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**Replies of Armenia to the list of issues in relation to its third  
periodic report<sup>\*</sup>, <sup>\*\*</sup>**

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\* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

\*\* The annexes to the present document may be accessed from the web page of the Committee.



**Reply to paragraph 2 of the list of issues (CCPR/C/ARM/Q/3):  
Anti-corruption measures (arts. 2 and 25)**

1. (a) The enforcement of anti-corruption laws was strongly strengthened in recent years. The prevention tools such as analysis of declarations, integrity checking is being successfully implemented in practice.
2. In 2018 960 people have been prosecuted for corruption cases, from which 470 were officials. For comparison, in 2017 599 people have been prosecuted, 292 of them were officials. In 2019, 1,264 people have been prosecuted for corruption, which is 31.4% more than in 2018. That is to say that each year the statistics of enforcement of is being improved.
3. (b) According to the program of events of the Anti-corruption strategy 2019–2020 the CPC has been provided with a separate territory, independent budget funding, and the necessary toolkit for applying responsibility. The CPC has financial independence and sufficient staff, which increases every year.
4. In order to ensure the use of analytical tools and specialized investigation of corruption crimes at the stage of scrutiny of corruption cases, the law “On Anti-corruption Committee” has been developed and is in a process of adoption. By 2021, corruption cases will be considered by one body-the Anti-corruption Committee, which will combine the functions of preliminary investigation and investigation. It is scheduled to allocate a separate territory, independent budget funding, and the necessary toolkit for the implementation of functions in late 2021 and early 2022.
5. The third point of the program of events of the RA Anti-corruption strategy stipulates the creation of specialized anti-corruption courts. The relevant package of Draft legislation has been developed and publicly discussed. In 2021, it is planned to form specialized anti-corruption courts and provide sufficient human, administrative and material resources to ensure their activities.
6. In accordance with the fourth point of the program of events of the RA Anti-corruption strategy the Prosecutor General’s office has created a specialized unit for corruption cases.
7. (c) The Law “On guarantees of activities of a deputy of the National Assembly”, which entered into force in May 2017, exhaustively prescribes the code of conduct of a member of parliament, as well as regulates the incompatibilities and the restrictions on being engaged in other activities. Article 4 of the above-mentioned Law refers to the conflict of interests of the members of the National Assembly. In addition, the Rules of Procedure Constitutional Law and the Law “On public service” also prescribe the duty of a member of parliament to follow the code of conduct enshrined by law.
8. Right after the elections of the National Assembly in 2018, nearly a dozen orientation sessions and thematic seminars have been held for deputies of the new convocation of the National Assembly with the support of international partners as well, and among the topics were parliamentary ethics and conflict of interests. Currently the detailed code of conduct for MPs is under development. Further steps are being carried out to ensure practical enforcement of ethical rules for MPs.

**Reply to paragraph 3 to 4 of the list of issues: Non-discrimination  
(arts. 2, 19, 20 and 26)**

9. The Law on Ensuring Equality, which provides for a comprehensive legal framework for the protection from discrimination, has been drafted in 2018. The OSCE/ODIHR certified that the recommendations of OSCE/ODIHR are taken into account and the Draft Law is brought into compliance with respective international standards.
10. Article 5 of the Draft Law clearly envisages the definitions of direct and indirect discrimination.
11. During the reporting period, no criminal cases have been instituted and no materials have been prepared in relation to cases of violence against representatives of the LGBT community.

### **Reply to paragraph 5 of the list of issues: Gender equality (arts. 3 and 26)**

12. On 19 September, 2019, by the Decision N 1334-L of the RA Government “The 2019–2023 Strategy and Action Plan for Implementation of Gender Policy” was adopted, which defines the priority directions of gender policy, and the aim of which is to create favorable conditions for the realization of women’s and men’s equal rights and opportunities in all spheres of public life. The Strategy identifies 5 priorities, the first of which refers to “Improving the national mechanism for the advancement of women, equal participation of women and men in governance and at the decision-making level.” The implementation of actions contained in this priority direction are aimed at ensuring the introduction of quotas to promote gender equality in the public administration system, increasing participation of women in the decision-making level of the legislative, executive and other authorities.

13. On November 21, 2019, the RA Prime Minister’s Decree “On Approval of the RA Women’s Council and its Individual Staff and Working Order” was adopted. The Council has been set up as a national mechanism to support the introduction of mechanisms on incorporation of women’s social and political resources into the public democratization processes, and to ensure equal rights and opportunities for women and men.

### **Reply to paragraph 6 of the list of issues: Violence against women, and domestic violence (arts. 2, 3, 6, 7 and 26)**

14. The new Strategy and deriving Action Plan on Human Rights envisages a number of events related to combating violence against women and domestic violence for upcoming 3 years, in particular it is envisaged:

- To carry out trainings on the subject of domestic violence and violence against women in line with international standards including police officers, investigators, prosecutors, judges and medical personnel, representatives of educational institutions, and the staff of support centers for victims of domestic violence;
- To adopt an Action plan to fight domestic violence;
- To criminalize the domestic violence and the violence against women in accordance with international standards;
- To establish legislation on procedural guarantees of remedy for survivors of domestic violence and violence against women in accordance with international standards.

15. In the Republic of Armenia, psychological services are provided in all sector-specific specialised sectors, alongside service provided for the main disease.

16. There have been 136 criminal cases instituted under cases of sexual violence against women, 34 of which have been forwarded to court with letter of accusation, one decision on forwarding the case to court for applying medical coercive measures has been rendered under 1 criminal case, proceedings have been dismissed under 68 criminal cases, proceedings under 21 criminal cases have been terminated under point 1 of part 1 of Article 31 of the Criminal Procedure Code and 11 criminal cases have been forwarded to other subdivisions of the Committee, 1 criminal case has been joined to another criminal case.

17. In order to assist the victims of domestic violence, in 2020, support centers were established in all regions of the country with the state support, where victims of domestic violence receive all types of assistance provided by law, in particular, legal, psychological and social assistance. In addition, in 2020 the state took over the partial financing of two shelters. Specialized training courses for specialists were launched in 2019 in order to properly organize the work in the newly established structures, and this process will be ongoing.

18. In July of 2020, the Police of the RA created “Armenian Police” address through Skype application, which gives assistance to domestic violence cases as well as allows the parents to contact the police on counseling for their minor children in case of necessity on the legal assistance issues to address to the police through the mentioned Skype application.

In addition, a hotline has been set up in the specialized department to provide appropriate counseling assistance on issues connected with juveniles and domestic violence.

