



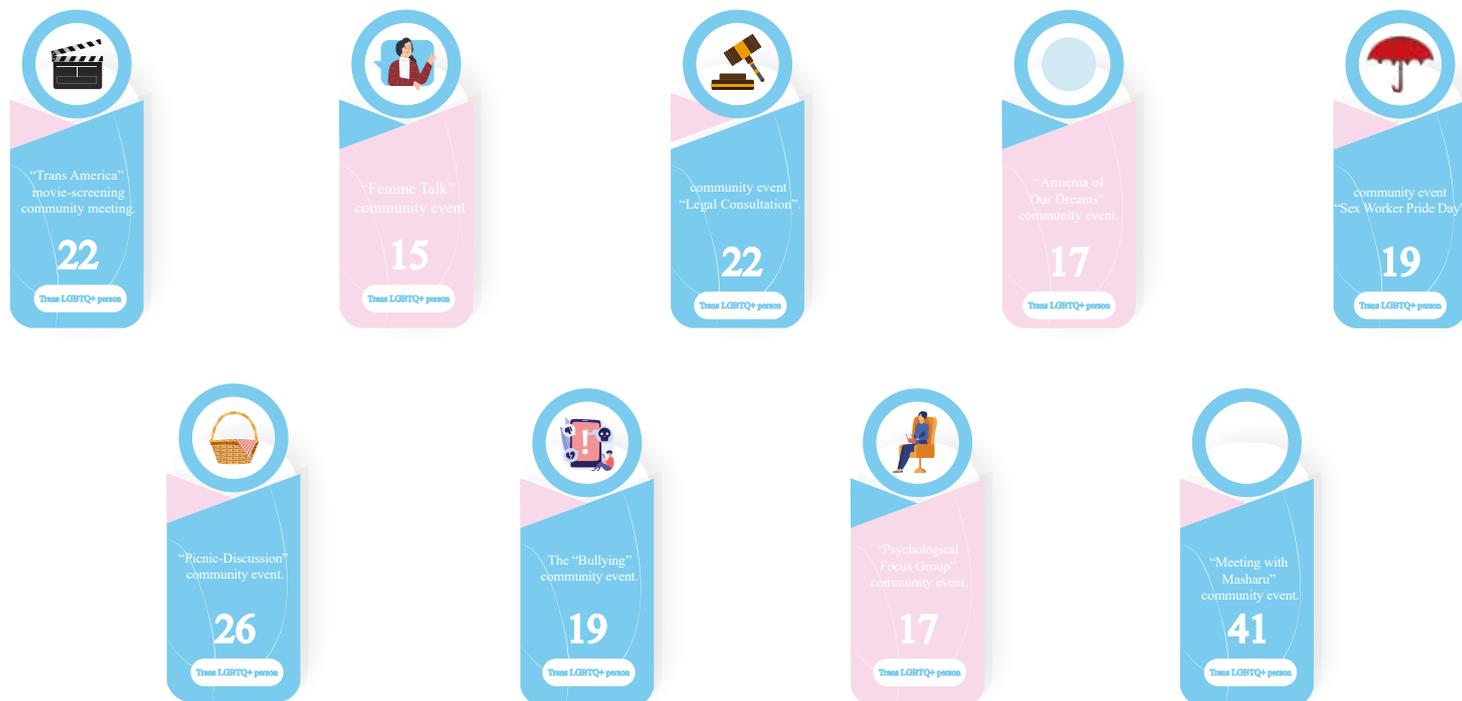
# TRANS NEWSLETTER

October November 2021

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## Summary of the events taken place during September & October



Visitors of the "Right Side" Human Rights Defender NGO During September and October 2021

433

Trans LGBTIQ+ and Sex Worker Community members



Twenty-two Trans LGBTIQ people and sex workers participated in the "Trans America" movie-screening-community meeting.

Fifteen trans and LGBTIQ people participated in the "Femme Talk" community event.

Twenty-two trans and LGBTIQ people participated in the community event "Legal Consultation".

Seventeen trans and LGBTIQ people participated in the "Armenia of Our Dreams" community event.

Nineteen sex workers participated in the community event "Sex Worker Pride Day".

Twenty-six trans and LGBTIQ people participated the "Picnic-Discussion" community event.

Nineteen trans and LGBTIQ people participated in the "Bullying" community event.

Seventeen trans and LGBTIQ people participated in the "Psychological Focus Group" community event.

