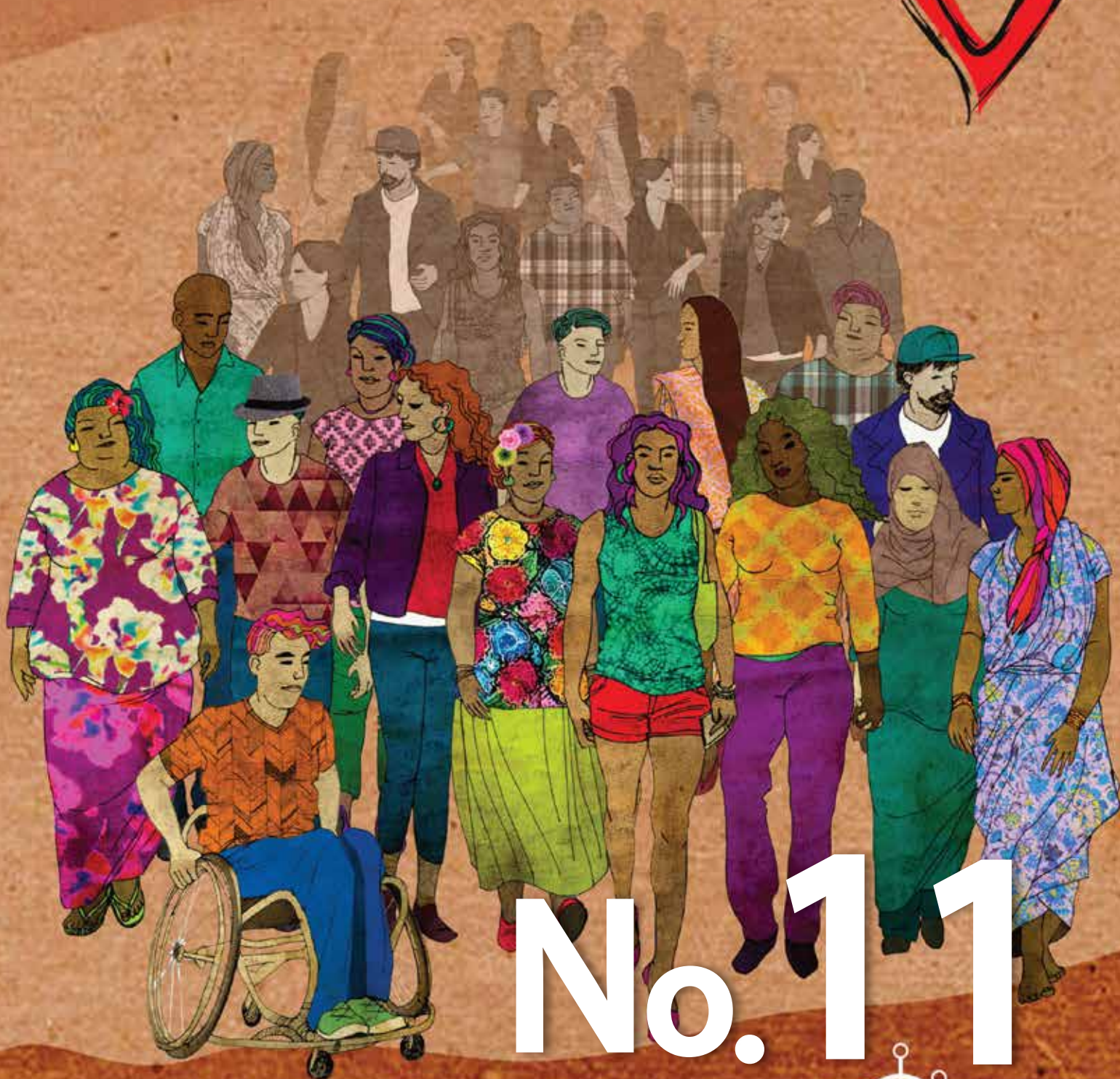
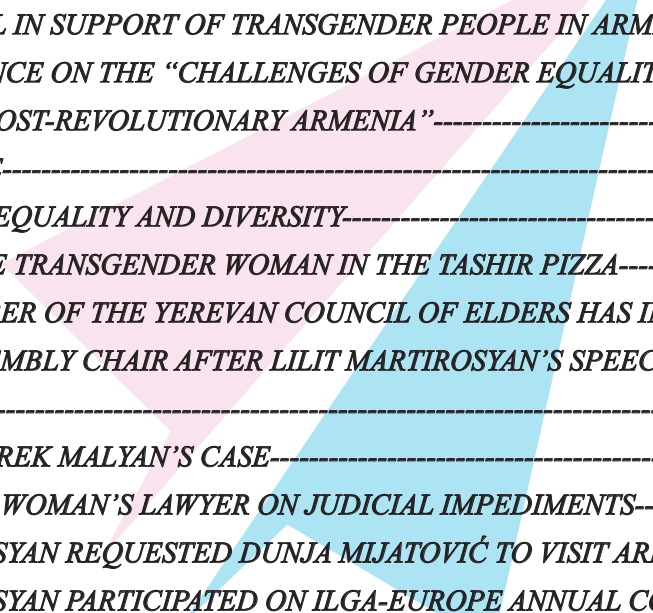


