravating the liability and punishment are as follows: [...] committal of crime against an obviously pregnant woman, against children, other insecure and helpless persons, or against persons dependent on the perpetrator. [...] Based on the nature of the crime, the court may consider the circumstances mentioned in points 10 and 14 of part 1 of this Article as not aggravating. When assigning punishment the court cannot take into account circumstances not mentioned in part 1 of this Article. If the circumstance mentioned in part 1 of this Article is envisaged in the appropriate article of the Special Part of this Code as an element of a crime, then it cannot be repeatedly taken into account as a circumstance aggravating the liability and the punishment. Criminal Code, unofficial translation.

his or her family members and temporary relocation of protected persons and/or their family members. In addition, hindering someone from giving testimony and acts of witness intimidation are established as criminal offenses, which can be regarded as a non-procedural measure of witness protection. Armenian law does not set forth a definition of a ‘vulnerable witness’, nor does it provide for any specific criteria of admission to what may be called a “witness protection program.”

Under the law, witnesses aged sixteen or older, if they are Armenian nationals, can be compelled to testify, and refusal to testify or perjury entails criminal liability. Armenia’s law grants a privilege against self-incrimination and incrimination of immediate family members. A child under the age of sixteen (the age of criminal responsibility in Armenia) cannot be brought to court for his or her refusal to testify. Armenia’s criminal procedural legislation attaches great value to the personal confrontation between defendant and witness and does not allow testimony by an anonymous witness nor testimony given in the absence of the defendant. The only exception is made for witnesses under the age of 16, who can testify in the defendant’s absence “if necessary for a complete, comprehensive and objective examination of the circumstances of the case.”

Except for the provision in the Code of Criminal Procedure that it is the Prosecutor’s Office which decides on whether or not protection measures should be applied, there is no further reference in the law on who should take the responsibility for the implementation of non-procedural measures. Armenia has no law on witness protection, which would be the appropriate framework for the implementation of non-procedural measures such as a witness protection program. The effective application on non-procedural measures of witness protection is further undermined by the high potential costs of implementation and the lack of relevant budgetary allocations. As far as the access of trafficking victim/witnesses to assistance is concerned, Armenia does not have a scheme tailored to the needs of trafficking victims (similar to Germany’s “cooperation concept”) that would link witness protection and victim support. Armenia’s legislation inadequately addresses witness protection and needs to be reviewed to guarantee proper safeguards against intimidation, retaliation or secondary victimization.²⁵

There are no special conditions prescribed for the hearing to avoid secondary victimization, repetition of testimony, etc. However, for the request of the child’s representative, the court hearing can be closed and the representative can present the list of people (to be approved by the judge) who she/he thinks can be present at the hearing. Article 87 of the Code of Criminal Procedure states that the legal

²⁵ Armenian Relief Society (2005) *Children in Orphanages and Special Schools in Armenia; Potential Victims of Trafficking and Exploitation? A Sociological Research* (Yerevan: ARS) (in Armenian and English).

representative of an underage person has the right to be informed regarding the time and location of court procedures, and has the right to participate in the investigative or other court procedures by accompanying the underage person. The Article also contains other provisions on the rights of the legal representative.

All cases, whether or not they concern violence against women, are protected, and are strictly confidential until the verdict is announced. There are no special (or applicable general) provisions for protecting or transferring data in victims of violence against women (especially victims of domestic violence.)

There are no special provisions in the law regarding the defense of the professionals or service providers dealing with cases of violence against women.

2.5 Legal assistance and representation for the victims of violence against women

All criminal cases can be provided with a free-of-charge lawyer if the defendant cannot afford the costs of legal representation. As for civil cases (support, reimbursement of damages, deterioration of health,) if the state requests, a lawyer is provided free of charge.

2.6 Providing information for victims about their rights, obligations, and the services available

N/A

2.7 Mainstreaming women's safety in laws and regulations of the national, regional, and urban planning

The issue of violence against women and women's safety is not present in the laws, regulations and guidelines of national, regional and urban planning, as the definition of violence against women does not exist on the state level in Armenia.

3. PROFESSIONAL GUIDELINES, PROTOCOLS, AND INTER-AGENCY COOPERATION

3.1 Professional guidelines and operational protocols for dealing with cases of violence against women

The Division on Anti-Trafficking and Illegal Migration in Human Beings of the Investigative Department of the General Prosecutor's Office has advisory guidelines which are used when investigating the cases of trafficking in human beings. There are no such guidelines for the police or health care professionals.

There is a manual for consuls entitled *Trafficking: Urgent Problems*, which was prepared by the Migration Division of the Consular Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in cooperation with the Armenian Mission of the International Organization for Migration and with the financial support of the US Embassy to Armenia. The manual was prepared for the staff of Armenian diplomatic representations, and its aim is to raise awareness on the issues connected with trafficking. The manual contains general points on trafficking in the world, on the situation with the problem in Armenia, instructions on how to help victims of trafficking, and contacts of IOM missions and Armenian Embassies all over the world.

There are no guidelines for domestic violence cases due to the fact that the term does not officially exist.

NGOs working in the field of violence against women also have special guidelines.

3.2 Legal regulations of inter-agency cooperation

There is a requirement for coordinated, multi-agency work and the cooperation of the different authorities. The issue is regulated by the Law on the Police, the Law on the Prosecutor's Office, and the Code of Criminal Procedure.

3.3 Medium- and long-term coordinated action plans for the different professions

N/A

3.4 Involvement of NGOs and other agencies in drafting laws and shaping policies

On August 21, 2006, the General Prosecutor's Office called for cooperation with NGOs to unite efforts to combat the illegal exploitation of people.

The Prosecutor's Office has announced its intention to form an NGO support group that would support the Division on Anti-Trafficking and Illegal Migration of Human Beings of the General Prosecutor's Office, assist victims of the above-mentioned crime, and provide them with public protection.

The main goal of the group is to provide public control over protection of victims' rights, to implement measures taken in the investigation of cases of illegal exploitation of people, and to serve as a link between society and the investigative group.

The NGO support group will be informed about the cases investigated by the corresponding division, it will have, with the consent of the victims, information about them, and, if victims wish, be present at the interrogation, with the consent of the investigative body.

NGOs that are registered in the Republic of Armenia and have at least three years of experience in protecting victims of illegal exploitation of people or raising society's awareness on the issue can be included in the group.²⁶ The NGO support group has not been established yet.

Several NGOs working in the sphere of trafficking in human beings are observer members of the Interagency Commission against Trafficking in Armenia (see Section 1.2).

The NGO Women's Rights Center has also applied for participation as an observer in the work of the Interagency Commission on Gender Issues (see Section 1.1).

When a new law, draft law or any other legal document is prepared by a person or institution, the initiators may organize public hearings to discuss the initiative with society. Representatives of NGOs, including those working in the sphere of violence against women, may also participate in them. These public hearings are unregulated, however.

²⁶ Republic of Armenia General Prosecutor's Office. Official website. www.genproc.am/main/am/46/1145/ (in Armenian).

3.5 Leading NGOs working in the field of violence against women in the country

There are five main NGOs dealing with violence against women issues in Armenia (See also Section 5 on Available Services):

- The *Women's Rights Center* (WRC) deals with domestic violence, trafficking in women, reproductive and sexual health and rights. The main activities of the organization are:
 - operation of a hotline for victims of domestic violence;
 - operation of the Women's Support and Drop-in Center for the victims of domestic violence;
 - operation of a domestic violence shelter for women and their children;
 - provision of legal services in the court for women victims of domestic violence;
 - organization of women's support groups for women subjected to violence;
 - social surveys, research studies on violence against women, reproductive and sexual rights and health;
 - advocacy on violence against women and reproductive and sexual rights and health;
 - organization of training programs for trainers of the WRC, its branches and representatives of other NGOs on women's rights, domestic violence, trafficking in women, reproductive and sexual rights and health;
 - organization of multidisciplinary training programs, round-tables, workshops and seminars on DV, trafficking in women and reproductive and sexual rights and health in Yerevan and in the regions of Armenia;
 - participation in the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence campaign since 2001;
 - organization of public hearings on the problem of violence against women;
 - publication of books, booklets, manuals, textbooks, newsletters on violence against women and reproductive and sexual rights and health;
 - participation in television and radio programs, shooting video films; and
 - networking on violence against women and reproductive and sexual rights and health, public relations.

Source of funding: grants from international donors.