Forty-one trans, LGBTIQ people and LGBTIQ allies participated in the "Meeting with Masharu" community event.

Twenty-eight trans and LGBTIQ people participated in the "Domestic Violence" community event.

Fourteen trans, LGBTIQ people and sex workers participated in a movie-watching, community event called "The Beauty".

Ten trans and LGBTIQ people participated in the "Our Fears" community meeting.

Eighteen trans and LGBTIQ people participated in the “How to React Correctly to Transphobic & Homophobic People” community meeting.

Fifteen trans and LGBTIQ people participated in the “The Security of Trans & LGBTIQ People” community meeting.

Twenty-eight trans and LGBTIQ people participated in the “Kuka in The Kitchen” community event.

Ten volunteers participated in the “A Meeting with The Volunteers” meeting.

Fifteen trans and LGBTIQ people participated in the “Skills for Running Campaigns” meeting.

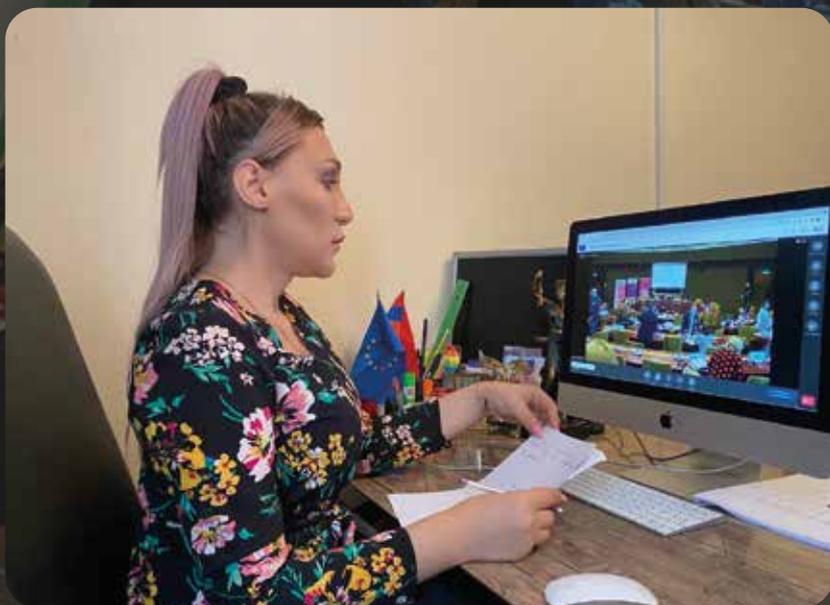
Seventeen trans and LGBTIQ people participated in the “Our Rights at the Police” meeting.

**In September and October, the “Right Side” NGO has welcomed 433 trans, LGBTIQ people and sex workers, who used the services provided by the organization within the framework of legal, educational, informational and social programs.**

You can get acquainted with our monthly summaries on our official website and on our social media.

## L. MARTIROSYAN SPOKE ABOUT HATE SPEECH AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

On November 3, 2020, Lilit Martirosyan, the Founder and President of the “Right Side” Human Rights Defender NGO had a speech during the international seminar organized within the frameworks of the regional project “Strengthening the access to justice through non-judicial redress mechanisms for victims of discrimination, hate crime and hate speech in Eastern Partnership countries” financed by the European Union and the Council of Europe and implemented by the Council of Europe. In her speech, L. Martirosyan particularly referred to the hate speech and gender-based violence against Trans LGBTIQ people in Armenia, emphasized that the “Right Side” Human Rights Defender NGO, as a pioneer in the field of preventing hate crimes, gave a big importance to the role of the international community in that matter and to the need for joint efforts.





## SERIES OF MEETINGS HELD FOR TRANS LGBTIQ PEOPLE

On 20th October of this year, a meeting-discussion took place in the “Right Side” NGO’s safe and secure space for the Trans LGBTIQ people who had arrived from Yerevan and several regions of the country. The theme of the event was mental health and it was hosted by the president of the NGO – Lilit Martirosyan.

Various psychological tests and games were conducted by L. Martirosyan. The participants shared their personal stories, talking about the psychological problems they were facing because of their gender identity. Afterwards, some of the participants presented cases of domestic violence, stigma and discrimination by society.

A mutual help group was set up among the Trans LGBTIQ community members present to assist those in need.

At the end of the meeting, a small survey was conducted among the community representatives on the availability of psychological services, during which participants reported that services were not available and they needed psychological support.