# TRANS NEWSLETTER

October, November, December 2019



# No. 11



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## PUBLIC APPEAL IN SUPPORT OF TRANSGENDER PEOPLE IN ARMENIA



**RIGHT SIDE**  
HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER NGO

Between 2008 and 2019, 3313 trans people were killed around the world, and 330 of them were killed only between 1 October 2018 and 30 September 2019. Every year on November 20, in many countries, transgender community and their supporters unite to remember the victims of transphobia and demand gender equality. While many countries in the European region are constantly doing reforms to ensure equality for transgender people, Armenia is not still fulfilling a number of its responsibilities. Transgender people in Armenia are the target of unacceptable political debates, systemic discrimination, and oppression, which is manifested in physical and psychological violence and discrimination in employment, health care, education, and all other areas of public life.

Given the state's ineffective anti-discrimination policy, community members' trust in governmental institutions is low. Transphobic statements and political initiatives by politicians and, in some cases, public officials, deepen the hatred and intolerance towards transgender people. Being unaccepted by the public, the inactivity of the state system, especially of the Police, makes transgender people unprotected and homeless, and the atmosphere of hatred filled with death threats forces transgender people to leave the country.

Right Side Human Rights Defender NGO recalls that human rights and dignity are of paramount value under the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia and, taking into account the above-mentioned issues, it calls on the Government of the Republic of Armenia to:

- develop and implement an effective anti-hate crime strategy that includes reforms in the legislative field, including the adoption of comprehensive legislation to combat hate speech and discrimination;

- ensure the realization of the right to sex change of transgender people by making it legally transparent and understandable process, including the development of health guidelines and the possibility of legal sex change without sterilization;

- development and adoption of a legislation ensuring the safety and security of human rights defenders.

Right Side Human Rights Defender NGO will continue to closely monitor public and political developments and use all domestic and international human rights protection mechanisms for the full affirmation of the equality of transgender people.



## CSO CONFERENCE ON THE “CHALLENGES OF GENDER EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IN POST-REVOLUTIONARY ARMENIA”

Activity supported by the  
Canada Fund for Local Initiatives  
Activités soutenues par le Fonds du  
Canada des initiatives locales

Canada

**RIGHT SIDE**  
HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER NGO

From November 20 to December 10, the Right Side Human Rights Defender NGO with the financial support of the Canadian Foundation for Local Initiatives (CFLI) was conducting a series of events on the theme “Equality and Diversity Festival.” On December 5, the eve of the International Human Rights Day, within the framework of the festival the RS NGO organized a conference on “Challenges of Gender Equality and Diversity in Post-Revolutionary Armenia” with representatives of diplomatic missions in Armenia, local and international human rights organizations, and other NGOs, transgender and LGBTQ community members working in the field of equality.

The discussion began with the opening speech of the “Right Side” Human Rights Defender NGO’s President Lilit Martirosyan. She thanked all human rights defenders, activists for proudly bearing the difficult task of promoting equality and diversity and attending the conference.