- The *Antenna* is specialized in issues of domestic violence. The main activities of the organization are: assisting electronic mass media; preparing radio programs, radio talk-shows, and a series of programs the main goal of which is to raise awareness on human rights.
Source of funding: grants from international, foreign donors.
- *Hope and Help* is specialized in issues of trafficking. The main activities of the organization are identification of victims of trafficking; provision of medical, psychological, legal counseling, social assistance and re-integration; decreasing the harm caused by sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS in high risk groups.
Source of funding: US Government, World Vision, Open Society Institute.
- The *Audio-Visual Reporters Association* also focuses on trafficking. The main activities of the organization are: the maintenance of a web site on trafficking (www.antitrafficking.am and www.antitrafficking.info); shooting and broadcast of television trailers on trafficking; and publishing booklets, posters and guidebooks on trafficking.
Source of funding: grants from international donors.
- *Ajakits* is specialized in issues of domestic violence. The main activities of the organization are: combating domestic violence against women and children; protecting the population's health; protecting children's rights.
Source of funding: grants and private donations.

4. SPECIAL UNITS IN THE LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICES

Due to structural changes in the police in 2005, the Department of the Fight against Illegal Drug Circulation and Trafficking at the Main Department of the Fight against Organized Crime of the police has been established. The functions of the Department are:

- coordination of police work on fighting against drug addiction, illegal drug circulation, trafficking in persons, and pimping;
- analysis of the results of the work;
- providing policemen working in the sphere with methodical and practical assistance;
- organization of training programs; and
- organization and realization of preventive measures with participation of representatives of involved institutions and structures.

The department has a female officer. Once in three months the department prepares statistical data on crimes committed in Armenia, including trafficking. The activity of the department is supervised by the Head of the police and the Head of the Main Department of the Fight against Organized Crime of the police.

In the framework of the *National Action Plan for Prevention of Trafficking in Persons from the Republic of Armenia for 2004–2006* the department takes all possible measures to prevent and disclose crimes connected with trafficking in persons.

There are no special guidelines or codes of conduct in the Department. Governmental bodies dealing with counter-trafficking have a gender-neutral approach.

The Division on Anti-trafficking and Illegal Migration in Human Beings of the Investigative Department of the General Prosecutor's Office was created by the decision of the Collegium of the General Prosecutor's Office on March 16, 2005, by the order of the General Prosecutor's Office on June 8, 2005. The division consists of three staff members: the Head of the Division (Deputy Head of the Investigative Department), the Senior Prosecutor and the Investigator on Especially Important Cases. All of them have university degrees in law. There are no women working in the division.

In 2005–2006, the staff of the division participated in training programs, seminars, roundtables and other discussions on preventing trafficking, victim identification, referral mechanisms and other themes. The events were organized by the Scientific-Educational Center of the General Prosecutor's Office, the Armenian Mission of IOM, UNDP, OSCE's Yerevan office and the US Embassy.

The Division's activity is transparent to the extent possible and NGOs, international organizations and the media can cooperate with, and receive information from, the Division.

The Division participates in the working group on the elaboration of a draft law on trafficking.²⁷

²⁷ Information from the Investigative Department of the General Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Armenia, Division on Anti-Trafficking and Illegal Migration of Human Beings, letter dated July 10, 2006 (in Armenian).

5. AVAILABLE SERVICES

5.1 Shelters

Currently, the state does not run or fund shelters in the Republic of Armenia for victims of violence against women. However, there are services operated by local NGOs and international organizations financed by various international donors. There are two shelters for victims of domestic violence (for seven women and 12 children in total) and two shelters for victims of trafficking in Armenia (for seven women).

The Women's Rights Center's (WRC) Shelter is intended for victims of domestic violence from both Yerevan and the regions of Armenia. The shelter provides its beneficiaries – women subjected to violence and their children – with a free dwelling-place, food, psychological and legal counseling, and medical and social assistance. This shelter provides immediate help and has special conditions for working with children. The services are intended for immigrant women as well. The total number of the staff is 11 (five psychologists, a child psychologist, two lawyers, a social worker, a coordinator and a house manager). The whole staff has attended special training programs. The shelter can host five families at a time (four women with eight children altogether). There is a code of conduct and operation in the shelter which defines the order of work, responsibility and obligations of the staff and rights and obligations of the beneficiaries. The regulations are specific for this shelter and are based on international standards and norms. The staff of the shelter participates in special training programs. Currently there are two families on the waiting list. The project is funded by SIDA.

In the period of between May 1 and August 31, 2006, 22 people stayed in the shelter (11 women and 11 children). Ten women's support group meetings, two family days, and nine parenting days took place in the shelter during the abovementioned period. The social worker found jobs for two women. The child psychologist had nine meetings (face-to-face and group counseling) with five children of the shelter's beneficiaries.

During the abovementioned period, 21 psychological counseling sessions took place with the shelter's beneficiaries.²⁸

The Ajakits shelter for victims of domestic violence may host six to eight beneficiaries at a time. The shelter is mainly intended for immediate help, so there is no waiting list, although the number of women wishing to be placed in it is almost always greater than the shelter can host. The placement is free of charge. Victims can receive psychological

²⁸ Information from the NGO Women's Rights Center (wrcarm@arminco.com), e-mail dated September 4, 2006.

and legal counseling, and medical and social assistance in the shelter. The staff of the shelter is composed of three people – a psychologist, a part-time lawyer, and a full-time social worker. In case the beneficiaries need medical help either they take them to the specialist or the doctor visits them herself/himself. This service is intended for immigrant women. There is a code of conduct for the shelter, which includes the working order, obligations of the staff, and rights and obligations of the victims. The service has some special conditions for working with children. The shelter is funded by foreign private donations and international grants.

In the past year 23 women and 41 children have stayed in the shelter and have received counseling. Two of those have families who, with the help of the shelter, have been transported to a village on the border of the country for permanent residence (the house was provided by the community). Two women have left for Turkey. One woman left for Turkey with her husband to find a job there. Another woman returned to her parents' with her children.²⁹

The shelter for victims of trafficking of the NGO Hope and Help can host five persons at a time. They do not have a waiting list; each victim can be hosted immediately. The placement in this shelter is free of charge. Victims of trafficking can receive medical, psychological, social and legal assistance; in case of necessity they can also receive immediate help. This service is not intended for immigrant women and they do not have special conditions for working with children. The staff of the shelter consists of six people: social workers, a psychologist, a lawyer, and a house manager.

There is a code of conduct for the shelter, according to which the staff must be polite to the beneficiaries, must maintain confidentiality, must not violate victims' rights, etc. The project is funded by the US Government for the duration of three years; it was started on October 1, 2003 and ended on August 31, 2006. The organization has already applied for funds to prolong the project.³⁰

One of the shelters for victims of trafficking, operated by the Armenian Mission of the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), did not provide any information due to the fact that it is strictly confidential.

5.2 Hotlines

The Women's Rights Center's National Hotline for women-victims of domestic violence provides its beneficiaries with free psychological and legal assistance. It is

²⁹ Information from the NGO Ajakits (ajakits@shirak.am), e-mail dated August 16, 2006 (in Armenian).

³⁰ Information from the NGO Hope and Help (hopehelp@web.am), e-mail dated August 1, 2006 (in Armenian).

accessible all over Armenia and is toll-free. The hotline is operated seven days a week, 24 hours a day. The staff consists of 4 people: two lawyers and two psychologists, all of whom have completed special training programs on working with victims over a hotline.

There is a code of conduct regarding the operation of the hotline, which defines the order of work, responsibility and obligations of the staff, and rights and obligations of the beneficiaries. The regulations are specific for this hotline and are based on international standards and norms.

Currently the project is funded by SIDA. The Center's hotline has operated without interruption since 1997.

The National Hotline and the Women's Support and Drop-in Center cover the whole territory of Armenia, and during the reporting period 156 women have applied from the regions. This means that the hotline registered applicants not only from Yerevan, but from the regions as well.

In the period between December 1, 2004 and December 31, 2005 the hotline registered 2,054 calls; 1,035 of the applicants were provided with psychological counseling and 1,019 with legal consultations. 766 of the total number of calls were regarding domestic violence (388 primary and 378 repeated); 282 cases out of this number were about psychological, 468 about physical, and 16 cases about sexual domestic violence. The rest of the calls did not regard domestic violence, but were of an informative character or were about psychological violence in the workplace or in the street. At the same time, the callers also became aware of the services rendered by the WRC for victims of domestic violence.

In the period between January 1 and August 31, 2006, the National Hotline registered 698 calls: 282 calls out of the total number were regarding domestic violence (142 psychological, 138 physical, two sexual, 132 primary, 150 repeated violence). 35 calls out of 368 were regarding violence by neighbors, friends, or other non-family members. Seven cases of violence in the workplace were registered in the above-mentioned time period. 47 calls from the regions were registered as well.³¹

The hotline of Ajakits for victims of domestic violence provides its beneficiaries with psychological and legal counseling, and attorney's, medical and social assistance. It is accessible in the *Shirak marz* (region) only, and is free of charge. The hotline is operated seven days a week, 24 hours a day; the staff is composed of five people – a psychologist, a lawyer, a doctor and two case managers (social workers). This hotline has operated without interruption since 1998; the source of funding is grants from international donors. There is a code of conduct for the hotline that contains

³¹ Information from Women's Rights Center, *ibid.*

provisions and guidelines for working with victims and includes the working order and obligations of the staff and rights and obligations of the victims. The staff prepares monthly and yearly reports/statistics on the number of victims, types of counseling provided, etc.³²

The hotline of Hope and Help for victims of trafficking provides its beneficiaries with legal, medical and psychological counseling. It is accessible all over Armenia and is toll-free. The hotline is operated from Monday to Friday, from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. The staff of the hotline consists of two people – an operator and a lawyer, who attended special training. There is a code of conduct for the Hotline, according to which the staff must be polite to the callers, must maintain confidentiality, must not violate victims' rights, etc.