On 26th October of this year, a meeting-discussion on the safety of LGBT people was held in the “Right Side” HRD NGO’s safe and secure space, which was hosted by a transgender woman, model, make-up artist Monica Sarkisian, who had participated in the NGO projects before.

Monica spoke about the security of the Trans LGBIQ community, presented several personal cases during which she had been abused, and based on those cases, presented some details for ensuring security which she had acquired through active participation in the NGO projects.

The participants thanked Monica Sarkisian for organizing such an educational meeting, since security was vitally important for the Trans LGBIQ community in that situation.

On 29th October of this year, a meeting on the “Skills for Running Campaign” was held in the “Right Side” NGO’s safe and secure. The meeting also included an Armenian cuisine event hosted by Kuka Kasyan. Fifteen representatives of the Trans LGBIQ community arriving from the capital city as well as from different regions of the country were present at the event.

During the meeting, the participants had a discussion, during which they gained important knowledge on how to run campaigns.

Afterwards, the guest of the meeting, transgender activist Kuka Kasyan, having intimate conversations with the participants, prepared a number of traditional Armenian dishes. During the tasting of the dishes, the participants talked about the needs of the community, successes achieved, challenges and future steps.

**The meetings were possible with the financial support of the Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice.**

## THE EVENTS THAT TOOK PLACE IN OCTOBER



On 12th October, 2021, a meeting-discussion with 12 representatives of the sex workers community and a movie screening for them took place in the “Right Side” NGO’s safe and secure space.

At the beginning of the meeting the representatives of the sex workers community shared their problems, talking about violence cases, discrimination and other incidents that happened in their life. Then everyone present watched the film “The Beauty”, the main character of which Vivian was a representative of the sex workers community. The discriminatory attitude, bullying, and the acts of violence by the society against the community are showcased in the film in detail.

The series of these meetings is continuous and they are aimed at uniting the sex workers community, educating and developing their skills.

On October 15th, 2021, a meeting-discussion was held for the representatives and activists of the trans and LGBTIQ community in the “Right Side” Human Rights Defender NGO’s safe and secure space.

The activists of the community talked about their activism, presented the work that they had done, and shared their personal experience. One of the activists mentioned that they had started engaging in activism thanks to the courses organized by the “Right Side” HRD NGO, and now they could present themselves as an activist and raise awareness about the issues of the trans LGBTIQ community on different platforms.

The other activist talked about their activism, told how they had changed the attitude of their family towards them and the Sex workers community by reducing stigma and discrimination against them.

One of the activists told how he was breaking many stereotypes at the university where he was studying and added that being an activist, he should change the abysmal attitude towards the Trans LGBTIQ people in educational places.

At the end of the meeting, the participants thanked the team of the “Right Side” HRD NGO for initiating events like that and recommended organizing various campaigns that would raise the visibility of the Trans LGBTIQ and sex workers community not only in Yerevan, but also in the regions of the Republic of Armenia.

The “Right Side” Human Rights Defender NGO organized a meeting on the topic of “our fears” with ten representatives of the Trans LGBTIQ and sex workers community in its safe and secure space on October 18th, 2021.

During the meeting the participants spoke about their fears trying to find solutions to them. One of the participants, who’s a representative of the Trans community of sex workers, told that a few months ago she had been attacked outside by a number of young men who had subjected her to violence, after that accident the participant was terrified to go outside to do sex work and it had been months that she was unable to get over the fear.

The “Right Side” HRD NGO offered its psychological services to the participants who needed it and assured that those kinds of meetings were going to be continuous to help Trans LGBTIQ people and sex workers to find harmony and peace.

The series of meetings were possible to implement with the financial support of the Red Umbrella Fund.





## Transgender Week of Remembrance.

"Right Side" Human Rights Defender NGO on the eve of the Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDoR) announces the week starting from November 16 as a Transgender Week of Remembrance.

**Together we will continue fighting until we are all safe!**

*November 16 – 19 – Social media campaigns through the release of short social videos with #TransArmenia #TDoR2021 #RightSideNGO hashtags.*

*November 18 – Candlelight vigil in Yerevan in memory of transgender people who became victims of transphobia.*

*November 19 – Publishing candlelight photos with #TransArmenia #TDoR2021 #RightSideNGO hashtags as part of the social media campaigns.*

*November 24 – The situation of trans people in Armenia: Interview with attorney Arthur Margaryan.*

# TDoR 2021

# FIGHT AGAINST VIOLENCE



I'm a trans person, and I'm proud of it. I was born the way I am. Respect our identity and stop hatred towards us, because I, my trans sisters and brothers, also want to live like all the members of the society. I mourn the memory of all the trans people who have become victims to transphobia, who have become victims to hatred.



