



Armenia

ASYLUM

In November, the European Commission presented the Visa Liberalisation Action Plan to Armenian authorities, marking a key step toward EU-Armenia visa liberalisation. The plan sets out required reforms, including effective implementation of the National Human Rights Strategy, strengthened anti-discrimination policies, protection of minority rights, access to justice, religious freedom, and awareness-raising against racism and xenophobia. It was reported that applicants to the Migration and Citizenship Service are often required to wait several months for an interview, most frequently due to the alleged lack of interpreters. As a result, an individual's lawful period of stay in the Republic of Armenia may expire, forcing them to exit the country and re-enter.

Further, civil society underscored that housing spots in state-run shelters are extremely limited, with NGOs continuing to provide social worker's services, psychological counseling, and legal assistance to LGBTI migrants.

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

In January, the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) delivered a judgement in *Minasyan and Others v. Armenia*, a case brought by 14 Armenian human rights defenders and activists who had been targeted by LGBTI-phobic hate speech. The Court found violations of Article 8 (right to private and family life), both alone and in conjunction with Article 14 (prohibition of discrimination), of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). The case concerned discriminatory newspaper articles published in 2014, which incited hostility against the applicants and included links to their social media profiles following their public support for Conchita Wurst's Eurovision song contest victory. The ECtHR concluded that the articles propagated hate and incited intolerance against a marginalised group, directly harming the applicants' dignity and psychological wellbeing. It further held that the domestic courts failed to strike a fair balance between freedom of expression and the right to private life, offering no effective protection against hate speech.

In August, research conducted by Pink Armenia revealed the lack of effectiveness of the Criminal

Code article that criminalises public calls to violence, the justification of violence, and violent propaganda, to protect LGBTI people. The study concluded that the article cannot be regarded as an effective tool for protecting the rights of minorities as the provision has been applied almost exclusively to cases concerning political authorities or, in one instance, influential opposition figures. Notably, incidents involving calls for violence, the justification of violence, or violent propaganda targeting individuals on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity have not attracted meaningful investigative attention. In situations where preliminary reviews were initiated, the proceedings remained incomplete, and no indictments were submitted to the courts.

During the campaign for the March local elections and in subsequent public statements, Vardan Ghukasyan, a candidate for mayor of Gyumri from the Armenian Republican Party, made repeated remarks targeting the LGBTI community. His statements included explicit threats of violence against LGBTI people and those who support their rights, as well as rhetoric that perpetuates harmful gender stereotypes. This case was reported by several activists to the law enforcement bodies. However, no criminal persecution was initiated.

In December, Armenian civil society groups underscored the growing instrumentalisation - by state institutions, political actors, and the media - of LGBTI issues as a tool to discredit political opponents, underscoring that these actors increasingly exploit LGBTI identities for political gain and to actively condemn and prevent intolerance and targeted hostility.

BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

Investigative and judicial practice continued to raise concerns, with authorities frequently failing to recognise bias based on sexual orientation or gender identity as an aggravating factor, contributing to impunity (see also under Police and Law Enforcement).

In May, the Yerevan First Instance Court sentenced a man to 10 years in prison for the murder of a trans woman. Despite efforts by the victim's

representative to request the case to be examined as a hate-motivated crime, the investigative body did not examine this aspect and the court relied solely on the scope of the indictment in its judgement.

In June, nearly seven years after the 2018 attack on nine persons perceived to be LGBTI in the village of Shurnukh, the Syunik Region First Instance Court overturned the decision to terminate the investigation, citing serious procedural failings, arguing that the inquiry had been neither timely nor thorough. The court thereby rejected the argument that the incident was unrelated to the victims' identities, criticised the failure to acknowledge a possible violation of the principle of equality, and ordered a reinvestigation. At the time of writing, the investigation was still ongoing and no significant step had been taken.

In July, a trans woman was found dead in her apartment. Although the police did not identify any sign of physical violence, they are reportedly evaluating the possibility of incitement to suicide. No outcome of the investigation has been made public.

In 2025, Pink Armenia documented 56 violations of human rights in conjunction with discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity, 30 of which constituted domestic violence cases. The other incidents included physical and mental abuse, including in the army, sexual harassment, blackmailing, threats, abuse of authority, as well as discrimination in the workplace.

EMPLOYMENT

In 2025, Pink Armenia documented three cases of violations of workplace rights of LGBTI people, underscoring discriminatory hiring practices, workplace harassment, and unjust dismissal based on sexual orientation or gender identity. (See also under Bias-motivated Violence). In these instances, LGBTI employees were either denied employment outright or removed from their positions after employers expressed explicit bias, such as stating that they "do not need such employees" or accusing workers of "discrediting" the workplace due to their identity or relationships.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

The Draft Law on Ensuring Equality, which has been under development for several years, remains unfinalised and fails to incorporate key elements required for comprehensive anti-discrimination protections. Notably, it does not explicitly include sexual orientation and gender identity among the prohibited grounds for discrimination. Although the law was expected to be submitted to the National Assembly in early 2025, this did not occur, and the law was not adopted during the year.