Afterwards, the representatives of the RA diplomatic missions welcomed the participants.

Argentinian Deputy Ambassador to Armenia Miguel Chilingarian has particularly noted that he gives great importance to such meetings and he is honored to be present in this conference. In his speech he has highlighted the hard work of the RS NGO team and expressed his gratitude for the contribution in the field of human rights.

After the welcoming remarks, the invited speakers touched upon the pre-selected topics on the agenda.

The first keynote speech was delivered by Pink Human Rights Defender NGO’s President Lilit Avetisyan and Lawyer Hasmik Petrosyan. They were presenting a report entitled “Hatespeech and False News in Post-Revolutionary Armenia”. After presenting the report, there was a discussion among the participants.

Then, a report on the “Issues of Women’s Reproductive Health and Rights in Different Groups in Armenia” was presented by Anush Poghosyan, an employee of Women’s Resource Center NGO.

RS NGO Lawyer, Advocate Arthur Margaryan presented the details of the NGO’s strategic trials, in particular the transgender men against the RA CARO body, the case against the inaction of law enforcement authorities in connection with threats of psychological violence after Lilit Martirosyan’s speech in the NA, etc. The participants asked questions that were of concern to them, and the RS NGO Advocate provided satisfactory answers.

Following was the speech by Arthur Andreasian, Artistic Director of “Dance of Dignity” Social-Cultural, Youth NGO, who presented the report on “Social Entrepreneurship and Organizing Cultural Events for Equality and Diversity”.

Artak Arakelyan, the President of DiverCity Social-Cultural, Humanitarian NGO presented another report on culture, he spoke about the creation, activities, culture, anti-culture, subculture of the NGO and how the mainstream culture pursued the aforementioned.



Queer Lab NGO's representative Arman Arshak-Shahbazyan spoke about the creation of the organization and its cultural activities in the field of diversity acceptance. A separate platform was provided for presenting the creative work of cultural organizations, where the Queer Lab NGO presented their copyright posters.

Lara Aharonian, the President of Women's Resource Center NGO and Hovhannes Madoyan, Head of the Anit-Discrimination and Equality coalition, also spoke during the discussion. They highly appreciated the importance of such meetings and expressed their gratitude for the invitation, spoke about the human rights situation in post-revolutionary Armenia. Also, a word was given to Anna Nikoghosyan, the founder of the Fem Library, who told about the foundation of the "Fem Library", its activities and obstacles they faced every day in the fight for gender equality and global human rights.

The aforementioned topics were followed by several reports by RS NGO staff members. The first report was given by A. Gevorgyan, the Project and Programs Officer of the "Right Side" Human Rights Defender NGO. He presented a report on "The Protection of the Rights of Transgender People", which included the problems that human rights defenders faced by advocating the rights of transgender people.

Besides, RS NGO's Public Relations and Communications Specialist Emil Avetisyan presented the report on "Monitoring Hate Speech, Dangerous Speech and Insult to Transgender Persons", which was also followed by heated discussions, questions and answers.

At the end of the conference, RS NGO's President Lilit Martirosyan presented the projects implemented by "Right Side" Human Rights Defender NGO in the field of diversity and gender equality during the past year, the obstacles encountered during the implementation of these projects and, of course, their successes. Afterwards, Lilit Martirosyan expressed her gratitude to all the participants and hoped that the efforts and potential invested in that difficult task would never decrease, she wished everyone a good working mood and invited them to the next event with great pleasure.

"Right Side" Human Rights Defender NGO kindly presented gifts to the participants of the conference for their hard work in the field of gender equality and diversity.

"Right Side" Human Rights Defender NGO once again reaffirms the civil society partnerships and frequent organization of similar meetings and thanks all the representatives of the diplomatic missions, participants, speakers, transgender and LGBTI community representatives who have dedicated their time and attended the conference.







