Committee of the Parties
to the Council of Europe Convention
on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings

COUNCIL OF EUROPE
1949 - 2024
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

CP(2024)03

Report submitted by the authorities of Armenia on measures taken to comply with Committee of the Parties Recommendation CP/Rec(2022)01 on the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings

Third evaluation round

Received on 17 June 2024

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INFORMATION

ON THE MEASURES TAKEN TO COMPLY WITH RECOMMENDATION CP/REC(2022)01 ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONVENTION ON ACTION AGAINST TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS BY ARMENIA

- *(Paragraph 54) Take steps to facilitate and guarantee access to justice for victims of THB, in particular by ensuring that legal assistance is provided as soon as there are reasonable grounds for believing that a person is a victim of human trafficking, before the person concerned has to decide whether or not he/she wants to cooperate with the authorities and/or make an official statement.*

Armenia is committed to providing comprehensive assistance to victims of trafficking and to facilitating access to the necessary help and information for all individuals who are believed to be victims, regardless of their circumstances. To ensure that all individuals have immediate access to the resources they need to make informed decisions about their situation, prompt and comprehensive help and information are available through the hotline numbers of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Republic of Armenia and the Ministry of Internal Affairs Police, or by contacting the regional center of the Unified Social Service in their area of residence. This accessibility guarantees that victims and potential victims of trafficking can swiftly obtain the support and guidance necessary for their safety and well-being, facilitating timely intervention and assistance tailored to their specific needs.

Additionally, comprehensive support services for individuals believed to be victims of trafficking extend beyond governmental bodies to include state-delegated services operated by non-governmental organizations (NGOs). These organizations provide around-the-clock support, ensuring that victims and potential victims of trafficking or exploitation have continuous access to the help they need. As part of Armenia's counter-trafficking efforts, the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs of the Republic of Armenia is operating a Programme "On the Provision of Social and Psychological Rehabilitation Services to Individuals who have Experienced Trafficking, Exploitation, and Sexual Violence ("Programme"). In the framework of this initiative and in line with the Law "On the identification and support of persons subjected to human trafficking and exploitation", the Ministry collaborates with non-governmental organizations to assist potential victims by offering tailored services and support, including legal assistance.

General counseling is provided to those who may be at risk of trafficking and exploitation. Additionally, legal aid is extended to individuals officially recognized as victims by the

Commission for the Identification of Victims of Human Trafficking and Exploitation[1]. Notably, legal support is offered unconditionally, irrespective of the individual's decision to apply to the law enforcement authorities. This comprehensive approach aims to ensure that victims receive the necessary care and protection.

In addition to legal aid, free legal assistance is also offered as part of the support services provided to potential victims of human trafficking and exploitation in Armenia. As part of the Programme, it is intended to launch a tender for financial support in the form of a grant to a selected non-governmental organization. The recipient non-governmental organization will then deliver services to victims of human trafficking and exploitation over the course of one year. This competitive process is recurrent and takes place annually to ensure continued assistance and support for those affected by trafficking and exploitation.

In December 2023, the "Sexual Violence Crisis Center" NGO became the winning recipient of state-provided financial support. Throughout the year 2024, this organization will extend relevant services to those in need. Notably, the Programme and the support offered within its framework are entirely carried out with state funding.

On the basis of the referral by the chairman of the commission for identifying individuals subjected to human trafficking and exploitation, the RA Public Defender's Office provides victims with free legal assistance. This aid, coupled with advocacy support, remains available for as long as the victim requires it. In light of the lengthy court proceedings for victims of human trafficking and exploitation, which can extend over years, free legal aid and advocacy services are provided to these individuals throughout the duration of their cases, to ensure they have access to the necessary resources and representation throughout their legal processes.

According to the Government's programme for 2021-2026, the adoption of the Law "On Legal Assistance in Criminal Proceedings" is scheduled for completion by December 2024. This forthcoming legislation is expected to enhance the legal support framework throughout criminal proceedings, including by strengthening support mechanisms available to victims, in line with international standards and best practices.

