

## Armenia

### **Information provided further the statement by the Lanzarote Committee Chair and Vice-Chairperson on stepping up protection of children against sexual exploitation and abuse in times of the COVID-19 pandemic**

The main source of statistical information regarding victims and numbers of sexual abuse cases is the central information centre of Police service of Armenia. Investigative committee provides data annually.

All agencies, safeguarding children' well-being, continue their work despite lock down difficulties. Cases are reported and properly processed. However, there are limitations that have been already revealed:

1. The referral system faces difficulties, as some private, social and childcare institutions do not have isolation places, they do not provide services, short term crisis intervention and supporting services for children during the lockdown.
2. Participation of childcare specialists, psychologists within the child interviewing: investigators and other officers face some difficulties to consult with other actors and to engage them within the interviewing.

We have been in consultations with various actors, including NGOs, working in child protection system and are planning joint webinar to consolidate our efforts and to find what solutions can be applied.

### **PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS THE SOCIAL IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON CHILDREN IN THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA**

#### **THE 4<sup>TH</sup> PACKAGE OF MEASURES TO NEUTRALIZE THE SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES OF COVID-19 OUTBREAK<sup>1</sup>**

1. The aim of the measures is to support families with children under 14 years old facing social difficulties caused by the challenges in the labour market as a result of COVID-19 outbreak.
2. The beneficiaries of the measures are all those families, which have children under 14 years old and face one of the following circumstances:
  - Both parents have been dismissed from their jobs within the period from 13 March, 2020 to 25 March, 2020;

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<sup>1</sup> The 4<sup>th</sup> package of measures to neutralize the social consequences of COVID-19 outbreak; [https://www.gov.am/u\\_files/file/Covid-19/4-en.pdf](https://www.gov.am/u_files/file/Covid-19/4-en.pdf)

- One of the parents has been dismissed from their job within the period from 13 March, 2020 to 25 March, 2020, and the other one is unemployed;
  - One of the parents has been dismissed from their job within the period from 13 March, 2020 to 25 March, 2020 and the other one is dead, recognized as dead or is gone missing;
  - A single mother or a parent living with a child (in case the parents are divorced) has been dismissed from their job within the period from 13 March, 2020 to 25 March, 2020.
3. The support is provided in the form of a lump sum benefit.
  4. The support is provided in the amount of 100,000 AMD for each minor child.
  5. Families are not eligible to receive the benefit, if:
    - the amount of average monthly salary of the parent dismissed, as referred to in paragraph 3 of this program, exceeded the amount of 500,000 AMD in the past two months before the dismissal;
    - the parent dismissed, as referred to in paragraph 3 of this program, has started a new job after the dismissal within the period from 13 March, 2020 to 25 March, 2020.

#### **THE 7<sup>TH</sup> PACKAGE OF MEASURES TO ALLEVIATE THE CONSEQUENCES OF COVID-19 OUTBREAK<sup>2</sup>**

1. The aim of the measures is to support pregnant women facing social difficulties caused by the challenges in the labour market as a result of Covid-19 outbreak.
2. The beneficiaries of the measure are those pregnant women, who have no job as of March 30, 2020 and whose spouses have been dismissed from their job within the period from 13 March, 2020 to 30 March, 2020 and did not manage to get another job during the same period. Single pregnant women who have no job as of March 30, 2020 are also beneficiaries of the program.
3. The support is provided in the form of a lump-sum benefit.
4. The support is provided a pregnant woman in the amount of 100,000 AMD.

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<sup>2</sup> The 7<sup>th</sup> package of measures to alleviate the consequences of COVID-19 outbreak;  
[https://www.gov.am/u\\_files/file/Covid-19/7en.pdf](https://www.gov.am/u_files/file/Covid-19/7en.pdf)

## **THE 9<sup>TH</sup> PACKAGE OF MEASURES TO ALLEVIATE THE ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF COVID-19 OUTBREAK<sup>3</sup>**

1. This package of measures aims to support households with children under 18, facing social difficulties as a result of COVID-19 outbreak.
2. Beneficiaries of this package of measures are all those households which have children under 18 and none of the parents had (or the single parent didn't have) a registered work as of 12 March 2020, nor they were recruited for a temporary or permanent job within the period from 12 March 2020 to 31 March 2020.
3. The support is provided in the form of a lump-sum, equal to 26,500 AMD for each child.
4. The support is provided based on the electronic application submitted by one of the parents to the official website [www.online.ssa.am](http://www.online.ssa.am) as defined in the procedures of the website.
5. The data of the households which receive support under this package of measures shall be published on the official website of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Republic of Armenia.
6. Within the meaning of this package of measures, households are considered a Beneficiary of these measures, if children under 18 (or the only child) and their parents (or the single parent) permanently reside in Armenia and at least one parent and the children lived in Armenia within the period from 12 March, 2020 to 31 March, 2020.
7. Within the meaning of this package of measures, households are not considered a Beneficiary of these measures, if:
  - the parents or one of the parents of the child had a registered permanent or temporary job within the period from 1 January 2020 to 1 March 2020, and the sum of the average monthly salary of the parents, or the average monthly salary of one of the parents during that period exceeded 500,000 AMD.
  - the family of the child was already registered in the household's vulnerability assessment system as of 12 March, 2020 or the score of household vulnerability is higher than 28.01.
  - the parents or one of the parents of the child were an individual entrepreneur as of 31 March, 2020 whose operations were not suspended by the same date as defined in the legislation of the Republic of Armenia.
  - Irrespective of the rules of identification stipulated in paragraph 2 of this Annex, all the households or parents who are identified as a Beneficiary of one of the packages of measures approved by the Government Decision N 358 L, of 26 March 2020, and Decisions N 410L, 411L, 412L of 30 March 2020, are Beneficiaries of this package of measures if this package of measures provides more support as per calculation of