I am Monica Sarkisyan, transgender woman and activist. I mourn the memory of all the trans people who have become victims to transphobia. I call for an end to transphobia. All the trans people have equal rights to live freely, without discrimination or violence regardless of their gender identity.



I am Kuka Kasyan, one of the trans people who faces stigma and discrimination, violence and persecution at every step. Those who are not in favor of violence, stand up for the protection of trans people' rights. Today, my trans friends all over the world have become victims to transphobia. I respect and mourn the memory of those who have become victims to the path of creating rights.



I am Ani, a Trans LGBTIQ activist. Today I mourn the memory of trans people who have become victims to transphobia around the world. Stop discrimination, hatred, violence against trans people. Respect each person's identity.



I am Vahe Babayan, a Trans LGBTIQ activist. I am speaking with regret about the fact that in the 21st century, gender-based killings are taking place all over the world. End discrimination against trans people. I will fight until we are all safe.



I am Ashot Gorgyan, the founder and editor of the "Dzayn" youth media initiative. Unfortunately, Armenia is still an insecure country for trans people. Trans people face gender-based violence every day. Today I respect the memory of all the trans people who have become victims to transphobia.



According to 2020 data, 350 trans people have been killed as a result of transphobia worldwide. Many of them were killed in everyday life, while walking outside, shopping, even at home on the basis of their gender identity. Stop violence against trans people. Trans people have equal rights as everyone else.



I am an LGBTIQ activist, I mourn the memory of all transgender people who have fallen victim to transphobia, I call on everyone to end violence against trans people. Because one of them could be your friend, relative, or neighbor.



20th of November is the Transgender Day of Remembrance, and we, as a community organization of transgender people, respect and remember the memory of those who have become victims of ridicule, discrimination, violence based on their gender identity and gender expression during the course of 2020\2021. We have collected 380 cases of hate crimes against transgender people, despite the number of cases reported by the RSNCO, unfortunately we are convinced that the situation of transgender people in Armenia is disturbing, transgender people are subjected to violence, discrimination and ridicule in all spheres of public life; medical institutions, state bodies, police departments, educational institutions, sports and entertainment places, public services, renting apartments.

<p><b>ECHR proceedings</b></p>	<p>Lilit Martirosyan v. the Republic of Armenia, recognition of violations of Articles 3,6,8,13 of the Convention.</p>
<p><b>Civil cases</b></p>	<p>1.A.Q. v. A.K. on the claim for confiscation of money.                  2.A.A. v. "Iskander" LLC on the requirements of recognizing the employment relationship and confiscating the salary amount.                  3.A.Q. v. A.K. on the demand to sell the property through public bargaining.</p>
<p><b>Criminal cases at the judicial stage</b></p>	<p>1.G.T. was beaten, he was caused material and moral damage, a criminal case was initiated under Articles 118 and 185 of the RA Criminal Code, G.T. was recognized as a victim. The case is under trial.                  2.M. was charged under Article 178 of the RA Criminal Code. The case is at the trial stage.                  3.G.T. was charged under Article 243.1, Part 2 of the RA Criminal Code; that is, driving a vehicle in an insane state by a person who does not have the right to drive a vehicle.</p>
<p><b>Criminal cases at the preliminary investigation stage</b></p>	<p>1.Sex worker A. was recognized as a victim in the criminal case initiated under Article 261 of the RA Criminal Code.                  2.Within the framework of the criminal case initiated under Article 261 of the RA Criminal Code, new cases of crime took place, and as a result of the complaints submitted by the lawyer, two criminal cases were initiated under Articles 340 and 110 of the RA Criminal Code. The E. Kh. was recognized as a victim.                  3.Article 258 of the RA Criminal Code, M. K. was involved as an accused.                  4.Article 118 of the RA Criminal Code, D. was recognized as a victim.                  5.Article 262 of the RA Criminal Code, M. was charged.                  6.Part 2 of Article 178 of the RA Criminal Code, victim A.Q.</p>
<p><b>Criminal cases at the pre-trial stage</b></p>	<p>1.A. Q. applied to the police to initiate a criminal case under Article 178 of the RA Criminal Code by the force of new circumstances. After a number of appeals, due to the efforts of the lawyer, the RA Criminal Court of Appeal upheld the lawyer's complaint and sent the case for a new examination.                  2.A. Q. applied to the police against his former lawyer on suspicion of committing alleged fraud by him. The police and the court rejected the complaints and now the case is in the RA Criminal Court of Appeal.                  3.The case concerns the publication of personal medical data on Cuban citizens by Narek Malyan. That is, N. Malyan wrote on his Facebook page that Cuban citizens who had AIDS had arrived in Armenia and asked for a refugee status in Armenia. The "Right Side" HRD NGO submitted a report on the crime regarding the publication of personal data by Narek Malyan, but the police refused to initiate a criminal case, which was appealed in court.</p>
<p><b>Administrative cases</b></p>	<p>K. A. v. Civil Status Acts Registration Agency of the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Armenia, corresponding administrative act, that is, to change the note on sex in Plaintiff K. A.'s birth number 870, to correct the female with a male note in the case of the demand to oblige the acceptance and cancel the defendant's conclusion on 17.12.2018. The case is in the Court of Cassation.</p>