- *(Paragraph 65) Strengthen effective access to the labour market for victims of THB and their economic and social inclusion through the provision of vocational training and job placement, raising awareness amongst different employers, and the promotion of micro-businesses, social enterprises and public-private partnerships, including through state supported employment programmes, with a view to creating appropriate work opportunities for victims of trafficking.*

[1] In 2023-2024, the Commission held 12 sessions, as a result of which 36 individuals were officially recognized as victims of trafficking or exploitation, including those classified as victims of a special category

As part of the Programme, the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs provides employment opportunities for individuals who have been subjected to human trafficking and exploitation. Specifically, it offers victims—and, as appropriate, those of a special category—employment that is suitable for them and compliant with the legislation of the Republic of Armenia. The Programme includes a social reintegration component, through which support is extended to help victims of human trafficking and exploitation reintegrate into society and rebuild their lives.

Efforts are underway to enhance support and reintegration services for victims of human trafficking and exploitation by introducing the following initiatives:

- Inclusion of trafficking victims in housing programs
- Provision of free entrepreneurship courses and guidance on starting a business
- Offering professional training courses
- Providing language and socio-cultural courses for victims unfamiliar with the Armenian language and plan to reside in Armenia.

In 2023, funding was allocated for the professional training services, with the "Sexual Violence Crisis Center" NGO becoming the recipient of the grant. As of June 2024, one individual has availed themselves of the new services, specifically engaging in a professional course with the support of the service provider, the "Sexual Violence Crisis Center" NGO, and having successfully attained the profession of an auto mechanic. Notably, the individual is a victim with a special disability category.

Furthermore, victims of human trafficking and exploitation are directed to the Unified Social Service (USS) to explore available employment opportunities. The USS prioritizes victims of human trafficking and exploitation when filling vacancies, emphasizing their support for these individuals in accessing job placements.

- *(Paragraph 82) Make additional efforts to guarantee effective access to compensation for victims of THB, in particular by:*
- ensuring that the collection of evidence about the harm the victim has suffered, including the financial gain from the exploitation of the victim or loss sustained by the victim, is part of the criminal investigations with a view to supporting compensation claims in court;
- ensuring that victims of trafficking are systematically informed in a language that they can understand of the right to seek compensation and the procedures to be followed; - making full use of the legislation on the freezing and forfeiture of assets, as well as international co-operation, to secure compensation to victims of THB, and ensure that recoverable property which is seized in criminal proceedings is returned as soon as possible to the victim;
- including the topic of compensation in the training programmes for lawyers, investigators, prosecutors and judges and encouraging them to use all the possibilities the law offers to uphold compensation claims by victims of THB.

In 2023, the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs of the Republic of Armenia introduced a trilingual information sheet (available in the Armenian, English, and Russian languages) outlining the various types of assistance available to victims and potential victims of human trafficking and exploitation. The information sheet also details the support mechanisms in place for potential victims of human trafficking and exploitation. Additionally, the document includes details about one-time financial assistance amounting to 250,000 AMD as part of the support options available to individuals.[2]

Armenia is committed to enhancing access to effective compensation for victims of trafficking, including through mechanisms of state compensation, in order to address trafficking issues comprehensively and to provide meaningful assistance to those affected by these crimes.

Since 2020, funding allocations have been made from the state budget to support victims of trafficking. Currently, efforts are underway to streamline the process of accessing these funds and to enhance the support network available to victims. There are plans to expand partnerships with NGOs, particularly in rural areas, to ensure more effective distribution of victim assistance funds, to improve outreach and to ensure that victims across the country receive the necessary financial support and care. Effective from 2025, state compensation is expected to include additional categories of victims, ensuring broader coverage and support across various circumstances of exploitation and trafficking.

Additionally, efforts are ongoing to ensure sustainable accommodation for victims of trafficking once they leave shelters, as many victims utilize state-provided compensation amounts to cover rent expenses. Currently under consideration is the introduction of rent certificates aimed at addressing the housing challenges encountered by victims of trafficking upon leaving shelters. This initiative would enable recipients to secure housing through state funding, in line with the state's commitment to assist victims of trafficking in achieving stable and secure living conditions beyond the initial sheltering period. Alternatively, if suitable state housing options are unavailable, the rent certificate could be used to subsidize rent payments partially through state support mechanisms.