## PRESS RELEASE

Recommendations on LGBT rights to Armenia at the third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review of the UN Human Rights Council

From December 8-12 2019, Right Side Human Rights Defender NGO President L. Martirosyan and Policy and Programs Officer A. Gevorgyan were on a mission in Geneva at the United Nations Human Rights Council headquarters based on the board of the Right Side Human Rights Defender NGO. The aim of the mission was to take part in a training course organized by the UPR Info, to present recommendations for Armenia on LGBT rights to the UN member states and to lobby at the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) during the 3rd Cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) pre-session. The purpose of the UPR pre-session was to ensure that the civil society recommendations are delivered to the recommending states of Armenia.

Right Side representatives participated in a one-day advocacy training, which included comprehensive information on all the stages of UPR advocacy, lobbying with UN member states, and providing accurate and targeted recommendations.

On the International Human Rights Day, December 10th L. Martirosyan made a video message from the HRC headquarters, urging Armenian state authorities and the society to immediately stop incitement of hatred, eliminate discrimination and violence based on sex, gender, age, nationality or any other type of character.

On December 11th, Right Side representatives participated in a UN HRC the 3rd UPR cycle pre-session, in which the Policy and Programs Officer A. Gevorgyan, along with four other civil society representatives from the Republic of Armenia, gave a six-minute speech. The speech delivered to the UN Member States, and included the situation of protection of LGBT rights in Armenia, provided information about the implementation of the LGBT recommendations and obligations undertaken by the Republic of Armenia in the previous UPR cycle.

In the previous UPR period, The UN Member States made twelve recommendations to the Republic of Armenia to ensure LGBT persons are protected from discrimination and hatred in the Republic of Armenia. Although the Republic of Armenia accepted the majority of the recommendations, it did not actually implement any of the recommendations. Right Side NGO once again emphasized the importance of the implementation of previous recommendations and right of LGBT people to be protected from discrimination and hatred. The speech of Right Side had five thematic directions:



#### Discrimination

Development and adoption of a law prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender in the field of education, employment, health care, housing, etc., including:

- establishment of an institutionalized body for receiving, reviewing and resolving complaints;
- implementation of programs aimed at raising public awareness on reducing stigma and discrimination against LGBT persons;
- training on sexuality and gender for the Ombudsman, police officers, investigators, health care workers, judges and education staff.

#### Hate speech

Adoption of a law criminalizing hate speech and hate incitement towards LGBT people, including:

- training on sexuality and gender for the Ombudsman, police officers, investigators, judges and education staff;
- implementation of programs aimed at raising public awareness on reducing stigma and discrimination against LGBT persons.

#### Hate crimes

Criminalization of hate crimes based on sexual orientation and gender identity, including:

- training on sexuality and gender for the Ombudsman, police officers, investigators, and judges;
- implementation of programs aimed at raising public awareness on reducing stigma and discrimination against LGBT persons;
- implementation of rehabilitation programs for the victims of hate crimes.

#### Healthcare of transgender persons

Remove transsexuality from the list of diseases according to the 11th revised version of the WHO international classification of diseases, including:

- ensure the availability of the necessary clinical guidelines in the field of gender reassignment surgeries and hormone replacement therapy;
- include costs associated with gender reassignment surgeries and hormone replacement therapy within the framework of pending comprehensive health insurance;
- ensure the availability of endocrinologists and surgeons trained in the field of health care for transgender persons in the RA.

#### Legal gender recognition

Elimination of legislative requirement for mandatory sex change (sterilization) for legal gender recognition and gender marker change in the documents, including:

- make the legal process of changing the gender marker a simple, easy to understand and fast procedure;
- ensure that the amended legislation allows transgender persons to make a legal change to the gender marker based on the principle and right of the transgender person to self-determination.

It should be also noted that in addition to the above-mentioned speech, RS HRD NGO representatives had meetings and discussions with the permanent representatives to the UN of Uruguay, the Kingdom of Sweden and the Federal Republic of Germany on the situation of LGBT rights protection in the Republic of Armenia.

It should be reminded that the Universal Periodic Review of Armenia in the 3th cycle of the UPR will be conducted in January 2020. In April this year, during the national hearings in the National Assembly, after the speech of the President of the RS HRD NGO L. Martirosyan, RS HRD NGO, as a civil society representative, exercising its right to presented an alternative report to the UN HRC on the eve of the 3th round of UPR. The report included the issue of protection of the rights of transgender persons in the RA, discrimination and violence against them, as well as the issue of ensuring the safety of transgender human rights defenders in the RA.