## “LGBTIQ PEER POWER” PUBLIC CAMPAIGNS

In October 2021, the “Right Side” Human Rights Defender NGO, with the financial support of the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives, organized public educational campaigns for the representatives of the Trans LGBTIQ community living in different regions of Armenia. The public campaigns were organized by the participants of the “Voice of Change” Youth Academy, who shared their knowledge and competences with their peers by promoting their involvement in youth work and civic activism.

With the support of mentors, the activists had mapped the topics to be discussed in advance, the participants, the venue, so that the series of meetings would be safer and more productive for everyone.

In October, the first meeting took place in Vanadzor, Lori region, uniting eighteen LGBTIQ people. During the meeting, the participants were informed about the ways to apply for competitive programs and scholarships and achieve success. The participants appreciated the meeting because they were not aware of the educational opportunities provided by international organizations, thanks to which young people living in Armenia could study and work outside Armenia. As a result of the group work, the participants developed a new project related to the education of LGBTIQ people and mentioned that by developing the idea, they would try to get funding in the future. The participants expressed their gratitude for the meeting and stressed the importance of its continuity, as they had a wish to achieve their goals.

Continuing the series of meetings, the next meeting was held in Kotayk region, which was attended by 21 LGBTIQ people. The topic of the meeting was “The situation of LGBTIQ people in the regions of Armenia. our further steps.” During the meeting, a number of issues were raised, which LGBTIQ people were facing in rural communities, they emphasized that they were trying to hide their identities in every possible way, silently enduring humiliation and pressure, so that not to be physically abused, not to lose the love and respect of their relatives. Many of the participants, sharing their personal stories, added that they wanted to make changes in their community so that people around them started to accept their identity and did not discriminate against LGBTIQ people, but they were afraid that they would not be accepted or would be misunderstood. The discussion was followed by an exchange of views and the development of further steps. At the end of the meeting, one of the participants mentioned: “Discussions in this format motivate us more, I feel strong when I see so many people next to me, please, organize such events for us often.” The meeting was inspiring and educational.

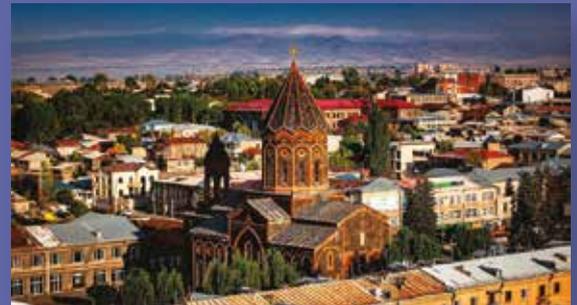




The next meeting took place in Armavir region, which was attended by twenty-three LGBTIQ people from different villages of Armavir region. The topic of the meeting was “Communication skills, overcoming obstacles.” Many of the participants were lucky enough to get acquainted with the activities of various NGOs in Yerevan and get involved in activism, but there were people who did not have the opportunity to go to Yerevan to participate in various educational events. So, it is important that NGOs focus some of their activities to the involvement of the representatives of the LGBTIQ community living in the regions in their work. Two of the activists who had participated in the academy tested their knowledge through role-plays, instructive examples, and shared their knowledge and communication skills with the participants. LGBTIQ people living in the regions expressed a wish to participate in the next academy, so that they, in their turn, could educate their peers.