19. With regard to the provision of necessary psychological, social and rehabilitation services to victims of domestic violence, the competent police officer, in accordance with the current legislation, directs the mentioned persons to the relevant interested structures or non-governmental organizations cooperating with the Police.

### **Reply to paragraph 7 of the list of issues: Voluntary termination of pregnancy and sexual and reproductive rights (arts. 2, 3 and 6)**

20. In 2016, after making a supplement to Article 10 of the Law “On reproductive health and rights to reproduction of a person”, the provision on the ban on sex-selective abortions was prescribed, as well as supplements were made to the Code on Administrative Offences which prescribe sanctions against medical workers who violate the requirements of the law.

21. After making amendments to the law, Decision No 180-N of 23 February 2017 “On approving the procedure and conditions for abortion and on repealing Decision of the Government of the Republic of Armenia No 1116-N of 5 August 2004” was drafted and adopted, by which the medical and social instructions for induced abortion and the procedure and conditions for implementation were specified, aiming at reduction of induced abortion, particularly sex-selective abortions. At the same time, large-scale efforts have been made with non-governmental organisations for valuing the girl child as a generation to rely on. Besides, actions have been implemented to change the professional working styles of medical workers.

22. Between 2017 and 2019, advisory skills enhancement seminars aimed at prevention of sex-selective abortions were organised for nearly 200 obstetrician-gynaecologists and sonographers working at in-patient institutions of the Republic of Armenia.

23. The implementation of Plan “For Approving the 2020–2023 Programme for Prevention of Abortion on Grounds of Sex of the Foetus and the List of Actions for Implementation of the Programme” has now launched, within the scope of which large-scale advocacy activities for public awareness have been carried out and continue to be carried out, in co-operation with state organisations, international organisations (United Nations Population Fund, International Center for Human Development, Save the Children Foundation, World Vision, etc.) and local non-governmental and community organisations. Discussions on the prevention of gender-biased sex selection of the child and abortion on grounds of sex of the foetus have been organised on social networks.

24. 1985 people have joined the Facebook group “Combating Gender Biased Sex-Selections” in the period between 2016 and 2019. Link: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/409020602617094/>.

25. Nearly 121 beneficiaries have participated in 25 on-line discussions held with regional partners. The designs of advocacy tools applied by the partners on the spot have been discussed and advice has been given during the meetings. Active groups have been created and training courses have been held in the communities, and 25 active civic groups (ACG) have been formed.

26. Between 2016 and 2019, the United Nations Population Fund provided modern contraceptives (combined contraceptive pills, condoms, intra-cervical spirals) to primary healthcare institutions performing reproductive health maintenance in order to allocate those contraceptives free-of-charge to all groups of the population, including women living in rural communities, socially insecure women, as well as persons with disabilities.

27. Over the past few years (between 2016 and 2020), various activities have been carried out within the scope of the strategy on proportionate development of the marzes for renovating and equipping medical institutions, and consequently for ensuring access to and availability of quality medical aid for health-care of the population of rural areas, women’s health and especially maternal health. In all regions of Armenia, 18 multi-profile medical centres have been built and equipped with modern equipment.

28. Between 2016 and 2019, within the scope of the strategy on improvement of reproductive health, actions for raising the level of awareness and improving the quality of medical aid continued to be carried out, thanks to which it was possible to make pre-natal care and midwifery for pregnant women truly accessible, quality, free and to ensure nearly 100% inclusion of women in pre-natal and in-patient maternity care, irrespective of the place of residence, social condition, etc.

29. For the purpose of reducing abortions, improving reproductive health and ensuring access to and availability of contraceptives, between 2016 and 2018, the three-year programme “Ensuring Access to Modern Contraceptives for Prevention of Unwanted Pregnancies” was implemented, providing the opportunity to receive comprehensive information about the manpower in the sphere of family planning, the needs of cabinets, as well as the demand for modern contraceptives in Armenia.

30. Courses have been organised for 503 obstetrician-gynaecologists and family doctors on the topic “Medical Criteria for the Application of Modern Contraceptives for Prevention of Unwanted Pregnancies”, which provided the opportunity to improve the knowledge of medical workers and provide women with quality medical service as well as prevent abortions.

31. Large-scale activities have been carried out to raise the level of awareness of the population about reproduction and family planning, having the aim to prevent abortions and to encourage the use of modern contraceptives through community meetings/trainings with the population.

32. For the purpose of increasing the safety of induced abortion, medical abortion has been introduced at all in-patient medical organisations, and curettage has been replaced by vacuum-aspiration, thanks to which there have not been cases of maternal deaths and severe complications over the past few years.

33. Pursuant to Article 4 of the Law “On medical assistance and service to the population”, every person, irrespective of national origin, race, gender, language, religion, age, health condition, political or other views, social origin, property or other status, shall have the right to medical assistance and service in Armenia. Thus, as citizens, all women, irrespective of national origin and ethnic belonging, benefit from the same rights and privileges as the population of Armenian. Moreover, target medical examination and treatment are organised for them in co-operation with non-governmental organisations.

34. In 2017–2019, in co-operation with “UMCOR Armenia” non-governmental organisation, complex professional clinical-laboratory and instrumental examinations were conducted for 520 Yazidi and 157 Assyrian women in the Yazidi-populated rural communities (Baghramyan, Frik, Nor Artages, Shamiram villages) of Armavir Marz and Assyrian rural communities (Verin Dvin, Dmitrov villages) of Ararat Marz; treatment of the detected pathologies was provided free-of-charge, through those organisations.

35. Within the scope of the support programme of Russia, the National Center for AIDS Prevention, with the support of the “SPID-infosvyaz” Foundation and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, is carrying out actions for prevention of HIV through the provision of a comprehensive package of health-care services for outbound labour migrants and their family members in rural and borderline regions of Armenia. This includes consulting regarding HIV, studies on HIV, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C and syphilis, as well as assessment of the status of tuberculosis. The mentioned services have been provided by the professional mobile groups of the National Center for AIDS Prevention at all ambulatories and on the base of mobile clinics in communities.

36. Within the scope of the state target programme for prevention of HIV/AIDS, the National Center for AIDS Prevention, in co-operation with non-governmental organisations in 6 marzes under the programme for prevention of sexually transmitted diseases and HIV being carried out for labour migrants and their family members, has created women’s community groups, the activities of which are aimed at reducing vulnerability of women to HIV. Issues related to the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases/HIV, the importance of a check-up for sexually transmitted diseases/HIV and the creation of motivation for a check-up are discussed during the meetings organised on a regular basis.