It is also noteworthy that Armenia was elected a member of the HRC for the 2020-2022 term during the elections held at the UN General Assembly in New York on October 17, 2019. The Republic of Armenia elected to the HRC for the first time. Within its membership, Armenia will make efforts to fulfill its commitments and priorities, one of which is the protection of women's and youth rights, the establishment of peaceful and inclusive societies.

In the coming year, Right Side Human Rights Defender NGO will closely and attentively monitor the implementation of the obligations to the international community of the Republic of Armenia and will continue to use local and international human rights protection mechanisms for the benefit of transgender persons in the RA.



## CULTURE FOR EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

From November 20 to December 10, the Right Side Human Rights Defender NGO, with the financial support of the Canadian Foundation for Local Initiatives (CFLI), organized a series of events under the theme Equality and Diversity Festival.

In line with its strategic goals, the Right Side has always focused on increasing community visibility, mobilisation and empowerment through cultural events. For this reason, within the framework of the festival, the Right Side organized a number of cultural events in Yerevan and in the regions to raise awareness of the transgender community, mobilize supporters, exchange experiences and strengthen inter-community relations.

The cultural events were semi-private and organized by inviting electronic music artists.

Right Side team presented the events implemented through non formal discussions, with assessment of the expectations, risks and obstacles of upcoming events, with discussions about the steps for achieving gender equality and community engagement, as well as the need to collaborate with other groups. Right Side president Lilit Martirosyan, participants and activists particularly highlighted the safety of community and supporters during the event.

During the cultural events a group of volunteers was formed, who expressed their willingness to participate in the organization of future events.

The Right Side team is thankful for the participants for attending the events, supporting the transgender community and contributing to the protection of LGBT rights.







## ATTACK ON THE TRANSGENDER WOMAN IN THE TASHIR PIZZA

On February 4, 2020, at 6 pm, four transgender people were assaulted at the “Tashir Pizza” food center located in the Northern Avenue, Yerevan city, which resulted in the physical injuries, including a two-sided nose fracture of a transgender woman A.Q.

Arriving at “Tashir Pizza” food center on that day, the transgender people immediately noticed the unfriendly, even discriminatory attitude of their staff member towards them. The employee served them in a mockery tone by drawing the attention of other clients to the transgender women.

Transgender activist Lilit Martirosyan asked to call the manager to improve the attitude of the service provider who was devoid of ethics, but even after that the waiter continued to taunt and mistreat the transgender women, A.Q. personally warned the waiter that he behaved properly, however, after that warning the transgender woman received offensive attitude and abusive remarks after which the waiter struck A.Q. by breaking her nose in the hall in the presence of other clients. Subsequently, clients in the hall encouraged the waiter’s illegal activities and also displayed intolerant and discriminatory behavior towards the transgender women.

To Lilit Martirosyan’s alarm, the police arrived at the crime scene and decided to detain the transgender women and the employee of “Tashir Pizza” at the police station of the center, where the victim transgender women testified on the basis of which a preliminary investigation was launched.

Right Side Human Rights Defender NGO strongly condemns crimes based on hatred and discrimination and promises to pursue the further development of the cases and fair trials. Right Side Human Rights Defender NGO also calls on the “Tashir Pizza” Pizza Network to review their employees’ unprofessional behavior and the attitude towards customers and severely penalize employees with similar behavior.

To learn about the further development of the case, follow us on the social media and on our official website.





## FORMER MEMBER OF THE YEREVAN COUNCIL OF ELDERS HAS INCENSED THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY CHAIR AFTER LILIT MARTIROSYAN'S SPEECH

On February 25, 2020 Sona Aghekyan, a former member of the Yerevan Council of Elders, gave a speech during the hearing on “Making Amendments to the Judicial Code and Related Laws” in the RA National Assembly.