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<sup>3</sup> The 9<sup>th</sup> package of measures to alleviate the economic consequences of COVID-19 outbreak;  
[https://www.gov.am/u\\_files/file/Covid-19/9-en.pdf](https://www.gov.am/u_files/file/Covid-19/9-en.pdf)

26,500 AMD per child. In this case, the Beneficiary has the right to reject the support provided based on the above-mentioned decisions and apply to receive support under this package of measures.

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## **Responses to specific questions by the Bureau of the Lanzarote Committee on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the protection of children from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse**

### **Data on child sexual abuse/exploitation** **For the period of March 16-June 5, 2020**

- 1. To what extent, if at all, has the threat of child sexual abuse/exploitation changed due to COVID-19? If so:**
  - **Please tell us about whether the level of risk has increased/decreased/remained the same and if possible specify this with regard to the various types of sexual offences against children (Articles 18-23 of the Convention);**
  - **You may also wish to indicate any emerging trends relating to child sexual abuse/exploitation, as the result of COVID-19, and point at measures taken to address them.**

During the state of emergency announced in Armenia caused by COVID-19, from March 16 until 5<sup>th</sup> June, 2020, the number of reported sexual crimes against children have been decreased.

Below is the data of reported crimes for the mentioned period:

#### ***2019, During 4 months, 17 cases were reported registered, of which:***

1. Article 138 of the RA Criminal Code, rape - 2 cases
2. Article 139 of the RA Criminal Code, sexual assault - 3 cases
3. Article 141 of the RA Criminal Code, sexual acts with the person under 16 years old - 6 cases
4. Article 142 of the RA Criminal Code, Lecherous acts - 6 cases.

#### ***2020, During 4 months, 13 cases were registered, of which:***

- Article 139 of the RA Criminal Code, sexual assault - 2 cases
- Article 141 of the RA Criminal Code, sexual acts with the person under 16 years old - 10 cases/
- Article 142 of the RA Criminal Code, Lecherous Acts - 1 case.

Based on police assurance, the above proves that the current situation- the COVID-19 pandemic, hasn't affected and hasn't had a significant/essential impact on the increase of the number of crimes against sexual freedom and sexual immunity against children.

As a result of the COVID-19 epidemic, no other threats and trends related to sexual violence / abuse of children are recorded.

At the same time, the officers of the specialized subdivisions of the Police, within the framework of their daily functions, take measures aimed at the prevention of crimes against sexual freedom and sexual immunity against minors, as well as early disclosure of the abuse.

**2. Did lockdown cause child sexual abuse/exploitation cases (identified/reported) to increase, decrease or stay the same? Please submit data (number of victims/offenders) and highlight what you think may explain the trend.**

According to Police data, the present situation affected by the COVID-19, has led to a decrease of cases of sexual violence. In conditions of lockdown, mostly staying at home, with parents, families, minors, under proper supervision of a parent or parents/caregiver are more protected from risks and of sexual violence / abuse.

Regarding the data of offenders, the Police submitted the following information: during the first 4 months of 2020, 11 people were registered as perpetrators/offenders of sexual crimes against children. For the same period in 2019 the number of offenders is 13.

Summary of the data for 2019 (4 mentioned period)	summary of the data for 2020
17 victims	13 victims
13 offenders	11 offenders

**3. Please also tell us whether and how general child safeguarding measures were, or are likely to be, affected by measures taken by governments in response to COVID-19. In addition, highlight any additional, specific measures put in place during lockdown to ensure reporting by victims of child sexual abuse/exploitation as well as to support and assist them, and whether these measures will be maintained even when the lockdown is lifted.**

In addition to police measures, the Ministry of Justice in cooperation with the Ministry of Work and Social Affairs, has launched a hotline service, there is also an ongoing consultation with NGOs. We also took part in webinars, and media discussion to reveal the trends, also to mobilize the resources. During this period one residential crisis care has become the center where children are referred during the COVID. Other specialized centers have more resources to work with children with trauma affected by sexual assault and abuse, however, they do not have quarantine venues and specialists for newcomers and cannot provide services during this period.

- 4. Finally, please tell us whether children have been duly listened to on decision-making concerning their protection against sexual abuse/exploitation during this period. Please also tell us whether and how children will be involved in decision-making on or assessing the impact of COVID-19 measures in the future.**

Children in closed institutions, particularly childcare centers, detention places, residential care institutions are informed of the situation. Regarding general population and children, after the ratification of the Convention, many awareness raising media activities have been organized especially to provide right information to the public and to talk about the preventive impact and importance of the Convention. TV programs, Radio and other media platforms are used to address the issue - lack of information about the Convention.