The project was funded by the US Government for the duration of three years; it was started on October 1, 2003 and ended on August 31, 2006. The organization has applied for funds to prolong the project.³³

5.3 Crisis intervention centers

The Women's Rights Center's Women's Support and Drop-in Center for women victims of domestic violence provides its beneficiaries with free psychological, legal and social assistance. The center provides women's support group meetings, parenting pays, legal seminars, and other events for women who have been subjected to violence. It operates every weekday from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Between December 1, 2004 and December 31, 2005, 666 women visited the Women's Support and Drop-in Center. There were 383 domestic violence cases (141 psychological, 225 physical, 17 sexual). 167 of the domestic violence cases were first instance and 216 were repeated.

Between January 1, 2006 and August 31, 2006 the Women's Support and Drop-in Center registered 342 visits. There were 267 domestic violence cases (124 psychological, 126 physical, 17 sexual). Eleven cases involved violence by neighbors, friends, etc; eight cases involved violence in the workplace. In the above-mentioned period, 31 women from the regions have applied for assistance.³⁴

The Crisis Center of Ajakits for victims of domestic violence is operated mainly for the population of *Shirak marz* (region) only, but if there are applicants from other regions of Armenia, they are accepted as well. The beneficiaries are provided with medical,

³² Information from Ajakits, *ibid*.

³³ Information from Hope and Help, *ibid*.

³⁴ Information from Women's Rights Center, *ibid*.

psychological, social and legal assistance, and sometimes with the assistance of an attorney.

The staff of the crisis center is composed of four people – a psychologist, a lawyer, a social worker and a doctor who works part-time. There are special training programs for the staff. There are internal regulations in the crisis center. The service is free of charge and is intended for immigrant women as well. The source of funding of the crisis center is grants.³⁵ All of the cases and services provided are registered; these are mainly in the form of reports submitted to the donors.

5.4 Intervention programs for the perpetrators

During eight months of 2006, the psychologists and lawyers of the Women's Rights Center NGO worked with 18 offenders individually and in family groups. Participation is voluntary. The duration of the project is two years. The service is accessible from all over the country. This initiative is funded by SIDA. There is no separate report on the evaluation of the effectiveness of this program; it is considered a part of the whole project.

Ajakits works with offenders in the framework of the project "Family free from violence". The activity includes education and awareness-raising activities for offenders, victims, students, pupils, policemen and health-care workers. The project has existed for seven years in the *Shirak marz* (region), with the financial support of the US Embassy to the Republic of Armenia. Participation in this program is also voluntary. In 2005, 27 offenders have participated in the project. More people participated in the seminars, and roundtable discussions. The project is considered to be successful, as Ajakits has the image of an organization that deals effectively with the protection of women's and children's rights, and state structures and bodies of local self-government cooperate with it. Surveys show that the awareness of society on the issue has been raised, and the people's mentality and behavior seem to be changing gradually. The NGO World Learning evaluated the work of Ajakits as very effective.

5.5 Other victim support services

There are no other services for victims.

³⁵ Information from Ajakits, *ibid*.

6. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

6.1 The prevalence of violence against women, prejudices, and stereotyped sex roles in school curricula and the availability of sex education programs

The issue of gender discrimination is included in the school curricula in the Republic of Armenia. Chapter 6 of the *Human Rights* textbook for the 8th grade is entitled “Women’s Rights” and presents the issue of discrimination of women, the UN Conventions on the issue (including those ratified by the Republic of Armenia), equality between women and men, women’s rights for equal education, labor, involvement in cultural life and maternity rights. Paragraph 6 (Maternity Protection) of the chapter says: “Severe violation of women’s interests and rights (torture, battery, humiliation) is punished by the law.”³⁶ The number of hours for teaching each topic is decided by the individual schools.

Chapter 9 of the *State and Law* textbook for the 10th grade is entitled “Family Rights” and discusses the definition and basics of family law, rights of the spouses, divorce and alimony. As for the rights of children, the *State and Law* textbook briefly discusses the rights of children in the family. It defines the cases in which parents can be deprived of their rights if they do not fulfill their obligations of bringing up their children, or if they treat them cruelly. The textbook does not provide references to the institutions, services and people from which a child could seek help. It only says that the court can confiscate property of the parents for the support of their children if the parents do not take care of them.³⁷

Chapter 5 of the *Human Rights* textbook entitled “Family and Children’s Rights” discusses children’s rights, including the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Armenian Law on the Rights of the Child, children’s health, children’s rights to be free from economic and sexual exploitation and the use of drugs, the right to an education, and other rights.³⁸

There are sex education programs that are not part of the school curricula. These are organized by the NGO called People for Healthy Lifestyle in high schools. The sources of funding of these initiatives are international grants.

³⁶ H. Stepanyan and N. Haroutyunyan (2001) *Human Rights: Textbook for 8th grade* (in Armenian).

³⁷ G. Ghazinyan, A. Vagharshyan and others (2001) *State and Law: Textbook for 10th grade* (in Armenian).

³⁸ H. Stepanyan and N. Haroutyunyan (2001) *Human Rights: Textbook for 8th grade* (in Armenian).

6.2 Mandatory and other training programs for future professionals

The issue of violence against women and its different forms, and issues of prejudices and stereotyped roles for the sexes (as well as gender discrimination generally) are not included into the curricula of the educational institutions of the police. Nevertheless, the issues are discussed in different themes of specialized lessons.³⁹

The issue of violence against women and different aspects of it can be included in the educational program of vocational educational institutions by the initiative of the institutions, which are supervised by the Ministry of Education and Science.⁴⁰ Each educational institution can include topics in the curricula (as an addition to the general educational program), but information about additional topics that are included is not available.

6.3 Mandatory and other training programs for practicing professionals

Between 2000 and 2004 the Women's Rights Center organized multidisciplinary training programs and seminars for representatives of law enforcement agencies, the mass media, health care providers, psychologists, lawyers and NGO representatives on the theme of domestic violence and on trafficking in women both in Yerevan and the region. The project was funded by the US Department of State and the US Embassy to Armenia.

Between 1999 and 2005 the Women's Rights Center organized training programs for trainers (ToT) on the subject of women's human rights, domestic violence, trafficking in women, reproductive and sexual health and rights, and women's leadership. This project was supported by the USAID, the US Department of State and the US Embassy to Armenia.

In November 2005, the OSCE Yerevan office organized a training program on the investigation of domestic violence for about 40 personnel from Yerevan and the regions. The event was organized in cooperation with the General Prosecutor's Office and OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR). In May 2006, as a follow up, a two-day training on combating and prosecuting sex crimes was organized for prosecutors and investigators.

In June and October 2005, the OSCE Yerevan office, with the support of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the US State Department, held two roundtables on the establishment of a National Referral Mechanism, a cooperative framework through which state institutions, in partnership

³⁹ Republic of Armenia Police, official letter dated September 7, 2006 (in Armenian).

⁴⁰ Ministry of Education and Science.

with civil society, fulfill their obligations to protect the human rights of trafficked persons. These events were followed by discussions in thematic working groups with the goal of formalizing cooperation between the state and non-state actors, and to look for solutions to identify gaps and problems.⁴¹

6.4 Gender equality issues in higher education curricula and human rights programs

There are higher education programs dealing with gender equality issues that are organized by the Association of Women with University Education and financed by ODIHR.

With regard to the gender perspective (the issue of gender equality) built into the human rights education programs, see Section 6.1.

7. THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA

7.1 Media law provisions concerning violence against women and the portrayal of women

There are no media law provisions concerning violence against women and the portrayal of women. There are no applicable general provisions, either.

7.2 Guidelines and codes of conduct for media professionals

There is a code of conduct for media professionals developed by the Association of Investigative Journalists of Armenia which, however, does not contain provisions dealing with violence against women or non-stereotyped images of women and men.

A guidebook for journalists entitled *How to Highlight the Issue of Trafficking*, published by the NGO Association of Audio-Visual Reporters with the financial support of the Public Affairs Office of the US Department of State, contains information on how to collect information on trafficking, how to find information on victims of trafficking, and how to organize interviews with victims of trafficking, as well as stories and contact information of local NGOs and international organizations dealing with counter-trafficking.⁴²

⁴¹ OSCE Yerevan Office, correspondence on July 24, 2006 (in English).