**Reply to paragraph 8 to 10 of the list of issues: Right to life and prohibition of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (arts. 6 and 7)**

37. Proceedings are under way under the Criminal Case No 62202608 being investigated in relation to the events taken place in Yerevan in the period between 1 and 2 March 2008, including on the occasion of the death of 10 persons.

38. In particular:

- Since 2018, more than 1250 persons have been interrogated as witnesses under the Criminal Case No 62202608. More than 120 expert examinations have been assigned, more than 1200 firearms and a large number of military products have been presented for expert examination, more than 70 searches have been conducted and more than 100 seizures have been conducted from citizens and different state institutions.

39. The investigation into the circumstances subject to disclosure under the criminal case is pending. See the list of the persons involved as accused in Annex 1 and the details of the proceedings in Annex 2.

40. During 2018, 93 criminal cases were instituted in regard to reports on excess of official powers through the use of violence, weapons or special means, received under parts 2 and 3 of Article 309 of the Criminal Code, of which:

- 4 criminal cases having been instituted against 5 persons were sent to the court along with letters of accusation;
- Proceedings for 51 criminal cases were dismissed;
- Proceedings for 15 criminal cases were terminated;
- 23 criminal cases were joined to another criminal case.

41. During 2018, 71 criminal cases were instituted on the occasion of reports on excess of official powers through the use of violence, weapons or special means, received under parts 2 and 3 of Article 309 of the Criminal Code, of which:

- 1 criminal case regarding 1 person was sent to the court along with the letter of accusation;
- Proceedings of 48 criminal cases were dismissed;
- Proceedings of 12 criminal cases were terminated;
- 10 criminal cases were joined to another criminal case.

42. In the same period, 2 criminal cases were instituted under parts 2 and 3 of Article 341 of the Criminal Code, the proceedings of which were dismissed.

43. During 2020, 33 criminal cases were instituted on the occasion of reports on excess of official powers through the use of violence, weapons or special means, received under parts 2 and 3 of Article 309 of the Criminal Code, of which:

- 2 criminal cases regarding 3 persons were sent to the court along with letters of accusation;
- Proceedings of 19 criminal cases were dismissed;
- Proceedings of 3 criminal cases were terminated;
- 6 criminal cases were joined with another criminal case;
- Investigations into 3 criminal cases are pending.

44. In the same period, 1 criminal case was instituted under parts 2 and 3 of Article 341 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Armenia, which is in the stage of investigation.

45. Between 2018 and 2020, out of the criminal cases sent to the court along with letters of accusation under parts 2 and 3 of Article 309 of the Criminal Code, a criminal judgement of conviction was rendered in regard to 1 person, a criminal judgement of acquittal was

rendered in regard to 1 person which was appealed to the Criminal Court of Appeal by the prosecutor and is in the stage of judicial examination.

### **The impact of the measures adopted to prevent non-combat deaths in the Armenian Armed Forces**

46. In 2018 there were a total of 41 125 phone calls via the hotline, in 2019, the indicator made up 46 162, which exceeds the indicator of the previous year by 12%. You can receive information about the content of the phone calls received via the “Hotline” from the official website of the Ministry of Defence via the following link: <http://www.mil.am/hy/news/7458>.

47. From 1 January 2018 to 20 August 2020, 64 cases of military service-related death of servicemen caused as a result of non-combat operations were recorded. From among the cases of death of servicemen, 7 were murders, 24 were suicides and cases of driving to suicide, 8 resulted from car accidents, 6 – from illness, 9 – from accidents, 2 – from mine explosions, and 4 – as a result of violating the rules of use of weapons, 2 – as a result of violating the rules of combat duty and 2 – as a result of violating the flight rules. With regard to the mentioned cases, 3 case materials were prepared, and 55 proceedings were instituted. The institution of proceedings on the 3 prepared case materials was rejected on the ground of absence of an incidence of crime.

48. The proceedings of 15 criminal cases having been instituted were terminated, the proceedings of 2 – suspended, and 25 are pending. Two criminal cases were sent for further preliminary investigation (criminal case No 90753018 instituted on the occasion of the fact of the death of Levon Torosyan (criminal case No 90859119 instituted on the occasion of the death of Arthur Ajamyan). Eleven criminal cases against 18 indicted persons were sent to court, 1 person was sentenced to imprisonment later being released from serving the sentence with amnesty; the trial on the others is pending.

49. As for the activities aimed at preventing cases of death in non-combat conditions, the relevant subdivisions of the Ministry of Defense regularly carry out preventive measures for that purpose, particularly emphasising the fight against manners of the street, criminal subculture, interpersonal relations and prevention of violence.

50. For this purpose, courses on legal topics are held in the military units with the participation of the command of the military units and representatives of other law enforcement bodies, during which the relevant articles of the Criminal Code are presented to the servicemen.

51. Surprise inspections are carried out in military units, during which prohibited objects and items available with servicemen are discovered and destroyed in accordance with the established procedure.

52. Activities are permanently carried out to identify servicemen tending to disorder, as well as those depressed and having various problems, and individual preventive explanatory activities are carried out with them.

53. Meanwhile, taking into account the death cases recorded recently in the army in non-combat conditions, at the suggestion of the Ministry of Defense, within the framework of the CoE cooperation, the CoE Yerevan Office plans to conduct a study on “Behavioural norms of informal relations within the Armed Forces of the Republic of Armenia and social and psychological problems of manifestation of criminal subculture among servicemen”. The results of the study will serve as a basis for implementation of a fact-based policy to address the root causes of human rights violations within the armed forces.

### **Steps taken towards establishing an independent complaints mechanism to receive and investigate allegations of torture or ill-treatment in all places of detention**

54. The Chapter 18 (Submitting proposals, applications and complaints by detainees and convicts) of the Domestic regulation adopted on 3 August 2006 by the decision N 1543-N on adopting the domestic regulation on detention facilities and correctional institutions of the Penitentiary Service is devoted to the submission of proposals, applications and complaints by detainees and convicts. In particular, the Articles 169, 170, 171, 172 and 173. The order N 5-L adopted on October 2, 2019 by the Head of the Penitentiary Service established the

procedure of acceptance proposals, applications and complaints in penitentiary institutions, as well as confidential mailing delivery to the addressees, furthermore special boxes with four language notes (Armenian, Russian, English and Persian) were put due to which applications and proposals are sent to the addressees.

