

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	305
Land:	Armenien
Kilde:	Amnesty International
Titel:	Annual Report 2019 – Armenia
Udgivet:	16. april 2020
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	18. maj 2020

Document #2028163

AI – Amnesty International

Annual Report 2019 - Armenia [EUR 01/1355/2020]

Former senior officials faced arrest and prosecution on charges related to past abuses of power amid concerns of executive pressure on the judiciary. The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention) was not ratified, despite growing recognition of the scale of gender-based violence. A draft law on anti-discrimination was discussed in parliament but sexual orientation and gender identity did not appear among the list of protected grounds. Protests by environmental activists and local residents forced the authorities to suspend construction of a gold mine and commit to a further impact assessment study.

Background

The government under Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan who came to power after peaceful protests in 2018, continued to enjoy relatively high popular support. It embarked on an energetic campaign against systemic corruption while pledging “transitional justice” by addressing abuses of power by the previous government. Its newly published anti-corruption strategy pledged the creation of specialised state bodies to fight corruption.

Justice system

Former President Robert Kocharyan was arrested for the third time on 25 June 2019, after being charged in 2018 with “overthrowing the constitutional order” and bribe-taking. The prosecution argued that the former President had been responsible for the violent dispersal, resulting in 10 deaths, of the March 2008 protests against what the then-opposition believed to be fraudulent elections. Robert Kocharyan denounced the charges as unfounded and politically motivated and accused the government of undue pressure on the judiciary. When the court released Robert Kocharyan on bail in May 2019, Prime Minister Nicol Pashinyan had called for a comprehensive reform of the judiciary, publicly criticised the judges for the decision to release him and urged his supporters to block court buildings.

Other former high-level government officials also faced prosecution in connection with the violent dispersal of the March 2008 protests and other alleged instances of abuses of power; proceedings were ongoing at the end of the year.

Women's rights

In 2019 at least 378 cases of domestic violence were investigated by the authorities. Following the adoption of the law on domestic violence in 2017, the authorities had been under pressure to pay more attention to the problem. However, local activists claimed that domestic violence continued to be severely underreported and that the authorities had not provided enough shelters for survivors.

The Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) signed by Armenia in 2018, was still not ratified in 2019. The ongoing and highly polarised debate on ratification was accompanied by a local #MeToo movement, with Armenian women publicly sharing their experiences of sexual violence. The influential Armenian Apostolic Church threw its weight behind the opposition to ratification, claiming it would endanger Armenia's "national traditions" and "values" as the convention "defines a third sex apart from female and male." Authorities adopted a delaying tactic by announcing in July that they were seeking guidance from the Venice Commission on the "constitutional implications" of the ratification.

Rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people

Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people continued to face harassment and discrimination. In the first half of 2019 a local LGBTI group documented 24 cases of homophobic and transphobic crimes, including physical and domestic violence and extortion.

For the first time in the country's history, an openly transgender activist - Lilit Martirosyan - addressed the parliament during a hearing on human rights. She highlighted challenges faced by transgender people in Armenia, including a lack of investigation into transphobic crimes, and called on the parliament to act. She subsequently received public threats, including death threats, while LGBTI people encountered growing transphobic and homophobic hate speech. A member of the parliament publicly called for Lilit Martirosyan to be burnt alive. Authorities refused to launch a criminal investigation into the death threats.

A proposed law on anti-discrimination was under discussion. LGBTI activists condemned the omission from the draft law of explicit mention of sexual orientation and gender identity among the grounds protected from discrimination.

The right to a healthy and sustainable environment

Protests against gold mining in Amulsar, south Armenia, which began with the blockage of a road leading to the mine in 2018, continued. Campaigners contested the results of the government-commissioned Environmental and Social Impact Assessment Review. Despite the promise of hundreds of new jobs, local residents and environmental

activists remained concerned about the potential social and ecological damage, including the negative impact on their livelihoods of predicted contamination of the mineral water of Jermuk, a spa resort and important tourism destination. The government stated it would go ahead with the project following publication of the review, but later reversed its decision and agreed to a further study on the environmental safety of the proposed mining.

Rights of persons with disability

People with disabilities continued to face discrimination and other human rights violations. Accessibility to buildings and public transportation remained a problem despite Armenia having ratified the International Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities in 2010.

Legislation continued to permit people with mental disabilities to be deprived of their legal capacity, instead appointing a guardian who would then make decisions for them, including representing them in court. This was a subject of criticism by the COE Commissioner for Human Rights. In a move welcomed by disability rights activists, a Cassation Court in Yerevan ruled in January, in a case about physical abuse of a person with mental disability, that investigators and courts could not ignore testimonies from people with mental disability on grounds of their mental health condition.

© Amnesty International

ecoi.net summary:

Report on the human rights situation covering 2019



Country:

Armenia

Source:

AI – Amnesty International (</en/source/10960.html>)

Original link:

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/europe-and-central-asia/armenia/report-armenia/>
(<https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/europe-and-central-asia/armenia/report-armenia/>)

Document type:

Periodical Report

Language:

English

Published:

16 April 2020

Document ID:

2028163

Austrian Red Cross

Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research
and Documentation (ACCORD)

Wiedner Hauptstraße 32, 1041 Wien

T (Telefon) +43 1 589 00 583

F (Fax) +43 1 589 00 589

info@ecoi.net

ecoi.net is run by the Austrian Red Cross (department ACCORD) in cooperation with Informationsverbund Asyl & Migration. ecoi.net is funded by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Austrian Ministry of the Interior and Caritas Austria. ecoi.net is supported by ECRE & UNHCR.