⁴² Gegham Vardanyan (2006) *How to Highlight the Issue of Trafficking: Guidebook for Journalists* (in Armenian).

7.3 Media watch organizations monitoring violence against women, sexism, and stereotyped portrayal of women

The Television and Radio State Commission may be considered a media watch organization. However, it has no powers and activities concerning violence against women, sexism and stereotyped portrayals of women. There are no applicable general provisions.

7.4 Training programs for media professionals on violence against women

There are no topics on violence against women or on a non-stereotyped image of women and men in the media school curricula.

As part of the *National Action Plan of the Republic of Armenia on Improving the Status of Women and Enhancing Their Role in Society, 2004–2010* the following events were organized:

- (1) A training seminar for 35 journalists on gender equality in the workplace, and the role of the media was organized by the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, in cooperation with the Armenian Mission of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Yerevan, in February 2005.
- (2) A gender training session for 25 journalists was organized by the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs in cooperation with the Armenian Mission of the IOM in the city of Tsaghkadzor in May 2005.
- (3) Gender training programs for the staff of the regional mayor's offices, NGO and media representatives have been organized by the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs in cooperation with UNDP since April 2005.
- (4) A seminar for television cameramen entitled "Rules of ethics when communicating with disabled people," during which gender issues were also discussed, was organized by the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs in cooperation with Bridge of Hope NGO in June 2005.
- (5) A training seminar for 25 journalists on the theme of "Men against domestic violence" was organized by the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs in cooperation with the PR Association NGO in Tsaghkadzor in June 2005.

In 2005, the Ministry of Culture and Youth Affairs paid special attention to the issue of the negative and humiliating image of women in television and radio programs. The media was given recommendations on forming a positive (national) image of women.

In 2005, the Ministry of Culture and Youth Affairs, with the aim of controlling popularization and dissemination of a negative image of women through the media and the internet, organized plays, concerts and exhibitions, with the participation of women, which promoted a positive image of women.⁴³

7.5 Media activity in raising the awareness of the general public of violence against women

The media mainly participates by publishing information on the issue of violence against women. From time to time they provide free space. Electronic, print, media, television and radio participate.

7.6 Analyses on violence against women in the media

In the framework of the National Violence against Women Monitor project of the Stop Violence against Women website, the Women's Rights Center was elected as the National Monitor. The WRC monitors the newspapers of the Republic of Armenia, with the purpose of discovering articles containing issues on domestic violence, trafficking in women and girls, sexual harassment and sexual assault, and finding out to what extent the issues are highlighted by the print media. The monitoring project includes the following newspapers: *Oz* police weekly, *Hayots Ashkharh*, *Aravot*, *Hayastani Hanrapetoutyun*, *Haykakan Zhamanak*, *Novoye Vremya*, and *Golos Armenii*.

The initiative is funded by the Network Women's Program of the Open Society Institute. The results of the monitoring are posted monthly on the Armenian Country Page of the StopVAW website,⁴⁴ and on the Official website of the Women's Rights Center (www.wrcorg.am).

According to the *National Action Plan of the Republic of Armenia on Improving the Status of Women and Enhancing Their Role in Society, 2004–2010*, the participation of the mass media in raising awareness on women's issues is insufficient and ineffective, and the efforts of the mass media and cultural institutions towards showing dignified presentations, and providing non-stereotypical role models of women and men have been ineffective.⁴⁵

⁴³ Protocol of Government Session, No. 9, March 9, 2006 (extract in Armenian).

⁴⁴ See: www.stopvaw.org/Armenia.html.

⁴⁵ *National Action Plan of the Republic of Armenia on Improving the Status of Women and Enhancing Their Role in Society, 2004–2010* (in Armenian and English).

8. AWARENESS RAISING

8.1 Campaigns on violence against women

Information campaigns against violence against women mainly take place on a project basis (with some exceptions). They are organized by NGOs and therefore are financially supported by international donors. The campaigns are mainly dedicated to such issues of violence against women as trafficking in women and domestic violence.

The domestic violence prevention component of the UNDP project “Gender and Politics in Southern Caucasus Program: Georgia and Armenia” envisages conducting a public awareness raising campaign on the issue of domestic violence in Armenian society, as well as facilitating research on the issue, and supporting institutional mechanisms for data collection and analysis on domestic violence in Armenia. Within the program component, a policy recommendation package to improve the legislative field regulating the area of domestic violence will be developed.

In 2004, the Program was allocated funds totaling \$1,183,000 (910,000 euros), and it will be completed in March 2007.⁴⁶

Each year the Women’s Rights Center participates in the “16 Days against Gender-Based Violence” annual campaign, and dedicates to it a series of events. These include press conferences, actions, television and radio programs, seminars, meetings, distributions of books, posters, etc. The initiative is organized in the framework of current projects, and is supported by various donors.

Internews News Agency created a talk show called *Mardavors* (people-hunting) that is aimed at raising public awareness on human trafficking, and at informing victims about institutions which can help them recover and reintegrate into society. The program is broadcast by the Yerkir Media Television Company in Yerevan and nine regional companies in Armenia.

The program consists of two parts. The first part is produced by *Internews*, involving journalists, independent experts, and officials. The *Mardavors* is a new television format: it involves both stories and theatrical miniatures, based on real cases, which are discussed and analyzed by psychologists, lawyers and NGO representatives. The second part of the program is produced by regional television companies, using the technique of the live interactive dialogue with viewers. Experts in the studio answer the questions of viewers asked by telephone.

⁴⁶ UNDP Gender and Politics in Southern Caucasus Program: Georgia and Armenia www.genderpolitics.am (in Armenian and English).

The *Mardavors* talk show is produced within the framework of *Internews*' "Combating Trafficking in Humans in Armenia" project, implemented with the assistance of IOM Armenia through funds received from the US Government. The project started with a seminar on developing communication campaigns on trafficking. Journalists from regional television companies participated in the seminar, which was conducted by a journalist-expert invited from Russia. The seminar participants not only advanced their knowledge on trafficking, but also studied works (films, public service announcements, television packages, etc.) previously produced in Armenia and Russia. At the end of the seminar the participants produced an educational program.⁴⁷

In 2001 and in 2006, the NGO Antenna organized 24 radio talk shows and two series of radio programs. The radio talk shows were dedicated to the issue of domestic violence, and the radio programs were dedicated to a human rights theme. The source of funding of the projects was grants. The evaluation was made by the NGO World Learning.

Since 1998, Ajakits has organized multiple awareness-raising campaigns. In 2001–2002 they implemented the "Protection of Women's Rights and Interests" project, which has also involved awareness-raising campaigns. This initiative included multiple television broadcasts, roundtables, public hearings, and seminars in the city of Gyumri and other towns of the Shirak region. During the events international and local laws and declarations, issues connected with the state of women, complex issues of traditional mentality, and the attitudes of the public and of relevant institutions were discussed. The project was implemented with the financial support of international organizations, educational programs of the US Embassy, and USAID. The target groups of the project were policemen, health-care workers, educational system workers, students, representatives of the mass media, deputies of the National Assembly, women subjected to violence, perpetrators, pupils, etc.⁴⁸

In the past five years, the Audio-Visual Reporters Association has organized six awareness-raising campaigns on counter-trafficking and the development of civil society. The campaigns were accessible all over Armenia as they were organized in cooperation with public television and private television companies. The initiatives were financially supported by international organizations, embassies, state structures, and local NGOs. The target groups of the campaigns were victims of trafficking, potential victims, youth and children. In general, all of the projects lasted for one year. Monitoring and evaluation was organized within the framework of all of the projects.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Internews News Agency's website, www.internews.am.

⁴⁸ Information from Ajakits (ajakits@shirak.am), e-mail dated August 16, 2006 (in Armenian).

⁴⁹ Information from the NGO Audio-Visual Reporters Association (arzuman@antitrafficking.am), e-mail dated September 8, 2006 (in Armenian).

8.2 Conferences and other awareness raising, information, and prevention programs

As part of the Stop Violence against Women and National Monitor project, the Women's Rights Center periodically organizes awareness-raising campaigns in the form of articles covering Yerevan and the regions of Armenia on the Armenian Country Page on the StopVAW website since 2002. The articles cover four types of violence: domestic violence, trafficking in women, sexual harassment, and sexual assault.