To ensure comprehensive support for victims in their recovery and rehabilitation, medical services are available for all individuals affected by human trafficking and exploitation, in line with the Government Decision No. 318 dated 4 March 2004. These services are offered by the state free of charge or at preferential rates, encompassing advanced and costly medical technologies when needed, whereby compensation for these services is covered by the state budget in accordance with the type and extent of services provided.

[2] Information sheet on the types of assistance available to victims and potential victims of human trafficking and exploitation, available at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/14azAap0_Qv103UWoyZ2FSTmWhk48fRrU/view?usp=sharing

Efforts to ensure justice and compensation for victims of trafficking are ongoing and reflect the government's dedication to addressing the challenges faced by victims. With the highest number of compensation claims filed in 2022, Armenia continues to prioritize legal redress for victims of trafficking. Notably, investigations are underway in two criminal cases where the property of suspected traffickers has been seized, underscoring the commitment to holding perpetrators accountable. Additionally, a case from 2022-2023, which was initially investigated as human trafficking and exploitation and waslater re-qualified under related criminal activity charges, has identified an amount of assets totaling approximately 60,000 USD.

- *(Paragraph 97) Take additional measures to strengthen the criminal justice response to THB, including by:*
- ensuring that human trafficking offences are proactively and promptly investigated, regardless of whether a complaint about the reported crime has been submitted or not, by making use of special investigation techniques in order to gather material, documentary, financial and digital evidence and not having to rely exclusively on testimony by victims or witnesses;
- taking into account the high staff turnover amongst law enforcement officials, systematically conducting specialised training on investigating human trafficking and gathering sufficient evidence in order to successfully submit cases to court proceedings;
- sensitising investigators, prosecutors and judges to the rights of victims of THB and the importance of preventing secondary victimisation, and encouraging the development of specialisation amongst prosecutors and judges to deal with THB cases;
- strengthening efforts to investigate, prosecute and convict traffickers of labour exploitation;
- ensuring that the length of court proceedings in cases of trafficking of human beings is reasonable, in line with the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights (Article 6, paragraph 1 of the ECHR) and the standards set by the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ).

In the section "Crimes against Freedom, Honor, Dignity, Physical or Mental Integrity" of the Criminal Code adopted on May 25, 2021, Armenia has established robust legal provisions to address human trafficking and exploitation. Specifically, the Code includes Article 188, which outlines criminal liability for human trafficking or exploitation. It also includes Article 189, which pertains to the trafficking or exploitation of a child or a helpless person. Additionally, Article 190 criminalizes the act of using the services of a person who is in a state of exploitation. These articles collectively reinforce Armenia's commitment to safeguarding human rights and ensuring that perpetrators of such heinous crimes are held accountable under the law.

While the new legal regulations share commonalities with the crimes outlined in the previous Criminal Code, significant changes have been introduced. These modifications are

expected to facilitate law enforcement practices and streamline the process of qualifying the discussed crimes. The penalties for these crimes have also been clarified.

Additionally, Part 5 of Article 188 of the Criminal Code introduces an incentive provision. Under this provision, individuals affected by the crimes described in Articles 188, 189, and 190 are exempted from criminal liability for minor or medium gravity crimes committed under coercion during their trafficking or exploitation. It's worth noting that the previous Criminal Code included a similar incentive provision, but it did not cover the crime defined in Article 190. As a result, the scope of the non-punishment provision for victims of trafficking has been generally expanded.

Armenia is committed to ensuring that human trafficking offenses are proactively and promptly investigated. From 2021 to 2024, there has been a notable increase in the investigations and prosecutions of cases involving trafficking for labor exploitation and forced begging. In 2023, several significant judgments were delivered regarding child trafficking in the agricultural sector. The perpetrators in these cases received sentences ranging from 8 to 12 years of imprisonment.