55. The application boxes (in closed and semi-closed correctional facilities, as well as in places of detention of detainees) are placed in the walk grounds or in the most convenient part of the road leading to the walk ground (in a place protected from bad weather). In other penitentiary institutions, boxes should be placed inside the common living spaces and buildings for persons sentenced to imprisonment (if it is possible near the entrance door).

56. The persons have been appointed responsible for opening the boxes and delivering the applications. The applications are sent to the addressees without opening them.

57. Studies have been carried out on the mechanisms for establishing the fact of ill-treatment in the context of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) and if necessary, a draft will be developed.

58. Supplements were made in the Criminal Code (Article 309.1, by HO-69-N of 9 June 2015) and the term “torture” was defined in line with the concept of torture defined by the UN Convention against Torture.

59. In 2018, 50 criminal cases were investigated with the elements of crime provided for by Article 309.1 of the Criminal Code, of which:

- 1 criminal case having been instituted against 1 person was sent to the court with an indictment;
- Proceedings of 35 criminal cases were dismissed;
- Proceedings of 4 criminal cases were suspended;
- 1 criminal case was joined to another criminal case;
- Investigation of 9 criminal cases was continued in 2019.

60. In 2019, there were investigated 47 criminal cases, of which:

- 3 criminal cases having been instituted against 6 persons were sent to the court with an indictment;
- Proceedings of 27 criminal cases were dismissed;
- Proceedings of 5 criminal cases were suspended;
- 3 criminal cases were joined to another criminal case;
- Investigation of 9 criminal case was continued in 2020.

61. In the first half of 2020, there were 33 criminal cases, of which:

- 1 criminal case having been instituted against 1 person was sent to the court with an indictment;
- Proceedings of 21 criminal cases were dismissed;
- Proceedings of 5 criminal cases were suspended;
- 1 criminal case was joined to another criminal case;
- Investigation of 5 criminal case continues.

62. There are many cases when the participants of the criminal cases make false statements in courts of different instances about being tortured. The studies show some difficulties in revealing the circumstances to be established under the cases on torture. In many cases, it is due to the fact that in practice the process of interrogation of suspects and accused, as well as other investigative operations involving them, including confrontation, identification parade, examination, investigative experiments, obtaining samples for examination are rarely recorded.

63. Given that most reports of torture relate to the extortion of confessions by torture, the video recording of interrogations of the suspects and the accused will provide a realistic insight into whether the interrogated person has testified voluntarily or under the influence of alleged torture or ill-treatment, as well as to find out if there are any signs of the possible torture on the parts of the body of the person being interrogated. Such a recording of the interrogations of the suspects and the accused will also enable to find out the accuracy of the reports by which the suspects and the accused report that during the interrogation they have reported the investigator that they have been tortured by the police officer but the investigator has failed to record that fact.

**Reply to paragraph 11 to 12 of the list of issues: Liberty and security of the person (arts. 9 and 10)**

64. (a) The Law “On making amendments to the Criminal Procedure Code” has been developed, according to which person taken into custody has the right to:

- (1) To know the reason for depriving of liberty;
- (2) To maintain silence.
- (3) To receive oral clarification on his/her rights;
- (4) To receive a written notification on his/her rights and responsibilities and clarification;
- (5) To inform the person of his/her choice about his/her location;
- (6) To invite an advocate;
- (7) To undergo a medical examination at his/her request.

65. Legislative changes have been made to reduce pre-trial detention. In particular, on April 24, 2020 The Law “On making amendments to the Criminal Procedure Code of the Republic of Armenia” entered into force. The Law, among other things, proposes to consider all preventive measures as alternative pre-trial detention measures, enabling courts to reject a motion to detain a person or extend his detention if it is possible to achieve the goals set forth in Article 134, Part 1 of the Criminal Procedure Code by applying other preventive measures against the accused, leaving the decision to choose other preventive measures to the competence of the body conducting the proceedings. Thus, the use of detention has reduced tremendously.

66. The Council of Europe has published the CoE Annual Penal Statistics for 2019 (SPACE I) and Armenia is among the countries with the lowest level of imprisonment.

67. (b) The new Criminal Procedural Code has been submitted to the approval. One of the innovations of the Draft is the introduction of a system of alternative measures and the radical reform of enforcement procedures. The Draft has envisaged new alternative preventive measures, such as home arrest and administrative surveillance. These new preventive measures will help reduce pre-trial detention.

68. The general analysis of the statistics allows to confirm that the strategy of the penitentiary and probation sector has targeted really important directions, and that the Government implements a policy of transition from punitive to restorative justice, the number of convicts has recently decreased, as well as the alternative measures to detention are more often used as a precautionary measure.

**Measures adopted to address overcrowding and poor material conditions in places of detention, particularly at Nubarashen, Vanadzor and Yerevan-Kentron prisons, and to ensure adequate access by prisoners to health care, including psychiatric care**

69. The problem of overcrowding at penitentiary institutions has already been solved completely for about four years. In all cases where the employee of the penitentiary institution is not in a position to overcome the problem, an application by the latter is

submitted to the Ministry of Health and the treatment is organized in public medical institutions in cases of oncological illnesses and other urgent conditions.

**Reply to paragraph 13 of the list of issues: Elimination of slavery, servitude and trafficking in persons (arts. 2, 7, 8 and 26)**

70. According to Article 26 of the Law *“On Identification of and support to persons subjected to trafficking in human beings and exploitation:*

1. *The Identification Commission and the competent bodies shall – each half of the year, until the 15th of the following month – submit a joint report to the Board on the activities carried out and the expenses incurred within the framework of this law.*

2. *By 15 February each year, the Board shall submit to the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia an annual summary report on the reports provided for in part 1 of this Article.*

3. *The form of the report provided for in part 1 of this Article shall be established by a decision of the Government of the Republic of Armenia.”*

71. In line with point 1.1.2 of the National Program on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings for 2020–2022 approved by the decision of the Government on June 4, 2020, it is envisaged to draft decision *“On Making Amendments to the Decision N 1200-N of the Government+”* adopted on October 15, 2015 to develop the working process of the Commission on Identification of Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings, to determine the form of the Report submitted by the Commission for the Identification of Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings to the Anti-Trafficking and Exploitation Council in the Republic of Armenia”.

72. In 2018, 9 criminal cases were initiated in the Republic of Armenia on the grounds of human trafficking or exploitation (1 case by the NSS), 2 of which were terminated, and 1 was re-qualified under Article 261 of the Criminal Code of the RA. Out of 6 cases, 1 was a case of sexual exploitation of women and 5 were cases of labor exploitation. One case of sexual exploitation took place in Turkey. The case is under investigation. In the mentioned case of sexual exploitation, the victim was also subjected to labor exploitation. Out of 5 cases of labor exploitation, 1 was external (Russia), the other 4 were cases of internal exploitation.