Since 2003 the Audio-Visual Reporters Association has organized awareness-raising campaigns mainly in the form of websites (www.antitrafficking.am in Armenian and www.antitrafficking.info in Armenian, Russian, and English), television trailers, shooting and broadcast of video films and television programs, roundtables and training programs, and publishing and dissemination of guidebooks, manuals and other print media. The projects were funded by UNDP, IOM, the US Embassy, and the Finnish Embassy.⁵⁰

The UNDP project "Gender and Politics in Southern Caucasus Program: Georgia and Armenia" sets the goal of supporting the development of gender policies in Armenia and Georgia, to build the capacity of decision-making women in order to facilitate their active participation in political processes, and to initiate regional gender dialogue. The program promotes the exchange of information and cooperation on the regional level, in order to strengthen the governmental mechanisms for implementing these policies. In 2004 the program was allocated funds totaling \$1,183,000 (910,000 euros). Its work will be completed in March 2007.⁵¹

The two-year project "Anti-Trafficking Program: Capacity Building Support and Victims Assistance," launched jointly by the government and UNDP on March 30, 2004, aimed at facilitating the development of a national framework to tackle the problem of human trafficking. The project was sponsored by the governments of the Netherlands and Norway – Armenia has not provided any financial contribution. The project had the following three components: capacity-building framework for strengthening institutions and elaborating policy; awareness-raising; and victim's assistance. These activities included the following tasks:

⁵⁰ Information from Audio-Visual Reporters Association, *ibid*.

⁵¹ UNDP Gender and Politics in Southern Caucasus Program: Georgia and Armenia. www.genderpolitics.am (in Armenian and English).

Activity 1 – Capacity-Building Support

- International and local experts assessed the technical needs of the law enforcement sector.
- Policy recommendations on the mechanisms of victims' medical assistance were developed.
- Development of draft legislation on trafficking was supported (the draft laws were: "Combating Trafficking in Human Beings," "State Protection of Persons Participating in Criminal Proceedings," "Amending the Criminal Code of the Republic of Armenia" and "Amending the Code of Criminal Procedure of the Republic of Armenia".)
- Local and regional NGO networks and a Mass Media Network on Trafficking Issues were established, and the capacity of five NGOs to mobilize resources was strengthened.
- Awareness of government representatives on trafficking, migration related International Labour Organization (ILO) and Council of Europe (CoE) conventions was raised.
- A national policy framework, including the development of national referral mechanisms, reintegration and return mechanisms, and victims' identification was supported.
- Regional cooperation between the government, law enforcement agencies and civil society stakeholders was expanded, and regional anti-trafficking approaches were harmonized.
- Establishment of the Regional Task Force was fostered (to be continued in phase II).
- Cooperation between the Inter-Ministerial Commission on Counter Trafficking, the civil society, and the international community was enhanced.

Activity 2 – Awareness-Raising

- Thirty-eight theater performances on counter-trafficking, entitled "Candles Burning," were staged and toured countrywide with an attendance of over 5,000 citizens and follow-up seminars and workshops on the performance were organized.
- Five Mass Media Network (MMN) Campaigns were conducted countrywide for over 2,325 community members, 200 representatives of the local mass media, 172 from NGOs, as well as 340 live calls answered by the MMN members.

- An “Artists against Trafficking Campaign” was conducted with three large concerts by 25 famous young Armenian singers for about 3,000 spectators, and 19 public service announcements (PSAs) on anti-trafficking were produced with 19 Armenian celebrities in the political, economic, cultural spheres on local and national television channels, the Radio Liberty program for youth, and a single and a CD with Armenian and English songs by famous Armenian singers was produced.
- Passport inserts were prepared and distributed to over 70,000 citizens at travel points, consular departments and embassies of Armenia, social and employment agencies, the Department of Migration, refugees, and medical institutions.
- Awareness was raised on trafficking-related issues among local youth NGOs, vulnerable groups, beneficiaries of special institutions, and orphanages.
- Training programs were conducted for 251 social workers, medical personnel and border guards (the training programs for border guards have been organized through UMCOR-ESO funding) on their relevant duties and functions in combating trafficking, and training manuals were developed for medical personnel and social workers.
- The awareness of over 40 government representatives on trafficking and migration-related ILO and CoE conventions and on victims’ identification was strengthened.
- The awareness of 130 officials from regional and local government authorities on trafficking-related issues was raised.
- Information about the hotline and other services for public assistance was posted in local newspapers and widely disseminated.
- Public awareness was raised through live television and radio talk shows, television programs, and interviews in the mass media.
- Documentary films on trafficking were produced jointly with the Armenian Red Cross Society.
- Three 20-minute films and four UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) video clips were translated and broadcast on TV Channel H1.
- Eight television and radio PSAs on trafficking and related issues were produced and broadcast countrywide.
- The only Armenian comprehensive website on anti-trafficking, www.antitrafficking.am, was developed and enhanced.

Activity 3 – Victim’s Assistance

- Psychological counseling and legal advice on trafficking, domestic violence and other related issues was provided to about 1,627 citizens through the hotline (0-800-50-558).
- Medical, psychological, legal and reintegration assistance and shelter was provided to 19 female and male victims of trafficking through the Rehabilitation and Assistance Center (shelter) and the drop-in center.
- Assistance and reintegration programs for victims were implemented by providing a safe and comfortable environment for reintegrated returnees.

The UNDP Anti-Trafficking Project achieved the following results:

- The institutional capacity of relevant government agencies was strengthened.
- The awareness of trafficking-related issues was raised among government officials, NGOs, media and the general public.
- The capacity, networking and cooperation among NGOs that deal with trafficking issues was enhanced.
- The policy framework on trafficking issues was strengthened.
- Support to victims of trafficking (VoTs) was provided.
- The regional cooperation of government sectors and NGOs on anti-trafficking issues was expanded.

Phase II of the project will be implemented from August 2006 through July 2009, with the financial support of the government of Norway. The overall objectives of phase II are: 1) strengthening the capacity of national stakeholders to prevent human trafficking; 2) assisting Armenian law enforcement officials’ efforts in their role as stakeholders to investigate, prosecute, and to make final judgment upon cases of human trafficking; and 3) strengthening local capacity to uphold the rights of those with ongoing claims, and, hence, to protect victims of trafficking, and to support their reintegration into society.⁵²

8.3 Information materials for the victims about their rights and the services they can seek help

The informational packages/brochures published by the Women’s Rights Center NGO are as follows:

⁵² Government of Armenia and UNDP joint Anti-Trafficking Program: Capacity Building Support and Victims Assistance Project, launched on March 30, 2004. (in Armenian and English).

- *Let's Know Our Rights* book (all forms of violence), 1998, Armenian, 500 copies, funded by the US Embassy to Armenia, accessible all over the country, available from the Women's Rights Center and during various events.
- *Whom to Apply to in Case of Violence* brochure (all forms of violence), 2001, Armenian, 1000 copies, funded by the US Embassy to Armenia, accessible all over the country, available from the Women's Rights Center and during various events.
- *Beware of a Trap* brochure (trafficking in women), 2001, Armenian, 1000 copies, funded by the US Embassy to Armenia, accessible all over the country, available from the Women's Rights Center and during various events.
- *Whom to Apply to in Case of Violence* brochure (domestic violence), 2001, Armenian, 1000 copies, funded by the US Embassy to Armenia, accessible all over the country, available from the Women's Rights Center and during various events.
- *What is Violence* brochure (domestic violence), 2002, Armenian, 2000 copies, funded by the US Department of State, accessible all over the country, available from the Women's Rights Center and during various events.
- *Alcohol and Violence* brochure (domestic violence), 2004, Armenian, 1500 copies, funded by the USAID, accessible all over the country, available from the Women's Rights Center and during various events.

The Armenian mission of the International Organization for Migration has the following informational packages and brochures:

- *Trafficking: Urgent Problems. A Manual for Consuls* (Yerevan 2006, Armenian). This manual was prepared by the Migration Division of the Consular Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in cooperation with the Armenian mission of IOM, with financial support from the US Embassy to Armenia. The manual was prepared for the staff of Armenian diplomatic posts and its aim is to raise awareness on issues connected with trafficking. The manual contains general points on trafficking and the status of the problem in Armenia, instructions on how to help victims of trafficking, and contact information for IOM missions and Armenian Embassies all over the world.
- *How to Organize Counter-Trafficking Activities in Communities: A Guidebook for NGOs* (Yerevan 2006, Armenian). The Guidebook was published by the Armenian Mission of IOM with the financial support of the British Council, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), Open Society Institute Assistance Foundation–Armenia and UNDP Armenia. The book is intended for NGOs dealing with the problem of trafficking. It promotes an

understanding of the phenomenon of trafficking, as well as better ways to develop and implement counter-trafficking activities.