The latter, straying from the agenda and raising an additional noise and false agenda, pulled the incense out of the pocket and burned it by saying: “About a year ago, this high chair, the highest chair in my country, they were creating a history, and no one sitting here was trying to get hold of that story maker and tell that transgender person that history was not made here, history could be made by laws only inspired by patriotism and national spirit. Therefore, since the chair of the National Assembly in my country is now desecrated, I am now incensing here and cleansing the Chair of the National Assembly of all the abominations committed by a transgender person here.” Despite the fact that at that time V. Vardanyan presiding the hearing urged to stop burning incense and follow fire safety rules. Aghekyan continued to burn incense, after which security forces had to stop her speech and invite her out of the assembly room.

Although nearly a year has passed since Lilit Martirosyan's National Assembly speech, however, passions have not yet subsided and the faces that ended their political career continue to speculate on Lilit Martirosyan's name in order to create false agendas and make meaningless commotion.

Let us remind you that after Lilit Martirosyan's speech in the National Assembly in March 2019, various religious and nationalist groups and representatives of those groups threw numerous threatening messages to Lilit Martirosyan, organized rallies, marches, tried to incense in the National Assembly and demonstrated other such dangerous activities as a result of which Lilit Martirosyan, her family members and staff had to flee the country for some time, they have applied to the police repeatedly, but none of these applications have so far received a fair trial or simply have not been processed.



## TRANS CAMP 4

The 4th Trans Camp organized by the Right Side Human Rights Defender NGO for transgender people, their family members and trans rights activists took place from March 4 to 6, 2020.

The purpose of the training-course was to promote the capacity building of the transgender community, their active involvement in civil, cultural and social life, and to promote the reduction of stigma and discrimination in the families of transgender people.

On the first day of the training, Lilit Martirosyan, the Founder and President of the Right Side NGO, made the opening remarks by welcoming the participants, she thanked them for their presence, assured them that after the training the participants would leave with new knowledge, expectations and perspectives. Lilit Martirosyan particularly emphasized the importance of the parents participating in the camp for the first time and thanked them for supporting their children, she expressed the hope that more parents would be present at the next camp who would be ready to fight for the full implementation of their transgender and LGBTI children's rights in Armenia.

After the welcoming speech, the participants had an active discussion with a sexuality expert, with the help of whom they mastered the topic "Sexuality", got acquainted with the basic concepts of sexuality, such as biological sex, sexual behavior, gender, sexual orientation, they learnt about the types of sexual orientation and gender, parallel to the main topic they learnt how to acquire critical thinking so that each question could be answered seriously based on their own, public and international experience. In the end, the trainer organized a game-exercise through which the participants were able to reveal such details about their identities that they had never paid attention to, and the game also contributed to the ice breaking and inter-community rapprochement among the participants.

At the end of the day the participants together with the trainers and Lilit Martirosyan summarized and evaluated the knowledge gained during the training and presented their suggestions for making the educational process even more profitable.

The second working day began with a summary of the previous one, the participants had been assigned to share the most influential parts of the previous day's topics and they successfully overcame it.

The second day of the training was dedicated to human rights and civic engagement. Within the framework of the topic the participants discussed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, considered and suggested how to be an active and responsible citizen and promote equal rights. The topic was a subject of heated debate; though, the questions of the participants received a comprehensive answer.

In the second half of the day the participants were informed about the educational opportunities which are a subject to scholarships in the RA, how to use these opportunities and how to write a competent CV and motivational letter. Participants played a role-play, during which they presented their CVs and motivation letters to the Right Side NGO team and they were interviewed for a fictitious job. After each participant's interview, the trainers indicated what mistakes the participant had made in the formation of a curriculum vitae and during the interview so that they would avoid repeating these mistakes when hiring.



The 4th Trans Camp organized by the Right Side Human Rights Defender NGO for transgender people, their The second working day was probably the most emotional of the three training days because the parents of trans and LGBTI were talking. During this discussion, the parents shared the story of their trans and LGBTI children, how they had learnt about it, how they had responded, and how they then interacted with their children. This was a platform where parents and children were able to express heart-wrenching questions, feelings, and emotions. After each speech the parents embraced their children with enthusiasm and uttered words of commendation.

On the second day, Lilit Martirosyan scheduled also to hold a panel-discussion during which the participants raised questions on hormone therapy, sex reassignment surgery and the legal regulations of sex work.