73. In 2019 11 criminal cases were initiated with human trafficking or exploitation features, 5 of which were terminated due to the lack of evidence. In the remaining 6 cases, 7 cases of crime were found out, 4 of which were cases of work exploitation and 3 of which were cases of sexual exploitation. 2 of the cases of labor exploitation were domestic and 2 were external (Russian Federation) exploitation cases. 3 cases of sexual exploitation were cases of internal exploitation. 8 persons were recognized as victims in the mentioned cases, 3 of which were female, 5 were male, and 1 was juvenile.

74. In the 1st half of 2020, 5 cases of trafficking were registered in the Republic /in the first half of 2019 – also 5 cases/, 1 of which was internal sexual exploitation case, 3 – internal cases, 1 – external labor exploitation case. 5 persons were recognized as victims in the mentioned cases, 3 of which were male/1 juvenile/, 2 females/1 juvenile/. The juvenile victims were involved in animal husbandry.

75. Information related to the trainings is attached (Please see Annex 3).

76. *“Strategic Plan for the Protection of the Rights of the Child in the Republic of Armenia for 2017–2021 and the schedule of measures for the implementation of the strategic plan of the Protection of the Rights of the Child for 2017–2020”* was approved by the protocol decision No. 30 of the sitting of the Government of July 13, 2017.

77. On June 3, 2019, the National Assembly adopted the Law *“On Amendments and Addenda to the Law on Identification and Assistance to the persons subjected to trafficking and exploitation”* which has also defined the process of directing people subjected to trafficking and children subjected to exploitation.

78. It should be noted that a month on “Human Trafficking or Exploitation” was held at public schools by the competent police officers from October–November 2019.

79. At the same time, in order to prevent cases of child trafficking, labor exploitation or the worst forms of work, to identify the persons involved, to prevent them from committing crimes, begging or wandering inspection-tours were organized and are underway in Yerevan and the regions of the Republic of Armenia by the territorial subdivisions of Yerevan City Department and regional departments of Police of the RA.

**Reply to paragraph 14–15 of the list of issues: Treatment of aliens, including refugees and asylum seekers (arts. 7, 9, 12, 13 and 24)**

80. The draft Law “On legal assistance in criminal matters” has been elaborated. In accordance with the draft the person who committed a crime outside the territory of Armenia and is found in the territory of Armenia, having the status of a refugee or asylum in Armenia, is not refouled to their country of origin. These persons could be refouled to the third country that has provided written request for extradition only in cases where the written safeguards are submitted on non-refoulement or extradition to the country of their origin.

81. According to Article 5 of the Law “On refugees and asylum” of 24 January 2009, an asylum seeker is a foreign national or stateless person, who has submitted an asylum claim in the Republic of Armenia. A person recognised as a refugee by a State signatory to the Convention, who, in accordance with part 1 of this Article, has submitted an asylum claim in the Republic of Armenia shall also be considered an asylum seeker. A foreign national or stateless person, who has submitted an asylum claim in the territory of the Republic of Armenia, shall, before a final decision on his or her application for being granted asylum has been delivered, be considered an asylum seeker and shall enjoy all the rights of asylum seekers in the Republic of Armenia.

82. According to Article 28 of the mentioned Law, asylum seekers and refugees shall not be subjected to criminal or administrative liability for illegal entry into, or presence in, the Republic of Armenia. When an asylum seeker deliberately fails to co-operate or fails to comply with the restrictions of movement, he or she may be subjected to liability as prescribed by law.

83. The systematic analysis of the above-mentioned provisions shows that the asylum application exists only in the case when the person, upon entry into the Republic of Armenia, presents his or her unequivocal wish to find protection in the Republic of Armenia, thus substantiating that he or she has initially entered the territory of the Republic of Armenia to seek asylum rather than seeking asylum is a means of being exempted from the criminal liability for a crime allegedly committed by him or her.

84. Armenia deports only foreigners staying in the Republic of Armenia illegally, but does not deport those foreigners who are stateless and who have the principle of non-refundability in the manner prescribed by the law, as well as those who have been granted refugee status in the Republic of Armenia.

85. At the same time, the draft law “On Stateless Foreigners” is currently in circulation, which clearly defines the process of recognizing the rights, responsibilities, as well as status of stateless persons that arises from the requirements of the UN Convention on the Status of Stateless Persons adopted on 28 September 1954.

**The situation of refugees and their families who fled to Armenia from Azerbaijan between 1988 and 1992**

86. On 21st of November the Government of Armenia adopted a Governmental Decree N 1666-N. The Decree approved a Program on Providing Refugees Deported from Azerbaijan in 1988–1992 with House Purchasing Certificates. The Program is aimed to address the housing problem of 112 refugee families residing in temporary shelters (dormitories, hotels and etc.) in 5 administrative districts of Yerevan. The total cost of the program is 1 492 400 000 AMD. On 27th of May 2020 the Government of Armenia adopted a new Decree N 866-N and launched a new program aimed at providing House Purchasing

Certificates to another 185 refugee families from Azerbaijan residing in temporary shelters of other 5 administrative districts of Yerevan. The total cost of the program is 2 169 974 000 AMD.

**Reply to paragraph 16–17 of the list of issues: Access to justice, independence of the judiciary, and fair trial (art. 14)**

87. (a) It should be noticed that after constitutional reforms of 2015 amendments were made in Judicial Code. Especially, in line with the constitutional amendments, the Code systematically ensures that court presidents are deprived of the tools to interfere in the activities of judges, the independence of judiciary. Examples of this are the following provisions:

(1) Court presidents cannot be elected as members of the Supreme Judicial Council;

(2) Court presidents cannot be elected as members of committees (disciplinary, educational) of the General Assembly of Judges;

(3) The Council of Court Presidents, as a mandatory decision-making body for the judiciary, will no longer exist;

(4) The withholding of a judge's salary has been removed from the types of penalties for subjecting a judge to disciplinary liability. The termination of a judge's powers has been removed as a form of disciplinary action, and the termination of a judge's powers has been linked only to a significant disciplinary violation by him;

(5) The stages of disciplinary proceedings and the actions taken during them are clearly separated. In contrast to the previous Code, which established the duty of a judge to give an explanation to a disciplinary body after initiating a disciplinary proceeding, the new Code considered it as a right of a judge. It also clearly states the rights and responsibilities of a judge during the disciplinary liability procedure in the Supreme Judicial Council.