- *Illegal Ways Lead to a Dead-End* booklet (Yerevan 2002, Armenian). This booklet was published in cooperation with the Department for Migration and Refugees by the Armenian government. It contains information on illegal migration, the main dangers connected with it, the most predictable results of illegal migration, and its connection with organized crime, as well as information on how to apply for help to local services, and Armenian Embassies and IOM offices abroad.⁵³

Ajakits has informative leaflets on the types, reasons, and consequences of domestic violence, the rights of victims, and services provided by the organization. The leaflets are mainly in Armenian, but several English versions are available. This organization also has other booklets in Armenian, the publication of which was financially supported by World Learning, the Global Fund for Women, and the US Embassy to Armenia. All of these information packages are distributed free of charge at seminars, roundtables and training programs, as well as disseminated among visitors to the Crisis Center and shelter.⁵⁴

Audio-Visual Reporters Association offers two main information packages to victims of trafficking which are on the Internet at www.antitrafficking.am and www.antitrafficking.info. These websites not only serve as tools for raising the awareness of society, they also present news, legislation, lists of organizations dealing with counter-trafficking, articles, stories, television trailers, posters and guidelines to avoid trafficking, etc. The NGO has assisted the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent in publishing 500 copies of *I Know What Trafficking Is*, a guidebook for young volunteers. The Audio-Visual Reporters Association has published and disseminated 300 copies of the guidebook *How to Highlight the Issue of Trafficking* guidebook for journalists among mass media representatives who are just beginning their careers as journalists. The organization has also published a series of booklets and leaflets. These publications are mainly in Armenia, and partially in Russian and English. Funding was mainly from international organizations. All of the information prepared by the NGO is disseminated throughout the country.⁵⁵

⁵³ Armenian Mission of the International Organization for Migration. iom@iom.am.

⁵⁴ Information from Ajakits, *ibid*.

⁵⁵ Information from Audio-Visual Reporters Association, *ibid*.

9. RESEARCH AND SURVEYS ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

9.1 Research programs and surveys

In 2001 the Women's Rights Center, in cooperation with Sociometer, an independent sociological association, conducted a survey among 1,200 women in Yerevan city, eight regional cities and eight villages. Funding came from the US Embassy to Armenia. Analysis of the data obtained from the survey clearly indicates that violence against women is widespread in Armenia. Seventy percent of the abusive acts and assaults against women are committed within the family, and another 51 percent are committed by the fellow employees at the workplace, and yet another 15 percent are committed by relatives, neighbors, acquaintances and other people from the woman's environment.

The following types of violence against women have become commonplace: (1) psychological abuse and treatment of women as inferior creatures; (2) employment of force; (3) physical assault as a punishment; (4) other forms of punishment; (5) hints and offers of a sexual character; (6) various attempts to convince a woman to have sex; and (7) unpunished cases of rape.

The types of violence against women may be divided into: psychological abuse (56 percent); physical abuse (39 percent); and sexual abuse (5 percent).

In 2005 the Armenian Sociological Association, with the financial support of the US Embassy in Armenia and technical support from experts of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in Armenia, published a sociological survey entitled *Trafficking and Labor Exploitation of Armenian Migrants*. The objectives of the survey were to assess the level of awareness among different social groups in Armenian society about the phenomenon of trafficking in persons, to understand how widespread trafficking is in Armenia, and to establish which social groups are potential victims of trafficking. The main findings of the survey are:

- Respondents felt that Russia was the country with the highest risk-potential for labor exploitation, whereas Turkey was considered the main destination country for exploitation for commercial sex. Based on the assumptions that labor exploitation mostly concerns men, and commercial sexual exploitation mostly concerns women, Turkey can be considered as a potential risk country for migrant Armenian women and Russia for migrant Armenian men.
- Only a quarter of respondents were familiar with the term "trafficking". Those who were, had mainly learned about it from television, which enabled them to roughly associate it with illegal transfer or persons, forced involvement in the

sex industry and other forms of exploitation. Yet, more than half expressed eagerness to learn more about migration, which appears to be a good entry point to raise levels of awareness about the dangers of illegal migration and trafficking in human beings.

- With insufficient information regarding trafficking as such, it was not surprising that only one out of ten respondents was aware of organizations working in Armenia to protect the rights of victims of trafficking. Even fewer people (5.5 percent) were aware of organizations working in Armenia and abroad to protect the rights of women involved in prostitution. Among 26 different organizations named by the respondents, the NGO Women's Union and the State Department for Migration and Refugees were mentioned the most frequently.
- Forty-eight of the 2,500 respondents have found themselves in a situation of exploitation in the process of migration, some of which may be considered to have been trafficking, depending on the exact circumstances of their transfer, which this study could not establish in the detail required. Based on the estimate that one million Armenians have migrated abroad in search of jobs over the past 12–44 years, it can be extrapolated that up to 20,000 persons could have faced similar problems during that period.⁵⁶

In 2005, the Armenian Relief Society, with the financial support of the US Embassy in Armenia and expert support from the Democratization Program of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Office in Yerevan, published a sociological research study entitled *Children in Orphanages and Special Schools in Armenia: Potential Victims of Trafficking and Exploitation?* The main findings regarding trafficking-related awareness include:

- More than half of the respondents in each of the target groups stated that they had heard stories about trafficking and perpetrators. Yet, a very substantial percentage of the respondents had not heard about the phenomenon of trafficking at all. As expected, the level of awareness was the highest among experts and teachers, and lowest among the institutionalized children. Five to ten percent of the respondents from each of the groups claimed to personally know people who had been trafficked. In a number of cases, the stories were about the respondents' close relatives (mother, uncle, father, sister, or brother). In total, the respondents reported 93 cases where children from a particular institution or those leaving the care institutions were taken abroad to get a profitable job, but in fact they were forced to do another job, or were not paid for the work.

⁵⁶ Armenian Sociological Association (2005) *Trafficking and Labor Exploitation of Armenian Migrants* (in Armenian and English).

- Besides labor exploitation, survey participants also indicated examples of sexual exploitation. The United Arab Emirates, Turkey, the Russian Federation, the USA, and Greece were mentioned as destination countries where those leaving the care institution were physically abused or sexually exploited.
- However, generally, the results of the survey concluded that institutionalized children and care leavers lack essential knowledge and information about trafficking both during their stay in the institution and when they leave. This was manifested in the answers to a number of questions.
- In particular, only 67 percent of the children stated that they have sufficient knowledge to give necessary advice to people who have been offered a lucrative job abroad by an acquaintance of his/hers. Moreover, when asked about their knowledge of Armenian law in relation to trafficking, about 80 percent of the children and care leavers confessed they are not aware of the law at all.
- These outcomes are not surprising, considering that the majority of the families of institutionalized children and their teachers also claimed that they lack knowledge of trafficking in general, and trafficking related legislation in particular.
- Due to this lack of awareness, the role of families, teachers and caregivers in raising awareness among institutionalized children about the issue of trafficking has been limited. In the majority of families, the issue of trafficking is not discussed at all. Similarly, teachers and caregivers appear to initiate few discussions on the issue.
- As for the main sources of information about trafficking, institutionalized children and care leavers mostly obtain such information from the television and their friends and acquaintances. Very few of the survey participants received trafficking related information from state officials, NGOs, radio, newspapers, the internet, or specialized brochures.

Findings related to migration tendencies and trafficking risks:

- When asked about their future plans, a substantial percentage of the institutionalized children (9.1 percent) and care leavers (20.4 percent) stated that they considered emigrating from Armenia. With regard to their the major reasons for leaving Armenia, the respondents highlighted the lack of jobs in the country, chances to find well paid jobs abroad, uncertainty of prospects, and lack of legal protection.
- The majority of the surveyed children and care leavers mentioned a willingness to work as the key motive for emigration. One fourth of the institutionalized children want to study abroad. Other motives for both institutionalized

children and care leavers were plans for getting permanent resident status abroad and getting married.

- The most important sources of information for those respondents who chose to leave Armenia are their acquaintances, friends and neighbors. Some respondents stated that people working abroad are their main source of information on issues concerning emigration to a foreign country.
- The respondents included the Russian Federation, the USA, France, Germany, Poland, the Netherlands, and Greece as destination countries. It is interesting that, although they are willing to go to these countries, more than half of the institutionalized children and almost a third of the care leavers have no idea about the rules of migration in these countries. This is corroborated by the readiness of 34.5 percent of the institutionalized children and 42.4 percent of the care leavers to give their passport and other documents to those who would organize their trip abroad.⁵⁷

Hilda Grigoryan published *Human Trafficking in the Republic of Armenia* in 2005⁵⁸ which contains general information on trafficking, the situation of trafficking in Armenia, its causes, international documents which contain provisions to combat the phenomenon, as well as steps Armenia has taken to combat it, and some recommendations. According to the report, human trafficking in Armenia is increasing rapidly. Local NGOs and reliable sources suggest that for the past five years, 3,000–5,000 men, women and young girls were sent to neighboring countries for sex and forced labor exploitation.

In 2004 the Women's Forum, with the financial support of World Learning, conducted a survey to find out about the prevalence and incidence of sexual harassment, its manifestation, reasons for it, high-risk groups, social-psychological consequences, the attitude of society towards the phenomenon and possible solutions. The results of the survey indicated that:

- Society's attitude towards the sexual harassment of women can be changed by demonstrating indisputable facts of its existence.
- One woman out of ten continues to reject the fact that sexual harassment as a general problem exists, viewing it as a single case.