The third day again began with a summary of the previous day which was followed by a discussion on “The state of Trans Activism in Armenia”; it was conducted by transgender activist Lilit Martirosyan. The latter outlined the hard path of her and other LGBT activists working in the Right Side NGO, she presented the further plans of the NGO and encouraged the recruitment and engagement of new activists in the capacity building and rights protection process.

At the end of the training-course Lilit Martirosyan once again thanked the funding organization, participants, trainers and the whole staff of the Right Side NGO by presenting certificates to the participants.

“Everything was organized ideally, I just wish that such meetings were more frequent,” an LGBT activist.

“Both the training topics and the trainers’ skills were excellent, I can’t help but mention the hotel’s high service, just thank you.” a transgender activist.

“This has just been an irreplaceable platform where I have got to know my child in a new way, I have understood his problems, the existence of which I have never known, now I know I will fight for the rights of my child and many other children like them to the end,” a parent of a transgender person.

“I would like to see such gatherings more often, be not being a member of the LGBT community, I realize how important and educational such gatherings are for the supporters,” trans ally.

Right Side Human Rights Defender NGO expresses its deep gratitude to all the participants and hopes to see them on the front lines of the trans human rights activists in the near future.



## UPDATE ON NAREK MALYAN'S CASE

On October 10, 2019, Lilit Martirosyan, Right Side Human Rights Defender NGO's Founder and President, submitted a report to the RA Prosecutor General on Narek Malyan's publication on "Cuban Citizens Suffering from AIDS", which was sent to the Yerevan City Police Department.

The Yerevan City Police Department had addressed the report to the Central Police Department, where the case had not been processed for a long time, and then on February 10, 2020, a letter was received from the Central Police Department stating that the report had been previously attached to another organization's report with a similar content.

Thus, on February 17, 2020, the Right Side Human Rights Defender NGO decided to appeal the inaction of the Central Police Department to the Chief Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Armenia. Accordingly, the Central Police Department must decide whether to institute a criminal case, or to reject the criminal case or report it to the subordinate.

We should recall that we were informed from the article "14 transgender people from Cuba are infected with AIDS, says Malyan; what does the Migration Service say?" published on October 14, 2019, at 15:57 in the Aysor.am website that Narek Malyan, the initiator of the VETO movement assured that this information on transgenders in Armenia was official.

Malyan wrote on his Facebook page that "14 pieces of transgender people from Cuba are AIDS infected. This information is from official sources, you can share. There are 16 pieces in total, 14 of them are infected with AIDS. Besides, one of them was working in a bakery."

To be informed more about this and other cases, follow the updates of our website and Facebook page.



**RIGHT SIDE**  
HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER NGO





## TRANSGENDER WOMAN'S LAWYER ON JUDICIAL IMPEDIMENTS

After the speech of the transgender woman in the RA National Assembly on April 5, 2019, we did not wait long for the public, as predicted it was mostly negative, but there were cases when the audacity of some representatives of the society exceeded all predictable and unpredictable limits.

Lilit Martirosyan, the president of Right Side NGO applied to law enforcement bodies several times to be protected from threats and harassment and to prevent the disclosure of her personal information. We talked to lawyer Arthur Margaryan about these and other legal cases. Arthur Margaryan is representing Lilit Martirosyan in a number of court cases.

Interview

Mr. Margaryan, could you please say whether there were any threats reported to the police after Lilit Martirosyan's speech in the Parliament and if so, how many reports have been submitted and in what stage are they today?

-Yes, after Lilit Martirosyan's NA speech there was definitely a need to worry about her physical and psychological well being and safety, and that is why Lilit Martirosyan filed a police report on the threats. The police declined the initiation of a criminal case, mentioning the threats were not real. According to the Police, people expressed the people's free opinion and resentment. We are currently in the court appealing the rejection of the criminal case.

In the framework of the same criminal case, when the supermarket dispatcher publicized Lilit Martirosyan's address, the investigating body and the police decided that it is an open information that could be easily accessed by any citizen who would visit the election.am website and check Lilit Martirosyan's address, but did not note that Lilit Martirosyan's registration address is posted on the site, and no actual residence address has been posted anywhere, which means that it could not be viewed as public information.