To further enhance the effectiveness of these efforts, financial investigations have been strengthened through the establishment of a Cyber Lab. Recognizing the extensive use of cryptocurrencies by criminal groups, the financial investigators are now equipped with specialized tools to identify and track crypto transactions. This proactive approach seeks to disrupt the financial networks supporting trafficking operations, whereby these advanced investigative techniques have already led to the identification of approximately 2.5 million dollars in cases related to illegal services.

Armenia prioritizes specialized training programs on investigating human trafficking, particularly in light of the high staff turnover among law enforcement officials. Aiming to equip the new and existing personnel with the necessary skills and knowledge, these training programs are designed to enhance the capacity of police officers, prosecutors, and judges to effectively combat human trafficking.

Recognizing the critical need for well-trained personnel, a new training program titled “Against Trafficking in Armenia” was conducted for police officers, prosecutors, and judges in 2023. This program aims to equip law enforcement officials with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively combat human trafficking and ensure justice for victims.

In 2023-2024, the Ministry of Internal Affairs held a series of training courses for police officers engaged in operational and inspection activities of the RA Police. These courses covered crucial topics such as "Crimes against Freedom, Honor, Dignity, Physical or Mental Integrity" and "Crimes against Sexual Freedom and Sexual Integrity." Additionally, specialized training was provided to officers in various positions within the patrol service, including those in the main group, deputy heads of departments, and senior group officers.

These officers participated in courses on "Crimes against Humanity" and a three-month intensive course on "Trafficking and Its Prevention" specifically designed for middle group officers of the RA Ministry of Internal Affairs Police. Furthermore, in 2024, the Ministry of Internal Affairs initiated a dedicated training course, which was attended by 14 anti-trafficking officers from the police territorial divisions of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

Additionally, preparation of a comprehensive guidebook for prosecutors on how to prevent secondary victimization is currently underway, highlighting the importance of protecting victims throughout the legal process. The topic of human trafficking is also included in the mandatory training modules for judges, with a dedicated module focusing on the victim-centered approach. The ongoing anti-corruption reforms include new procedures for integrity checks for investigators and prosecutors, as well as an increase in judges' wages.

The table below provides the list of the courses included in the 2021-2024 training programmes for judges, prosecutors and investigators on prevention of human trafficking and exploitation:

Course	Target Group	2021	2022	2023	2024
Features of the Status of Victims	Judges	36	40		
	Prosecutors	14		41	
	Investigators		52	34	
Protection of the Rights of Juvenile or Other Vulnerable Fffenders	Judges			34	
Current Issues of Armenian Criminal Law	Prosecutors	100	66	219	
	Investigators	37		11	
	Investigators at the Anti Corruption Committee				19
Issues of qualification of crimes, including issues with qualifying human trafficking or exploitation, crimes against constitutional human rights and liberties, crimes against justice	Investigators		52	34	

- (Paragraph 159) Take further steps to prevent and combat THB for the purpose of labour exploitation, and in particular to:

- ensure that the Health and Labour Inspection Body has sufficient powers and resources to carry out inspections, including proactive and unannounced inspections in both

registered and unregistered companies, and outreach work with a view to preventing and detecting cases of THB for the purpose of labour exploitation, including in rural areas;

- train labour inspectors throughout the country, as well as law enforcement officers, prosecutors and judges, on combating THB for the purpose of labour exploitation and the rights of victims;

- strengthen co-operation between labour inspectors, law enforcement officers, tax authorities, trade unions and other civil society actors, with a view to collecting evidence necessary for successfully investigating and prosecuting cases of THB for the purpose of labour exploitation;

- harmonise the provisions on forced labour in Armenian law, in line with the ILO indicators of forced labour, and ensure their prosecution under criminal law;

- develop safe reporting and complaint mechanisms of cases of labour exploitation;

- take steps to regulate recruitment and temporary work agencies to strengthen prevention of THB and labour exploitation;

- strengthen efforts to curb fraudulent job offers disseminated by means of the Internet and social media and to build up public awareness on safe migration and the risks of trafficking.