88. The new Law of the Republic of Armenia "On the Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Armenia" adopted on 17 November 2017 and entered into force on 9 April 2018, based on the constitutional and legal regulations, made an attempt to consistently implement a number of directions being considered as priorities in the context of the activities of the Prosecutor's office at the current stage of judicial reforms (See detailed information in Annex 4).

89. (b) Procedures and criteria for the selection, appointment, suspension and removal of judges are enshrined in the Chapter 16 of the Judicial Code. Hence, there are a number of changes envisaged within the Judicial and Legal Reforms Strategy.

90. (c) The nature and scope of the powers of the Prosecutor General are conditioned by the fact that the Prosecutor's Office is a unified and independent system. However, the legislative reforms made and envisaged in the recent years aim at expanding the powers of the collegial body of the Prosecutor's Office, namely, the Collegium of Prosecutor's Office and the Qualification and Ethics Committees adjunct to the Prosecutor General, as well as to change the procedure for formation of the Committees adjunct to the Prosecutor General so that their members are appointed through a process that does not imply the participation of the Prosecutor General.

91. The procedure for formation of the Ethics Committee adjunct to the Prosecutor General has also been amended. Thus, according to Article 23 of the Law "On the Prosecutor's Office", the Deputy Prosecutor General, who is the Chairman of the Ethics Committee and three lawyer-scientist, who are members of the Ethics Committee, are appointed by the Prosecutor General, and the other three member-prosecutors are elected by the superior prosecutors.

92. Besides, the opinion of the Committees adjunct to the Prosecutor General is currently required in the process of appointment, office promotion of the prosecutors and subjecting them to a disciplinary action.

93. The 2019–2020 Action Plan arising from the 2019–2023 Judicial and Legal Reform Strategy approved by Decision of the Government No 1441-L of 10 October 2019 envisages to amend the rules of formation of the Qualification Committee so that a simple majority of its members are appointed through a process not implying the participation of the Prosecutor General.

94. For the purpose of implementation of the above-mentioned measure, the General Prosecutor’s Office is currently preparing the “Draft Law on Making an Amendment to the Law of the Republic of Armenia “On the Prosecutor’s Office”, which will be submitted to the Government for discussion after passing through the established procedure.

95. (d), (e) In December 2019, the National Assembly adopted the law envisaging the possibility of voluntary early retirement for Constitutional Court judges. The draft was consulted with the Venice Commission which had issued an urgent Opinion in general stating that: “The proposed mechanisms increase the accountability of judges and are more efficient to prevent corruption, without, at the same time, disproportionately encroaching on the judges’ independence”. Nevertheless, even before the expiration of the term provided by the abovementioned law at least some of the judges had announced that they would not file an application for early retirement; moreover, they even described the discussed institutional measure as “legal bribery” and labelled it with other disrespectful statements. This discourse established the option of opting for an early retirement as undignified and hence sealed the environment where none of the justices would make such a choice. When this became apparent, the authorities came to the conclusion that the proposed scheme would not be efficient in bringing the 2015 amendments to life.

96. Taking into account the abovementioned, a number of deputies forming parliamentary majority initiated the adoption of the draft amendments to the Constitution envisaging amendments to Article 213 of the Constitution, as a result of which the powers of all judges appointed before the entry into force of Chapter 7 of the current Constitution would terminate.

97. The failure to hold the referendum was due to Covid-19 outbreak and global pandemic.

98. It should be highlighted that in May 2020, the Minister of Justice applied to Venice Commission for opinion regarding the situation around Constitutional Court.

99. Thus, under these exceptional circumstances, the Commission was of the view that a possible solution aimed at reconciling the different conflicting interests at stake, may be to amend current Article 213 and provide for the renewal of the Constitutional Court while envisaging a transitional period which would allow for a gradual change in the composition of the Court in order to avoid any abrupt and immediate change endangering the independence of this institution.

100. Concerning the President of the Court, although the international standards appear to provide more leeway concerning his position, changes in the term of office of the chairperson also require a cautious approach. It would therefore be advisable to envisage a transitional period instead of immediately terminating the mandate of the current chairperson of the Court upon the entry into force of a possible amendment to Article 213.

101. (f) The Strategy for Legal and Judicial Reforms is in the process of due implementation. (Information on already implemented activities can be found in Annex 5).

#### **Information on the juvenile justice sector reforms**

102. Within the scope of co-operation with the UN Children’s Fund in Armenia, the Juvenile Justice Council (hereinafter referred to as “the Council”) was established by the Order of the Minister of Justice No 633-A of 30 December 2016 and currently operates. In the best interests of the child, the activities of the Council are aimed at establishing and continuously improving the institutional system for minors relating to laws, as well as ensuring the protection of the rights and legitimate interests of children. It significantly contributes also to the formation of inter-agency relations, accessibility of services, improvement of the legislation and development of mechanisms, introduction and ensuring of child-oriented approaches in the sector of juvenile justice.

103. The Council includes interested state bodies, representatives of non-governmental and international organisations.

104. During 2016–2019, at least 3 sessions of the Council were regularly held on an annual basis. Continuous ensuring of organisational and technical activities of the Council and administration thereof are carried out by the “Centre for the Implementation of Legal Education and Rehabilitation Programmes” SNCO of the Ministry of Justice.

105. In the framework of the Council, the issues of juvenile punishment, rehabilitation programs, training of specialists aimed at the introduction and development of leading approaches in working with juveniles who have committed crimes were discussed.

### **Reply to paragraph 18 of the list of issues: Right to Privacy (art.17)**

106. The Republic of Armenia in accordance with the Article 4(1) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (hereinafter referred to as Covenant) took measures derogating from its obligations under the present Covenant to the extent strictly required by the exigencies of the situation. We should state that the measures are not inconsistent with their other obligations under international law and do not involve discrimination solely on the ground of race, color, sex, language, religion or social origin. Despite the right of privacy, the right to liberty of movement and freedom to choose his residence (Article 12) has also been restricted on the grounds provided by law, which was necessary to protect public health. Also, we should state that the State of Emergency will be over on 11th of September and a new regime of Quarantine will be established, as a result of the amendments to the Law on Sanitary-Epidemiological Safety of the Population and the Law on Protection of the Population in Emergency Situations. Due to these amendments it will be possible to establish Quarantine in the territory of Armenia, with fewer restrictions of human rights: especially, it will be impossible to continue the electronic supervision by the means of Electronic Communication.