Two activists living in Gegharkunik region had expressed readiness to organize the next campaign in Sevan city, during which they managed to unite twenty-six members and supporters of the LGBTIQ community. During the meeting, the participants spoke about security and self-defense. Security is a very important issue for LGBTIQ people living in the regions. We need to be more informed, fight together for the promotion of our rights, protect both ourselves and others. The meeting has been important for everyone, as each member of the community and each individual advocating for the community faces the issue of physical and psychological security.

Summing up the series of meetings, the last event was organized in Gyumri, which was attended by 17 LGBTIQ people. The meeting was focused on the ways to prevent domestic violence in the families of LGBTIQ people. LGBTIQ people talked about their personal life, presenting how they continued to live in their families by being discriminated against. The meeting with the activists was also attended by two parents of LGBTIQ people who accepted their children as they were. Parents talked about parent-child relationships, shared special skills for communicating with parents, and emphasized that they were always ready to stand by every person who had been abused. The meeting was emotional, but very important for everyone.



## “RIGHT SIDE” HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER NGO APPRECIATES THE OPPORTUNITIES PROVIDED THROUGH THE “HUMAN RIGHTS TULIP” AWARD

On December 10, 2020, the “Human Rights Tulip” award was presented to Lilit Martirosyan, Founder and President of the “Right Side” Human Rights Defender NGO. The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands Stef Blok presented the award during an online ceremony organized by the Government. At the same time, the Netherlands Embassy in Yerevan organized an event to celebrate Human Rights Day and congratulate Lilit, during which Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Kingdom of the Netherlands Nico Schermers presented the award to Lilit on behalf of the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

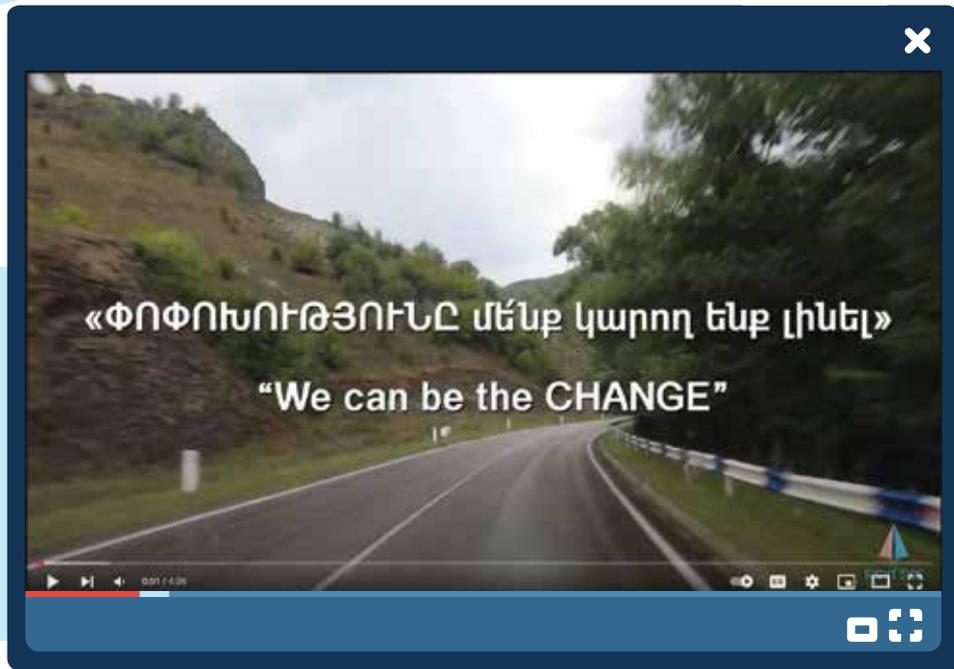
Lilit Martirosyan, as a result of the discussion with the NGO staff, board members and LGBTIQ community representatives, expressed a wish to devote the award to the creation of a Trans LGBTIQ community safe space, where community members would have the opportunity to mobilize, receive education, where they would feel safe and harmonious. According to L. Martirosyan: “When you are an activist, you have to put your life into your work to change the lives of others for the better, you should make them live by giving hope to face any challenges in the world. Every precondition should be created for each individual in order that they feel happy and protected.”