Armenia continues to implement comprehensive measures to address the issues of forced labour and to eradicate labor trafficking, focusing on both prevention and enforcement. By enhancing legal frameworks, strengthening labor inspections, and promoting awareness campaigns, multiple activities are underway to identify and protect vulnerable individuals and to hold violators accountable. This includes ongoing efforts to enhance the capacity of the Health and Labor Inspection Body (HLIB). Starting from 1 July 2024, new legislative measures will empower the HLIB, particularly concerning oversight of foreign workers. These reforms aim to bolster monitoring and enforcement mechanisms to prevent and respond to cases of forced labor effectively. Furthermore, Armenia is intensifying collaboration with various state authorities, particularly law enforcement agencies, to strengthen coordination in combating forced labor and ensuring comprehensive protection for all workers.

Additionally, Armenia is actively addressing forced labor through several initiatives, including plans to train new inspectors for the HLIB. Additionally, practical re-training sessions are scheduled for current inspectors from September to October 2024. These efforts aim to bolster the capacity of HLIB inspectors in identifying and combating forced labor practices effectively.

Another step forward in addressing labor exploitation involves the development of the indicators of forced labor and inter-sectoral guidelines. These tools, which have been in

place since 2022, aim to identify instances of labor exploitation effectively. Furthermore, these indicators and guidelines have been integrated into specialized training modules tailored for social workers and labor inspectors, among other professionals. To enhance accessibility and reach, these training modules have been converted into e-learning materials, ensuring continuous education and capacity-building in combating forced labor across various sectors.

With the advancement of technology and digital systems, the risks associated with online trafficking are growing, necessitating targeted measures for prevention, detection, and raising awareness of online trafficking and labor exploitation cases. To identify suspicious advertisements or recruitment patterns, law enforcement authorities employ a systematic approach to review and monitor digital spaces and address potential trafficking and/or exploitation threats.

In formulating policies to combat human trafficking and exploitation, special emphasis is placed on women and young girls, through efforts to enhance their professional skills through training and education. In 2023, a digital literacy development course was created and implemented for women residing in rural areas through collaborative efforts between the state authorities and international partners. The project aimed to improve the digital literacy skills of approximately 1000 women by providing them with knowledge of basic digital devices and software, principles of digital content creation, and creative use of digital technologies.

Armenia continues to rely on various methods of information dissemination, presentation, and coverage in the fight against human trafficking and exploitation. The website http://antitrafficking.am/ has been operational since 2003, offering diverse informational materials and programs related to human trafficking and exploitation.

Armenia has been consistently conducting awareness raising activities, covering all regions of the country. Awareness campaigns are conducted annually from July 30 to December 2 as part of the "Blue Heart" international awareness campaign against human trafficking.

Additionally, the following activities have been implemented as part of Armenia's efforts to prevent and combat trafficking and/or labour exploitation and to raise awareness:

-In collaboration with the "Amcor Armenia" charitable foundation, the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs of the Republic of Armenia organized awareness and training courses under the "Data for Impact" program. These courses were designed for staff working at children's day care centers, institutions offering round-the-clock care for children, as well as facilities catering to the elderly or individuals with disabilities. The primary objective of these training sessions was to enhance the employees' understanding of human trafficking and exploitation. Approximately 30 field workers took part in these training sessions;

-The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, in collaboration with the "Amcor Armenia" charitable foundation, organized 24 informative seminars focused on raising awareness and preventing the risks associated with human trafficking and forced labor. These seminars targeted various groups, including six college students and two high school students from Armavir and Ararat regions, community members from four rural areas, individuals displaced from Artsakh in two Armavir region communities, as well as beneficiaries and staff from four NGOs ("We Can" NGO, "Full Life" NGO, "Arpi" NGO, "Christian Association of Young People of Spitak" NGO). After the training sessions, information booklets on trafficking prevention and hotline contacts were distributed. Approximately 600 individuals participated in these seminars, contributing to increased awareness and knowledge on combating human trafficking and exploitation;