### **Reply to paragraph 19 of the list of issues: Freedom of conscience and religious belief (arts. 2, 18 and 26)**

107. The draft law on Freedom of Conscience and religious belief is currently under the process of elaboration and discussion. The elaboration thereof is also envisaged by the Human Rights Strategy and Deriving Action Plan for 2020–2022 by the first quarter of 2021. Nowadays, constitutional amendments are initiated in Armenia and the commission is discussing the status of the church and other religious organizations and the ways of improving these spheres.

108. Constitutional court found non-constitutional the norms indicating that employees of, inter alia, the military, national security, penitentiary or rescue service are prohibited by law from being a member of a religious organization, thus these norms are not valid and can't be applied.

109. The content of general education in the Republic of Armenia is regulated by the State Standard of General Education, which was approved by the decree N 439-N of the Government dated on April 8, 2010. The State Standard for General Education defines the obligatory minimum, maximum volume of the content of the main general education programs, the general requirements for the graduates of the elementary, basic and secondary general education programs and the pupils' assessment system. Currently, the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport is reviewing the State Standard of General Education. The proposed project attempts to respond to all the problems that exist in the field of general education, to create a basis for building more flexible content. The new standard will create an opportunity to have the least restrictive standard requirements in the context of the rapid development of science and technology, which will allow us to respond quickly to changes, maximizing the satisfaction of pupils' diverse educational needs. There is no subject “History of the Armenian Church” in the subject list of the circulating draft.

**Reply to paragraph 20 of the list of issues: Freedom of expression (arts. 19 and 20)**

110. In 2018, 8 criminal cases were initiated on 11 materials prepared on obstructing the lawful professional activities of journalists. The initiation of criminal cases on the other 3 materials was rejected on the grounds of acquittal. Two criminal cases were transferred from the previous year. A total of 14 criminal cases were investigated. There were 10 accused involved under the mentioned criminal cases. Eight criminal cases were completed, the proceedings of four of which were dismissed (3 on acquittal, 1 on non-acquittal grounds), and the other four were sent to court against 8 persons. Two criminal proceedings were suspended, each based on points (1) and (2) of part 1 of Article 31 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Armenia. Under 3 cases examined in the court, three persons were found guilty, one of which was sentenced to imprisonment and two – to fines. A fine was imposed against all of them.

111. In 2019, 10 criminal cases were initiated on 10 materials prepared on obstructing the lawful professional activities of journalists. Two criminal cases were transferred from the previous year. A total of 14 criminal cases were investigated. There were 2 accused involved under the mentioned criminal cases. Eight criminal cases were completed, the proceedings of six of which were dismissed on the grounds of acquittal, and two were sent to court against 2 persons. Under one case examined in court, a judgment of acquittal was rendered against 1 person, which was cancelled by the Criminal Court of Appeal of the Republic of Armenia as a result of the examination of the appeal brought by the prosecutor, an judgement of conviction was rendered against the accused, and a fine was imposed as a punishment.

112. During the first half of 2020, 6 criminal cases on obstructing the lawful professional activities of journalists were investigated, which were transferred from 2019. Three criminal cases were completed, the proceedings of two of which were dismissed on the grounds of acquittal, and one was sent to court against 1 person. A criminal judgement of acquittal against 4 persons was rendered under 1 case examined in court. Fine was imposed against all of them as a punishment.

113. On 16th of March the Government adopted the decree which declared the state of emergency in the whole territory of the Republic of Armenia for a period from 16 March 2020, 18:30, to 14 April 2020, 17:00, which has been extended in accordance with our legislation 4 times for a month and is now set until August 14 2020, 17:00.

114. The Government established a Commandant's office headed by DPM Tigran Avinyan, for the purpose of jointly managing the forces and means ensuring the legal regime of the state of emergency.

115. A special sitting of the National Assembly has been convened immediately on 16th March by virtue of law and according to the Article 120 of the Armenian Constitution. The Parliament maintained the measures envisaged by the Decree of the Government (hereinafter referred to as "Decree"). The Decree sets out the measures applied during the state of emergency, including those related to the restrictions of some human rights.

116. There are limitations set for freedom of movement, personal liberty, freedom of assembly and association. Besides, some concrete restrictions are set for property rights (including economic activities and trade). The limitations on the freedom of movement were defined on March 24 by N16 Decision on the Commandant and were lifted on May 4.

117. Regarding the freedom of expression, the Decree regulates only the publication of information of a medical and epidemiological nature, thus ensuring safeguards for the genuine freedom of media outside this narrow topical framework. On March 25 changes were made to the restrictions of the media activities. In particular, it was defined that if COVID 19-related stories are re-published from the foreign media, their source should be mentioned in the headline of the Armenia version. It was also defined that if a media entity publishes a story on isolated, self-isolated, and Coronavirus-positive Armenian citizens and epidemic measures, it is necessary to attribute the Commandant's office, totally republishing the official information without editing. On April 13th this Chapter VII of Government's decree lost its force.

**Reply to paragraph 21 of the list of issues: Freedom of peaceful assembly (art. 21)**

118. (a) It is envisaged to introduce changes in the Law “on Freedom of Assembly” in compliance with international norms (first half of 2021), to organize training on the international standards of the freedom of assembly for police officers (2020–2022) and to establish legislation on the terms and conditions for the activities of the police of the Republic of Armenia in compliance with international standards. The Police of the RA is exclusively guided by Article 32 of the Law of the RA “On Freedom of Assembly” during peaceful assemblies, i.e. Police:

(1) Is obliged to appoint his/her representative immediately after receiving the information about the assembly, to inform the organizer and the authorized body about it;

(2) Is obliged to ensure the presence of his/her representative at the assembly;

(3) Is obliged to remove from the venue of the assembly those persons who grossly violate the peaceful and normal course of the assembly, if it is not possible to ensure it otherwise;

(4) Is obliged to ensure the free entry and exit of buildings, structures or other areas located at or adjacent to the assembly place.

119. (b) The Police protect a person’s life and health, as well as other rights and freedoms, legitimate interests, property, regardless of nationality, race, sex, language, religion, political or other views, social origin, property or other status.

120. In any case of restriction of human rights and freedoms, the police officers shall immediately present the grounds and reasons for the restriction in a language that is accessible to him/her, introduce, explain the rights and responsibilities arising from it, and assist in the realization of the rights.

121. The police give detainees a real opportunity to exercise their right to legal aid, inform their relatives within three hours of being brought to the police division, and, in their absence, inform the administration of the place of work or study of their whereabouts. If necessary, measures are taken to provide them with medical (or) other assistance, such as to eliminate the threat to the life, health and property of the person or his/her family members in connection with the arrest.