Access to effective remedies remained limited. In 2025, documented cases indicated that courts rarely examined discrimination as a distinct legal issue, and bias based on sexual orientation or gender identity was frequently not treated as an aggravating factor (see also under Police and Law Enforcement).

In 2025, Pink Armenia lodged an application to the European Court of Human Rights for a case involving the 2017 refusal, by the Ministry of Culture, to recognise and classify three awareness-raising materials promoting tolerance towards LGBTI persons as social advertisements. In 2017, the Ministry refused to grant this status without providing a written justification, and when pressed for an explanation, cited unfounded reasons, including the claim that the advertisements lacked public importance because society was already "aware of the existence of 'non-traditional' people," and that the presence of a QR code and website link rendered the materials commercial.

In October, Mary Lawlor, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, issued a statement concerning the treatment of Mamikon Hovsepian. Hovsepian had been publicly targeted by Armenia's Ministry of Health, which reportedly smeared him and unlawfully suspended him from the Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM), a key body addressing HIV, TB, and malaria, following his denunciations of abuses within the health sector. The Ministry of Health's response reportedly included mocking Hovsepian and questioning his status as a human rights defender.

In December, the re-emergence of political manipulation targeting LGBTI issues became a prominent [issue](#) in Armenian public debate. Civil society highlighted that both government authorities and opposition forces have repeatedly sought to discredit political opponents by associating them with the LGBTI community.

FAMILY

In May 2025, Pink Human Rights Defender NGO [published](#) a report titled "The Human Rights Situation of LGBT+ People in Armenia During 2024" documenting 65 cases of violence and discrimination against LGBTI communities, recorded during the previous year, 38 of which involved domestic violence, making it the most prevalent form of abuse. Despite this scale, only 10 cases were reported to law enforcement authorities, and just three resulted in ongoing investigations, pointing to serious gaps in access to justice. As reported by Pink Human Rights NGO, this is due to the fact that victims frequently encounter insensitive treatment by law enforcement, including revictimisation, ridicule, and dismissive attitudes. Further, protection mechanisms for minors remain particularly weak, with authorities frequently prioritising "family reconciliation" over the protection of victims, often resulting in minors being returned to the same environment where violence occurred. At the same time, NGOs face legal constraints in assisting minors, as legal representation can only be provided with the consent of the minor's legal guardian – who may be the perpetrator or complicit in the abuse. Finally, the research underscored that the number of shelters operated by NGOs falls far short of existing needs, leaving many victims without immediate protection.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

In June, the [Rainbow Forum](#), held in Yerevan, celebrated its 10th anniversary under the theme "Resilience of the Movement," continuing to provide one of the few semi-public spaces where the LGBTI community and allies can gather, reflect, and build solidarity amid broader constraints on freedom of assembly.

HEALTH

In 2025, the absence of state-approved standards for legal gender recognition and trans-inclusive healthcare continued to force trans people into reliance on informal networks, as documented in a [report](#) by Pink Armenia. The report highlighted that Armenia currently lacks a comprehensive legal and regulatory framework governing gender-affirming care and underscored the systemic challenges that trans people face in healthcare institutions. In the absence of state-approved standards, trans people are forced to rely on informal networks or personal connections with healthcare professionals, resulting in inconsistent, unmonitored, and at times unsafe medical practices. Further, Armenia faces a significant shortage of endocrinologists and other specialists trained to provide gender-affirming care. Individuals are often left to self-administer treatments or depend on untrained providers, creating preventable health risks.

FOREIGN POLICY

At the 49th session of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) in May, 26 states, including Spain, Sweden, and the UK, [urged](#) Armenia to adopt anti-discrimination legislation explicitly covering SOGI, while others called for the establishment of legal gender recognition procedures. Although legislative amendments adopted in 2024 marked progress, States also expressed concerns over insufficient legal protections against gender-based violence and attacks targeting human rights defenders, as well as over the absence of guarantees for freedom of expression, assembly, and association.

FREEDOM FROM TORTURE, CRUEL, INHUMAN, OR DEGRADING TREATMENT

In 2025, Pink Armenia documented instances of severe and degrading treatment of gay military personnel, including the forced disclosure of sexual orientation, humiliation, and coercive transfers. In one case, a young man was placed in a psychiatric institution for months solely due to his sexual orientation, while also facing violence and psychological pressure from family members. In

another, intimate videos were circulated among servicemen, leading to threats, harassment, and ongoing danger even after discharge.