-Two training sessions focusing on the identification, referral, support, and reintegration of victims of human trafficking were organized for the primary field workers. The initial training took place at the Stepanavan territorial pedagogical and psychological support center, involving local social workers, educators, guardianship authorities, and police personnel. A total of 25 specialists attended this session. The second training session was attended by 25 social workers;

-Three informational seminars focusing on cyber-trafficking and cyber security were conducted at the Yerevan State University, Yerevan Northern University, and Yerevan College of Informatics. Awareness raising materials were distributed to participants following the workshops. A total of 135 students took part in these seminars, enhancing their understanding of cyber-related risks and security measures;

-A working group was established to examine and identify ways to reduce the vulnerability of children from socially vulnerable groups to trafficking, forced labor and exploitation;

-The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, as part of the "Together Against Human Trafficking" program, collaborated with the international development and charitable organization "World Vision Armenia" to execute:

Training conducted for 26 community social workers focused on "Social work with individuals affected by human trafficking: prevention, intervention, recovery." This training was based on a module developed as part of the project and delivered through the distance learning laboratory at the Faculty of Sociology, Yerevan State University. The module was also digitized as an E-module available on the university's electronic platform;

Training provided for employees from 21 non-governmental organizations using a project-developed module on the "Characteristics of human trafficking or exploitation and the protection and support of individuals facing trafficking or exploitation";

Development of 5 guidelines on trauma awareness and implementing victim-centered approaches when working with individuals affected by human trafficking or exploitation." Aimed at aimed at a range of professionals, including police officers, investigators, prosecutors, judges, public defenders, and attorneys specializing in criminal law., these guidelines have been introduced and are being successfully implemented;

Training delivered for 90 specialized attorneys and public defenders in the criminal field based on a dedicated module focusing on victim-centered approaches and investigations in criminal proceedings related to human trafficking and exploitation.

Training sessions organized for 105 law enforcement officials (police officers, investigators, prosecutors) and 47 judges using the module on ensuring victim-centered approaches and victim-centered investigation in criminal proceedings on human trafficking and exploitation, by the Academy of Justice.

In collaboration with the "Democracy Today" NGO, ten informative seminars were conducted in Yerevan, Gegharkunik, Lori, Armavir, and Ararat with the aim of preventing human trafficking and mitigating associated risks. The seminars were attended by a diverse group, including high school students, parent council presidents, teachers, students, unemployed individuals, individuals registered in the Unified Social Services, employees of the Unified Social Service, and displaced persons from Nagorno-Karabakh. A total of 231 individuals participated in the seminars, and information booklets were distributed to them to supplement their understanding of the topic.

In collaboration with the "Democracy Today" NGO, the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs of the Republic of Armenia organized awareness campaigns on human trafficking for approximately 20 job seekers registered at the territorial center of the unified social service in Ajapnyak district of Yerevan, targeting various vulnerable groups. The primary objectives were to enhance awareness about human trafficking, clarify referral procedures for potential victims, and ensure appropriate support for individuals subjected to trafficking and exploitation. The seminar covered topics such as the risks associated with human trafficking, preventive measures, and available support programs in Armenia.

The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, in partnership with the National Institute of Labor and Social Research, conducted a remote training course focusing on recognizing human trafficking, potential victim referral mechanisms, the social worker's role in identification and referral processes, and the state-provided services for trafficking victims. The training was attended by 48 employees from 16 agencies operating under the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, including institutions offering 24-hour child care, facilities for the elderly and disabled, and mental health care centers.

As part of the "Together against Human Trafficking" programme, the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, in collaboration with the NGO "Association of Audio Visual Journalists," conducted awareness campaigns on human trafficking and exploitation in six regions of

Armenia: Gegharkunik, Kotayk, Aragatsotn, Shirak, Vayots Dzor, and Lori. This initiative included the dissemination of informational posters and self-identification tests developed by the NGO to educate visitors and the local population about human trafficking types, signs, and the services available to victims of trafficking and exploitation.