⁵⁷ Armenian Relief Society (2005) *Children in Orphanages and Special Schools in Armenia; Potential Victims of Trafficking and Exploitation?* Sociological research (Yerevan: ARS, in Armenian and English).

⁵⁸ Hilda Grigorian (2005) *Human Trafficking in the Republic of Armenia*, paper prepared for the Third International AIPRG Conference on Armenia, January 15–16, 2005 (Washington, D.C: The World Bank) (hilda@grigorianconsultants.com, in English).

- Two women out of ten are convinced that it is impossible to overcome the problem.
- Three or four women out of ten do not have an opinion regarding the phenomenon.
- Four women out of ten are certain that the problem can be solved.
- Presently only 40 percent of women are concerned about this violation of their rights.
- Women's opinions and their evaluation of this struggle depend upon their place of residence, level of awareness and education.
- The total number of people who accept, are aware, and want to be aware of the issue grew from 63 percent to 87 percent in the course of the survey.
- According to those surveyed, it is necessary to continue the awareness-raising process, which should include the following events (sorted by degree of importance): television and radio programs, publications, special training programs for upper grade pupils, assistance to NGOs that deal with women's human rights protection, and accessible literature on how to protect oneself from such phenomenon.
- Women depend upon on the increasing role of the state in combating this phenomenon.

In 2004 the NGO Hope and Help organized a research study entitled *Trafficking and Illegal Migration in Southern Caucasus*, which was financed by Open Society Institute Assistance Foundation–Armenia. According to the conclusion of the survey, in order to effectively combat trafficking there must be an interstate agreement between the countries of the Southern Caucasus, as well as cooperation between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, law enforcement agencies and NGOs.⁵⁹

In March 2004 the Council of Europe published a comparative study on *Legislation in the Member States of the Council of Europe in the Field of Violence against Women*.⁶⁰ The study presents a brief overview of member states' legislation in the field of domestic violence. In case of Armenia, though, the study of the legislation was limited to the Criminal Code, due to the fact that Armenia does not have specific legislation on the issue.

⁵⁹ Information from Hope and Help (hopehelp@web.am), e-mail dated August 1, 2006 (in Armenian).

⁶⁰ Council of Europe (March 2004) *Legislation in the Member States of the Council of Europe in the Field of Violence against Women*, Strasbourg: EG (2004) 2, 2003–2004, Volume I.

In 2003 the Helsinki Committee of Armenia released a report entitled *Human Rights in Armenia in 2003*.⁶¹ The report gives an overview of the situation in Armenia on the fulfillment of international obligations, women's rights, trafficking and children's rights.

In the same year, the American Bar Association's Central European and Eurasian Law Initiative (ABA/CEELI) published *CEELI Survey of Legislative Frameworks for Combating Trafficking in Persons: Armenia*. The survey presents a general overview of the legislation of the Republic of Armenia on the issue.⁶²

In July 2002, the American Bar Association's Central European and Eurasian Law Initiative (ABA/CEELI) published *CEDAW Assessment Tool Report for Armenia*, funded by the Armenian Mission of USAID. The goal of the report was to assess Armenia's compliance with its obligations under CEDAW, using an assessment tool developed by the Central and Eastern European Law Initiative of the American Bar Association. The executive summary of the report states:

"Overall, Armenia's *de jure* compliance with CEDAW is largely satisfactory. Collectively, Armenian laws articulate a vision of equality of opportunity which includes equal entitlements for men and women to health care, education, economic opportunity, employment and some anti-discrimination provisions. While there are notable gaps in the laws, reforms have been proposed which would help strengthen the legal protections for women, such as specific legislation on domestic violence and human trafficking.

Armenia's *de facto* compliance is more problematic. While laws exist in the books, they are rarely implemented or enforced. Therefore, there is a lack of connection between the State's vision of equality between men and women and what exists in day-to-day life. The rigid gender stereotypes which characterize Armenian norms fill the vacuum created by the legal system's lack of relevance. This leads to *de facto* discrimination in many aspects of life.

Reliance on conservative customs and traditions also leads many women to believe that the discrimination which they face is a 'normal' part of life and is an acceptable part of the human condition. This clashes directly with the vision of equality espoused by CEDAW and Armenia's commitments thereunder.

However, there are hopeful signs: women's high rates of participation in the non-governmental sector bodes well for their growing activism in public life;

⁶¹ Helsinki Committee of Armenia (2003) *Human Rights in Armenia in 2003*. www.hra.am/ahc/english1/12new_e/frame_e.htm (in English).

⁶² American Bar Association's Central European and Eurasian Law Initiative (ABA/CEELI) (2003) *CEELI Survey of Legislative Frameworks for Combating Trafficking in Persons: Armenia, 2003*. www.abanet.org/ceeli/publications/conceptpapers/humantrafficking/armenia.html (in English).

the increasing engagement of NGOs on issues such as domestic violence, women's political participation and women's leadership development, are important developments; NGO direct service providers are playing critical roles in such things as promoting women's health and providing education on contraception. The involvement of young women in women's issues is an important step towards creating the next generation of reformers who will advocate for women's human rights."⁶³

In 2001–2002 Ajakits organized a study of 2000 people on violence against women. The initiative was funded by the NGO World Learning. According to the results of the study, 80 percent of the questioned think that domestic violence exists in the region of Shirak. The reasons for the phenomenon, according to the study, are varied – the attitudes of people, traditions, stereotypes, insufficient work of law enforcement agencies, legislative gaps, and women themselves.⁶⁴

In December 2000, Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights (USA), with the organizational support of the Women's Rights Center (Armenia), created a report entitled *Domestic Violence in Armenia*. The report was created in collaboration with Winrock International as the first phase of a larger project entitled "DOS-INL Anti-Domestic Violence and Trafficking in Women and Children Project" and funded, in part, by the US Department of State. The findings of the report are summarized as follows:

"Domestic violence is widespread in Armenia. In interviews conducted by Minnesota Advocates, government officials and members of the legal system initially denied the existence of the problem, but in the course of the interview were able to describe numerous cases that correspond to the United Nations' definition of domestic violence. Despite this evidence of domestic violence, the government of Armenia has not taken adequate steps to address the issue. Armenian law punishes physical assault but has no legal provisions that specifically proscribe domestic violence.

Government officials at all levels either minimize the problem or consider it a matter of private concern outside the purview of the legal system. Police reportedly discourage women from making complaints against abusive husbands, and abusers are rarely removed from their homes or jailed. The overwhelming response of the legal system to domestic violence is to urge women to reconcile with their abusers. In cases in which women seek to prosecute abusive husbands, they receive little assistance or protection from the government. Monetary penalties for assault often deter women from making a complaint, especially when fines are paid from their family budgets. Although law enforcement officials acknowledge that women turn to divorce

⁶³ American Bar Association's Central European and Eurasian Law Initiative (ABA/CEELI) (July 2002) *CEDAW Assessment Tool Report for Armenia* (in English).

⁶⁴ Information from Ajakits, *ibid*.

as an escape from abuse, divorce procedures fail to take domestic violence into consideration. The Armenian government generally does not support the efforts of NGOs working to meet the needs of victims. Further, the government does not keep statistics on assault or other crimes that indicate the relationship of the victim and the perpetrator or the sex of the victim. This type of information is necessary to identify data related to violence against women or domestic violence.”

9.2 Violence against women on the agenda of research centers dealing with equality issues

The Gender Information-Analytical Center was established in March of 2005 to support cooperation between the “Gender and Politics in Southern Caucasus Program: Georgia and Armenia” UNDP project, the government, the civil society organizations, and the academia, and to strengthen common efforts in targeting gender equality policies and exchanging information on national and regional levels. The Gender Center functions on the basis of a gender mainstreaming strategy and believes that increasing gender sensitivity is an effective goal for society at large. The Gender Center performs the following activities:

- compiling all relevant information, materials and expertise in the center’s databases;
- developing links and forms of communication with government agencies, regional governments and National Action Plan focal points, NGOs, educational institutions, international partners, and gender advocacy groups and NGOs that are the main stakeholders and beneficiaries of the center’s services, in order to collect and disseminate relevant information;
- supporting gender advocacy groups and NGOs working for promotion of gender equality;
- developing competence in the issue, promoting the concepts of gender equality and equal opportunities;
- supporting capacity-building initiatives on gender equality, equal rights and opportunities for women and men, gender mainstreaming policies, and building awareness on women’s rights;
- supporting research on gender-related issues and problems;
- publishing brochures and informational materials on gender;
- supporting training programs on UN convention;
- creating and maintaining informational databases of gender publications and contacts;

- promoting experience exchange, and “best practices” exchange with other countries and the RBEC region;⁶⁵ and
- supporting informational networks and capacity-building initiatives for the mass media.