Increasing the scope of our work year by year, we spare no effort and energy to support the full implementation of the rights of Trans LGBTIQ people, to ensure their prosperous future, to promote an inclusive atmosphere, to make Armenia a democratic country that protects human rights.

The “Right Side” Human Rights Defender NGO would like to express its gratitude to the Government of the Netherlands for its trust and continued support in ensuring the protection of the rights and security of LGBTIQ people, and appreciates the work of the Netherlands Embassy in Yerevan and our cooperation with the staff of the Embassy.

The official opening of the safe space for Trans LGBTIQ people will take place in 2022.





This video tells about the ongoing social discrimination against LGBTIQ people in Armenia. The purpose of this video is to raise awareness about the problems of LGBTIQ people and reduce discrimination against them, which will allow community members to receive a quality, full education, visit cultural centers, entertainment venues, and be a full member of Armenian society. The video emphasizes the importance of social inclusion of the LGBTIQ community.





Let's  
SAVE THE  
WORLD  
TOGETHER

## LAUNCH OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECT

For the first time in its practice, the Right Side Human Rights Defender NGO with the financial support of the Urgent Action Fund | For Women's Human Rights is implementing an environmental project which is aimed at raising the level of awareness of Armenian LBTIQ youth on environmental issues, the various impacts of climate change, gender roles, and the need for their active participation in promoting gender justice.

Climate change increases gender inequality, negatively affects the social and political rights of LBTIQ community members, and in many cases, community members are more vulnerable to the negative impacts of climate change because they are not equally represented and are not involved in the discussions on climate and gender justice and decision-making processes.

Through this program, we are going to foster the level of involvement of LBTIQ people in climate activism; the community members, with the support of NGO staff, will be involved in combating climate change by gaining knowledge about their rights and using them to promote gender justice.

During the project, it is planned to organize a 5-day long camp with 20 LBTIQ participants from Armenian regions, who will later carry out eco-campaigns in all the regions of Armenia by including at least 200 peers living in regional areas. Moreover, tree planting will be carried out in 4 regions of Armenia, eco bins will be installed to create a tradition of garbage sorting, 5 touristic areas will be cleaned of garbage. Along with all this, a social video on inclusion will be produced and a manual on environmental protection will be developed by LBTIQ people, which will promote community members' climate activism in rural communities.

## LEGAL CASE SUMMARY

# Trans man applied to the RA Administrative Court of Appeal

On October 30, 2018, K.A. submitted an application to the Kentron and Nork-Marash Department of the Civil Acts Registration Services of the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Armenia to change the gender marker in the birth certificate.

With the submitted application, K.A. asked to make a correction in the act No. 870 of birth, that is, to change the gender marker in the gender column from female to male.

The application was rejected by the conclusion drawn up by the Kentron and Nork-Marash Department of the Civil Acts Registration Services on 17.12.2018.

In this case, the Kentron and Nork-Marash Department of the Civil Acts Registration Services, rejecting K.A.'s application, referred to the order of the Minister of Justice of the Republic of Armenia adopted on 14.05.2007, which is stating that the Civil Acts Registration Services refuses to make changes, additions or corrections in the civil registration act, if the submitted documents are incomplete, do not follow the requirements of the legislation of the Republic of Armenia or the requirement to make changes, additions and corrections is not substantiated, there are information inconsistencies in the documents.

K.A. applied to the RA Administrative Court, demanding to declare invalid the administrative act adopted by the Kentron and Nork-Marash Department of the Civil Acts Registration Services of the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Armenia and to oblige to adopt a favorable administrative act.

K.A.'s lawsuit was rejected by the RA Administrative Court, after which K.A. applied to the RA Administrative Court of Appeal.

That is, if a person wants to make a change in a civil status act record (gender marker change), they must:

Undergo gender reassignment.

Submit a document on gender reassignment issued by a medical organization in accordance with the RA legislation.

In the emntioned case, in order for K.A. to be able to correct the gender marker from female to male in the gender column, he had to perform the listed actions, ie performed gender reassignment and submitted a document on gender reassignment issued by a medical organization in accordance with RA legislation.

The European Court of Human Rights, in the case of A.P., Garçon and Nicot v. France (ECHR 121(2017) 06.04.2017)[1] has referred to these issues, in particular, noting that the recognition of a transgender person's sexual identity after medical interventions that he / she has not wanted to perform means denial of the full exercise of the right to respect for his / her private life.