122. The police give a person the opportunity to get acquainted with the documents or materials that are directly related to his/her rights and freedoms, unless otherwise provided by law.

123. (c) During the period between 21–22 April 2018, a group of persons took part in the riots organised to restrict the rights of free movement and participation in peaceful assemblies of persons participating in the peaceful assembly organised in the Republic Square of the city of Yerevan by “My Step” civil initiative at the intersection of Acharyan street and Acharyan 2nd street of Avan administrative district of the city of Yerevan, near “Ford” car service, during which rioters wore batons and medical masks to hide their identity, used sexual insults towards peaceful marchers and passers-by, threatened to inflict bodily harm and damage property, accompanied by violence, property damage and beating.

124. On the occasion of the above-mentioned cases, during the investigation of the Criminal Case No 17173818 investigated in the Yerevan City Department of the by Investigative Committee of the Republic of Armenia, first class specialist of the staff of Avan administrative district, Karen Tonoyan was charged with committing a criminal act provided for by part 2 of Article 225 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Armenia.

125. Eight citizens suffered as a result of these riots by incurring physical and property damage. Criminal case No 12200518 charged against Gor Hambardzumyan under point (1) of part 3 of Article 258 and part 4 of Article 258 of the Criminal Code, Harutyun Hakobyan (father’s name: Volodia) under point (1) of part 3 of Article 258 of the Criminal Code, Karen Ohanyan (deputy mayor of Masis city) under part 2 of Article 225 of the Criminal Code, Armenak Hakobyan under part 2 of Article 225 of the Criminal Code, Armen Mamulyan

under part 2 of Article 225 of the Criminal Code, Davit Hambardzumyan (mayor of Masis city) under part 4 of Article 258 of the Criminal Code, Gor Khachatryan under part 2 of Article 225 and point (1) of part 3 of Article 258 of the Criminal Code, and Marat Poghosyan under point (1) of part 3 of Article 258 of the Criminal Code, was sent, along with a letter of accusation, to the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan, and the part regarding the accused Edik Chichoyan, Seyran Karapetyan and others not identified under the case has been separated the preliminary investigation of which continues.

126. (d) Opinions that the law enforcement bodies have failed to bring the perpetrators to justice are groundless, as the data on the investigation of criminal cases presented under the previous point show the opposite.

**Reply to paragraph 22 of the list of issues: Rights of the child (arts. 23, 24 and 26)**

127. (b) The National Assembly of Armenia ratified the Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (the Lanzarote) Convention on May 22. The Ministry of Justice has carried out a comprehensive analysis of existing gaps of our Criminal and Criminal Procedure Code in compatibility with the Convention. The relevant CoE expert opinion was also requested and received in September 2019. Based on these documents relevant suggestions have been submitted to the working group on the elaboration of draft new Criminal and Criminal Procedure Codes and were taken into consideration. The New Criminal and Criminal Procedure Codes drafts were approved by the Government of Armenia and will be submitted to the Parliament till the end of the 2020. Besides, the MOJ elaborated the Action Plan on the application of the Convention, which was adopted on 31 July 2020, by N 855 decision of the Prime Minister. It should also be noted that the Human Rights Action Plan for 2020–2022 envisages the submission of legislative amendments package to the Parliament of RA till end of first half of 2021.

128. In 2019, an action plan on prohibiting all forms of violence against children was developed. The action plan was developed by the Inter-agency Council on Justice for children. Main provisions of the action plan have been included in the National Human rights strategy for the period 2020–2022. In accordance with the HRAP it is envisaged to define the corporal punishment of children within our legislation, put in place mechanisms in childcare institutions for anonymous reporting of torture, inhuman or degrading treatment, to carry out trainings for relevant employees of social care institutions and representatives of educational institutions on domestic violence and to establish a unified statistics collection and running system on issues related to the rights of the children. Besides, new criminal legislations, drafts of criminal code and criminal procedural code also foreseen appropriate improved provisions to decrease risks and increase criminal responsibility for crimes and violence against children.

129. (c) In order to prevent cases of sexual abuse of minors, the Police has envisaged to include the topic of “Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Violence “in the educational process of the Educational Complex of Police in the draft decision of the Prime Minister “On measures to ensure the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse”, as well as a proposal was made to amend the relevant laws and regulations.

130. At the same time, preventive conversations were held with the pupils during the awareness-raising talks to prevent them from being sexually abused or exploited.

131. According to the statistics, 50 cases of crimes against sexual freedom and sexual immunity with the participation of juvenile victims were registered in 2018, 60 in 2019, and 29 crime cases in the first half of 2020.

132. In 2018 there was 1 case of labor exploitation of minors with the involvement of a juvenile in the commission of a crime and 2 cases with the involvement of a juvenile in prostitution.

133. In 2019, 1 case of child labor exploitation, 2 cases of involving a minor in the commission of a crime, and 1 case of child trafficking for the purpose of taking care of

children, 1 case of involving a child in prostitution or activities related to the preparation of materials or objects of a pornographic nature were registered.

134. In the first half of 2020, 1 case of child labor exploitation, 1 case of child trafficking for childcare, 3 cases of child pornography through a computer system, and 1 case of promoting child prostitution were registered in the Republic of Armenia.

135. (d) To prevent ill-treatment and violence against children – residents of 24-hour child care and protection institutions under the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, a hotline has been put into operation and anonymous boxes have been installed where children exposed to violence post information about their abused rights and cases of violence.

136. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs has not observed any financial barriers in implementing the 2017–2021 Strategy for the Protection of Children’s Rights in the Republic of Armenia, and the actions envisaged by the Strategy are being proportionately implemented.

### **Reply to paragraph 23 of the list of issues: Participation in public affairs (arts. 25 and 26)**

137. The Draft Amendments of the Law on Political Parties are now in the process of elaboration, after the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission) published the report. It should be noticed that the amendments address questions such as transparency in campaign financing and other important aspects of political parties activity.

138. Within the framework of the Law “On social protection of the disabled in the Republic of Armenia”, a draft decision of the Government “On Approving the 2021 Annual Programme and the List of Measures on Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities” was elaborated. It was drafted on the basis of the commitments undertaken under the UN Convention “On the rights of persons with disabilities”. The measures envisaged by the Draft include a comprehensive survey on the accessibility of polling stations to develop new legal regulations and to exercise the rights of persons with disabilities in the electoral process.

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