The Gender Center Library serves as an informational database and dissemination center of publications and other materials in hard and electronic copies on gender related topics.⁶⁶

10. STATISTICS AND DATA COLLECTION ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

10.1 Official statistics, data collection, and specific indicators on violence against women

There are no common indicators developed by the state to evaluate the scale of violence against women.

Official statistics and systematic data collection on violence against women cases are prepared by relevant state departments, divisions or institutions (the police, the General Prosecutor’s Office, the Migration Agency of the Ministry of Territorial Administration). According to information provided by the police, 497 out of 8,875 cases registered in 2005 were connected with violence against women. These are:

- crimes against life and health – 252 cases;
- crimes against human freedom, honor and dignity – 34 cases;
- crimes against sexual immunity and sexual freedom – 48 cases;
- crimes against constitutional human rights and freedoms of citizens – one case;
- crimes against the interests of family and child – one case;
- crimes against property – 107 cases; and
- crimes against public order and morality – 54 cases.

⁶⁵ United Nations Development Program Regional Bureau for Europe and CIS (UNDP RBEC), see http://europeandcis.undp.org/files/uploads/KM_advisor.doc.

⁶⁶ Namely: collection of UN, EU and other international conventions, agreements and declarations on human and women’s rights; publications on gender analysis, gender and civil society, gender and development issues, gender and employment, gender and human rights, gender and IT, gender and politics, gender and poverty, gender budgeting, gender mainstreaming, gender statistics, violence against women, women and business, and women’s health.

Criminal proceedings were instituted in 444 of these 497 criminal cases of violence against women.

In the first two months of 2006, 70 of the 1342 registered cases were connected with violence against women. These are:

- crimes against life and health – 39 cases;
- crimes against human freedom, honor and dignity – five cases;
- crimes against sexual immunity and sexual freedom – seven cases;
- crimes against constitutional human rights and freedoms of citizens – two cases;
- crimes against property – 12 cases; and
- crimes against public order and morality – five cases.

Criminal proceedings were instituted in 14 of these 70 criminal cases on violence against women.⁶⁷

According to the information provided by the police, the following crimes were committed against women in 2004, classified according to the relevant articles in the Criminal Code of the Republic of Armenia:⁶⁸

Cases of violence against women in families:

- Article 104 on “Murder” – three cases;
- Articles 34–104 on “Attempted murder” – four cases (victims survived);
- Article 110 on “Causing somebody to commit suicide” – two cases;
- Article 112 on “Infliction of willful heavy damage to health” – eight cases;
- Article 113 on “Infliction of willful medium-gravity damage to health” – 13 cases;
- Article 117 on “Infliction of willful light damage to health” – 81 cases;
- Article 118 on “Battery” – 12 cases; and
- Article 119 on “Torture” – five cases.

Cases of trafficking in women and prostitution:

- Article 132 on “Trafficking” – 2 cases; and

⁶⁷ Republic of Armenia Police, official letter dated March 20, 2006 (in Armenian).

⁶⁸ This is information about the crimes committed and classified according to the articles of the Criminal Code. Unfortunately, we do not have data about the results.

- Articles 261 on “Involvement in prostitution” and 262 on “Maintaining dens of prostitution or pimping” – 30 cases.

Sexual actions against women:

- Article 139 on “Violent sexual actions” – 6 cases;
- Article 140 on “Forced violent sexual acts” – 1 crime;
- Article 141 on “Sexual acts with a person under 16” – 20 cases; and
- Article 142 on “Lecherous acts” – 4 cases.⁶⁹

According to the General Prosecutor’s Office, during the first half of 2006, 17 cases of trafficking were registered in the Republic and 75 persons were sexually exploited. Nine cases were registered in the regions (four in Kotayk, three in Lori, one case in Ararat and one case in Armavir), and eight cases were registered in Yerevan. Criminal procedures have been instituted in connection with 16 cases, and 16 persons were convicted. Another eight people were subjected to various forms of punishment.⁷⁰

The following table shows the number of criminal cases instituted according to Article 132 of the Criminal Code on “Recruitment, transportation, transfer, conceal or receipt of persons for the purpose of exploitation”:

	2003	2004	2005	2006 (6 months)
Number of criminal cases	0	2	11	4
Numbers of people subjected to criminal responsibility	0	3	15	2

The National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia collects information mainly on gender issues and does not refer to the issue of violence against women.

The data collected by the police is gender-sensitive, and they refer to the relationship between the victim and the batterer, and to previous acts. In the framework of the *National Action Plan of the Republic of Armenia on Improving the Status of Women and Enhancing Their Role in Society, 2004–2010* a working group has been created in the police department to collect data on violence against women, including domestic violence. Medical personnel do not collect such data.

⁶⁹ Republic of Armenia Police, official letter dated January 24, 2004 (in Armenian).

⁷⁰ *Hayots Ashkarh* daily, No. 32(3915). July 15, 2006 (in Armenian).

There are no reports by the different law enforcement professions about their statistics on cases of violence against women or its different forms.

Statistics and data accessible for the general public are usually published in newspapers or other media (electronic, television radio), or are provided through inquiries to relevant structures or institutions.

There is no genetic data bank in cases of sexual violence in Armenia.

10.2 NGO statistics on violence against women

The reports of the NGOs providing services for victims are usually for internal use and are submitted to donors only.⁷¹

11. CASE LAW ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

11.1 Cases on violence against women before the national and international bodies dealing with human rights issues

There are no cases of violence against women before the Constitutional Court. As for the Ombudsman, the office has no gender disaggregated statistics and it cannot provide a brief summary of the existing cases according to Article 14(2) of the Law on the Human Rights Defender, which prohibits disclosure of any information about the applicant or other persons that became known during the investigation of the application without the written consent of the applicant or the abovementioned persons.

There is no information available on cases of violence against women brought to international courts.

11.2 Published court decisions, case studies, and analyses of case law

There are numerous court decisions concerning trafficking in women, sexual assault and domestic violence which are published in the newspapers (classified according to relevant articles of the Criminal Code that refer to violence in general). The articles are placed on the Armenian Country Page on the StopVAW website (www.stopvaw.org/armenia.html). There are no guidelines or a guiding court decision for judges for the treatment of violence against women cases.

⁷¹ For the available information see Section 5 and Section 9.1.

12. RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GOVERNMENT

- Recognize domestic violence as a violation of fundamental human rights and prioritize the problem on the governmental level;
- Adopt a Law on Domestic Violence that should provide maximum safety for, and protection of, victims and classify all forms of violence within the family as a criminal offense;
- Elaborate mechanisms for the implementation of a domestic violence law within the framework of the Criminal Code to consider domestic violence as a crime;
- Organize special training programs for professionals confronted with violence against women (police, judicial personnel, psychologists, health care and social workers);
- Establish relevant structures responsible for domestic violence in all three – legislative, executive and judicial – branches of power; this must be incorporated into the national legislation;
- Elaborate special programs on work with perpetrators;
- Establish relevant services for victims of violence against women, such as hotlines, shelters, crisis centers, to provide victims with psychological, legal, medical and social assistance on a confidential basis and free-of-charge;
- Elaborate codes of conduct for media professionals, which would take into account the issue of violence against women; and
- Raise public awareness concerning violence against women and organize education of children and young persons on these issues.

ANNEXES

Annex A. List of laws and regulations screened

Code of Criminal Procedure

Criminal Code

Law on Social Assistance

Law on the Human Rights Defender

Decree No. 591-A of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia of October 2000 creating the Interagency Commission against Trafficking

Decree No. N117-A/1 of June 20, 2006 of the Minister of Labor and Social Affairs establishing the Interagency Commission on Gender Issues

Decree of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia of December 29, 2000 creating the Women's Council Adjunct

Annex B. List of documents, books, and experts consulted

National Action Plan of the Republic of Armenia on Improving the Status of Women and Enhancing Their Role in Society, 2004–2010

National Action Plan for Prevention of Trafficking in Persons from the Republic of Armenia for 2004–2006

National Report of the Republic of Armenia to the 49th Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, New York, February 28–March 11, 2005.

American Bar Association's Central European and Eurasian Law Initiative (ABA/CEELI) (2003) *CEELI Survey of Legislative Frameworks for Combating Trafficking in Persons: Armenia, 2003*. Available at www.abanet.org/ceeli/publications/conceptpapers/humantrafficking/armenia.html

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- US Secretary of State (2002) *2001 Annual World Report on Human Trafficking*
- Vardanyan, Gegham (2006) *How to Highlight the Issue of Trafficking: Guidebook for Journalists* (in Armenian)
- Interview with Lyalya Aslanyan, Deputy Head of the Migration Agency of the Ministry of Territorial Administration (infoprogram@dolphin.am), e-mail interview made on July 11, 2006
- Interview with Valeri Mkrtoumian, Head of the Department of International Organizations of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Chairman of the Interagency Commission against Trafficking in Armenia (v.mkrtoumian@mfa.am), e-mail interview made on June 26, 2006