There is another case about insult in the Yerevan City Court of General Jurisdiction for insult, when once again the irates.am website called Lilit Martirosyan was "perverted" after her speech, a civil case was filed for public apology with a claim for compensation.

Mr. Margaryan, what kind of obstacles you face, while representing Trans or LGB persons rights?

- The main obstacles arise with the police and investigative authorities when they refuse to pursue or delay the process even if there is sufficient evidence and obvious crime, based on the SOGIE of the victim.

Have you ever experienced or faced any obstacles with the court ?

-No. The court usually moves in its normal course of action if the case is in the court already. Still with the main obstacles arising from the investigation stage: the police and the investigative body.

We conclude from a conversation with a lawyer, despite the fact that a number of NGOs and public institutions in Armenia are fighting for democratic society and universal equality in Armenia, however, the relevant authorities and law enforcement bodies do not have sufficient political will to properly address LGBT issues and act in line with

## LILIT MARTIROSYAN REQUESTED DUNJA MIJATOVIĆ TO VISIT ARMENIA



Every year ILGA Europe (European region of the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association) organizes an annual conference with the participation of more than 500 public and state bodies, initiatives and human rights advocates involved in the protection of LGBTI rights in Europe and Central Asia. The conference is intended to summarize the activities of the past year and plan the activities of the coming year.

This year it has been held in Prague, the capital of the Czech Republic, on October 23-26, and Lilit Martirosyan, President of the Right Side Human Rights Defender NGO, is also participating in this conference, where she has held discussions on the safety and security of human rights defenders; besides, she has had meetings with a number of decision and policy -makers, including Mrs Dunja Mijatović, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, with whom she has discussed the issues of trans and LGB community and the current situation in Armenia. Mrs Dunja Mijatović has expressed a wish to visit Armenia in the near future, get acquainted with the activities of the Right Side Human Rights Defender NGO and the trans community in the country.





## LILIT MARTIORSYAN PARTICIPATED ON ILGA-EUROPE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

From 23rd to 26th of October, 2019 the annual conference of ILGA-Europe (the European Region of the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association) which was attended by Lilit Martirosyan, the Founding President of the Right Side Human Rights Defender NGO was held in Prague, Czech Republic.

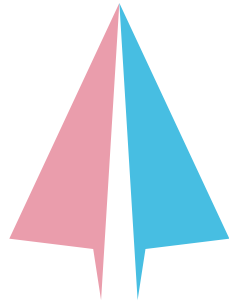
During the workshop Lilit Martirosyan participated in several meetings and discussions on the situation of the LGBTI community in Central Asia and Eastern Europe.

Mrs Martirosyan and several other speakers held a discussion on the safety of human rights defenders. During the discussion a video of Lilit Martirosyan's speech at the RA National Assembly was shown, which received a great response. The participants were particularly interested in the response of the state bodies to the situation and Lilit Martirosyan's security. Lilit said that after her speech at the National Assembly, as a result of protests by ethnic groups and other transphobe groups, hate speech and threats of death on the online platform, she was forced to leave the country temporarily with her family members and staff. Afterwards, the participants expressed their gratitude to Lilit Martirosyan for her tremendous work and encouraged her to continue her work and not to bow to any obstacle.

Lilit shared with the experience of Right Side NGO on how to mobilize human, technical and financial resources to ensure the safety of the NGO and human rights defenders. She emphasized the importance of having security policies in order to reduce the risks and dangers arising from the activities of human rights defenders. Another meeting was devoted to the discussion of reporting hate speech and violence, methods of case collection and monitoring against the LGBTI community during which it was enhanced Eastern European and Central Asian civil society's experience of reducing hatred towards the LGBTI community, including the formation of community and cross-sectoral partnerships. This discussion will also have a positive impact on the development of regional initiatives ("Trans Murder Monitoring", "ProTans", "UNIFORM", "Call It Hate").

Lilit Martirosyan has returned from the ILGA-Europe annual conference with new ideas and new acquaintances that are crucial to the operation of the Right Side NGO and the further development of transgender community advocacy in Armenia.





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