Under the "Together against Human Trafficking" programme, the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, in partnership with the Association of Audio Visual Journalists, conducted awareness initiatives and created informational materials addressing the risks associated with human trafficking and exploitation[3].

In collaboration with the non-governmental organization "Haykakan Caritas," the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs of the Republic of Armenia organized informational meetings for labor migrants in various communities including Martuni, Tumanyan, Gavar, Vardenis, Ashotsk, Amasia, Gyumri, Noyemberyan, and Ijevan. These sessions, totaling 125 participants, offered pre-departure counseling for labor migrants and addressed the challenges faced upon their return. Employees from the regional centers of the Unified Social Service were also engaged in these informational meetings.

Awareness campaigns were conducted for youth in Armavir, Vanadzor, and Gyumri on the topic of "Labor migration: opportunities and challenges," engaging a total of 42 participants.

- Training sessions were held for employees from the Employment Centers of the Unified Social Service in Yerevan, Armavir, Vayots Dzor, Syunik, Lori, Tavush, Gegharkunik, Shirak, Aragatsotn, and Kotayk focusing on "Pre-departure counseling and assistance for labor migrants," with a combined participation of 71 individuals.

- *(Paragraph 182): Take additional steps to ensure that all assistance measures provided for in the Convention and by Armenian law are guaranteed in practice, in particular by:*

- ensuring that adequate financing is provided to cover the range and quality of assistance services delivered by NGOs;
- providing long-term assistance to enable the social reintegration of trafficking victims;
- providing shelter and access to assistance to all victims of trafficking, including male victims.

The state has raised the allocation of the state budget for services catering to individuals subjected to human trafficking, exploitation, and sexual violence. In comparison to the funding in 2019, the amount was increased in 2020 and subsequent years, doubling the amount and bringing it to approximately 40 million drams. This financial support is

[3] The resources can be accessed at:
https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1a5dCDc2TrW2a1RK0VKU1IC1slcDFVijd/edit?usp=drive_link&ouid=113148889084579635906&rtpof=true&sd=true

intended to aid victims of human trafficking and exploitation, particularly those in special categories, to overcome the disruptions in their lives resulting from these experiences and to ensure the full social reintegration of victims into society.

Support for victims and victims in special categories may encompass a range of services, such as:

- Providing accommodation
- Offering in-kind assistance
- Assisting with acquiring or replacing necessary documents
- Provision of medical care and ongoing support
- Access to psychological counseling
- Consultation services
- Legal aid
- Care provision, including placement in suitable facilities
- Access to translation services
- Basic education provision
- Facilitating access to secondary education or initial vocational training
- Ensuring job security
- Coordinating safe return arrangements
- Offering one-time monetary compensation

In 2023, a total of 23 individuals who had been subjected to human trafficking and exploitation received support from the state. These supports are extended to victims until their successful resocialization is achieved.

In 2024, the scope of services is set to expand geographically. With a particular focus on the resocialization element, support services will be offered to victims of human trafficking and exploitation in an additional 3 regions.

Currently, there is a shelter in the Republic of Armenia designed to accommodate up to 14 victims of human trafficking and exploitation. The shelter caters to both male and female victims, with separate living quarters. Victims are permitted to stay at the shelter for a duration of 12 months, with the possibility of an extension if required.

In adherence to the RA Law "On Identification and Support of Persons Exposed to Human Trafficking and Exploitation," victims of human trafficking and exploitation are provided with one-time financial assistance. As part of the budget of the programme on the provision of social and psychological rehabilitation services to individuals who have experienced trafficking, exploitation, and sexual violence, it is planned to grant one-time financial compensation to 7 individuals. This allocation is subject to review, with intentions to increase the number to 14 recipients.

The state also extends assistance to potential victims of human trafficking and exploitation, which may involve:

- Emergency medical treatment

- Temporary accommodation during the pre-identification phase, including lodging for the legal guardian and dependent children
- Provision of basic education
- Initial in-kind aid
- Primary psychological support
- General guidance and counseling
- Care provision