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

In April, the Armenian government approved its Gender Policy Strategy and Action Plan for 2025–2028, outlining commitments to promote gender equality and combat discrimination. While the initiative was welcomed by human rights NGOs, it was reported that the strategy still falls short of explicitly addressing sexual orientation and gender identity as protected grounds against discrimination.

In May, ahead of the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT), Anzhelika Movsesova, Advisor to the Human Rights Defender of Armenia, conveyed the Ombudsperson's message reaffirming the institution's commitment to monitoring LGBTI rights, responding to violations, and developing preventive tools to better protect vulnerable groups.

In December, the EU-Armenia Partnership Council held its sixth meeting, during which both parties highlighted the strong momentum in bilateral relations, reaffirmed shared values, and adopted a new "Strategic Agenda for the EU-Armenia Partnership." The agenda sets ambitious cooperation priorities and represents a major step toward deepening and advancing EU-Armenia ties. The Council noted the upcoming EU-Armenia Summit in May 2026 as another key milestone for enhancing the partnership. As EU-Armenia cooperation is grounded in commitments to human rights and non-discrimination, the strengthened partnership may have implications for advancing protections for LGBTI people.

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

In June, human rights defender Mamikon Hovsepyan was suspended from the Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM), the body overseeing HIV programmes. (see also under Equality and Non-discrimination). A document circulated to CCM members on 25 June announced a formal reprimand and temporary suspension, citing alleged violations of

the CCM and Global Fund Code of Conduct, including claims that Hovsepyan had spread "misinformation". In October, Hovsepyan filed a legal challenge seeking annulment of the decision. The Administrative Court transferred the case to the Civil Court, stating that the Ministry of Health was not responsible for the actions of the CCM.

LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

In April, The Right Side NGO launched a strategic litigation case seeking to compel the authorities to issue an administrative act allowing the correction of the gender entry in a birth registration record. The lawsuit, submitted to the Administrative Court of Armenia on 3 April 2025, was accepted for examination. It concerns a trans applicant whose request to amend the gender marker in their passport had been refused by the competent administrative body.

In 2025, civil society reiterated that the lack of formal mechanisms for changing gender markers on official documents generates daily obstacles for trans persons in employment, banking, healthcare, and travel. As a result, many face discrimination, forced outing, and denial of essential services.

Although name changes are possible under the Law on Civil Status Acts Registration, the law does not provide any procedure for legal gender recognition. In practice, trans people are often required to undergo psychiatric evaluation or medical procedures to access rights that should be rooted in self-determination.

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

In 2025, Pink Armenia and the Network of Reproductive Health and Rights, operated by Women Resource Center Armenia, released a report examining the sexual and reproductive health and rights of lesbian and bisexual women and trans, non-binary, and queer people.

The research identified systemic barriers in access to gynaecological and sexual health services. In Yerevan, Private medical centres were described as relatively more accessible; however, lesbian

and bisexual women often concealed their sexual orientation and same-sex relationships to avoid discrimination and biased questioning, relying on a limited number of LGBTI-sensitive specialists referred by community organisations. These services are not free of charge and were reported to sometimes lack adequate knowledge of same-gender sexual relations.

The report documented discrimination, breaches of confidentiality, and hostile treatment of trans, non-binary, and queer people accessing sexual and reproductive health services in state-funded medical centres, which often remain the only option outside the capital. It highlighted systemic deficiencies, including a lack of basic knowledge among specialists regarding gender identity, gender expression, and gender-affirming care. In one documented case, a trans person was refused service on the grounds that the specialist was not qualified to treat them, illustrating the structural barriers faced by LGBTI people in accessing essential healthcare.

PUBLIC OPINION

According to the [Caucasus Barometer 2024 Armenia](#), a nationwide survey on socio-economic issues and political attitudes issued in 2025, only 14% of respondents said they would be comfortable doing business with an LGBTI person, while 14% stated that they would not want an LGBTI person as a neighbour.

POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

In November, Armenian law enforcement officers took part in a [two-day training](#) on identifying and investigating hate crimes, organised under Council of Europe and EU-Council of Europe projects. The training focused on applying Council of Europe standards and European Court of Human Rights case law, with specific attention to hate crimes affecting LGBTI communities.

In 2025, based on data documented by Pink Armenia, only 8 out of 56 cases of discrimination and harassment were reported to the police. Of these, one victim later withdrew the complaint, and in another case the victim declined to pursue proceedings

after the perpetrator compensated the damage. As a result, only one case ultimately proceeded to trial. At the same time, research indicates little progress in investigative and judicial practice, with courts rarely examining discrimination as a distinct legal issue. LGBTI communities continue to face significant structural, psychological, and social barriers that discourage reporting to law enforcement. In addition, police and courts frequently fail to treat bias based on sexual orientation or gender identity as an aggravating factor, allowing perpetrators to avoid liability or receive disproportionately mild sanctions.