At the same time, it should be noted that there are no legal regulations in Armenia, according to which the norms and regulations on the provision of a certificate on gender reassignment by a medical organization would be defined.

On October 4, 2021, the RA Administrative Court of Appeal rejected K.A.'s appeal and on November 4, 2021, the decision of the RA Administrative Court of Appeal was appealed to the RA Court of Cassation.

[i] [https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/spa#{%22itemid%22:\[%22001-172913%22\]}](https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/spa#{%22itemid%22:[%22001-172913%22]})

## INFORMATION ON THE GENDER MARKER REGISTRATION

On 16.05.2021, the law on the Registration of Civil Status Acts was repealed and on 16.05.2021, a new law came into force, which removed the provisions of the previous law on gender reassignment, in particular, the Article 70 of the previous law stipulated that the conclusion of the Civil Acts Registration Services on making corrections, additions or changes to the Civil Status Act record was drawn up in particular in the following case:

In accordance with the legislation of the Republic of Armenia, the medical organization has issued a defined document on the gender reassignment.

That is, if a person wants to make a change in a civil status act record (gender marker change), they must:

Undergo gender reassignment.

Submit a document on gender reassignment issued by a medical organization in accordance with the RA legislation.

Currently, only the order No. 170-N adopted by the Minister of Justice on 13.05.2020, where it is stated that according to Article 70 of the law, the Civil Acts Registration Services draws up a conclusion on making changes in the civil status act record, if the person for whom the civil status act has been drawn up has undergone gender reassignment. That is, this norm refers to the previous law.

Thus, the provisions of the current law do not contain any provision on the conditions for making changes in the acts of the Civil Acts Registration Services in case of gender reassignment.

To some extent, the current law (in our opinion) provides for regulation in the third part of Article 66, according to which the grounds for making a change in the civil status act registration are:

As a consequence of the registration of another civil status act or a document adopted (provided) by another competent body, there has been a need to make a change in the compiled civil status act registration.

Thus, with the adoption of the new law on the Registration of Civil Status Acts, in case of gender reassignment, the requirements for making a change in the civil status act are not clear, and the regulations for submitting the necessary documents are not defined.

One of the strategic directions of the Right Side Human Rights Defender NGO is to regulate the process of legal gender recognition in the Republic of Armenia and a number of activities are being carried out in this regard.

## A SERIES OF TRAININGS FOR SEX WORKERS

The Right Side Human Rights Defender NGO, continuing to raise the awareness level of sex workers about their rights, organized a series of educational-informational events in November and December 2021.

In November, four events were held on safety and security, physical and mental health, HIV / AIDS prevention and digital security.

During the events, the organization's outreach workers, being in constant contact with the sex workers community members, regularly tested them for HIV, provided condoms and lubricants, informed them about sexual health, and directed appropriate medical examinations.

The sex workers, meeting with the organization's lawyer, obtained detailed information about the protection of their rights, which would help them to be protected in the police, on streets during sex work and elsewhere.

During the events, the participants gained knowledge about digital security and learned to be protected on various social platforms. Many sex workers are engaged in sex work online; so, the community members give importance to the continuity of these activities to promote their own safety.

In December, sex workers took part in three events organized at the Right Side HRD NGO's community center. The events were focused on the prevention of trafficking, emigration, and domestic violence and on the importance of social assistance.

Those meetings were a necessity for sex workers and became a subject of wide discussion. This is because sex workers in Armenia are deprived of basic living conditions, have no means of subsistence, and often have to become victims of violence in their own families because they do not have the financial means to live separately. "Everything has become more tense during the COVID-19 period, I can not even cover the daily expenses," – said one of the participants.

There are still administrative fines for sex workers in the amount of twenty times the minimum wage, and if the same actions are taken within a year after the imposition of an administrative penalty, a fine of forty times the minimum wage is imposed. And since sex work is not legal in Armenia, many sex workers go abroad to work, and often do not return.

It should also be mentioned that sex workers regularly receive attractive offers to work in different countries, they are deceived due to lack of awareness and become victims of abuse, exploitation and trafficking on the way to migration. During the meetings, the participants learned about the three main elements of trafficking (action, means, purpose), the causes and consequences of trafficking, and through practical advice they were informed about the ways to avoid becoming a victim of trafficking.

These meetings will be continuous so that the problem of every sex worker living in Armenia is documented, raised and addressed.

It should be noted that the series of meetings is carried out with the financial support of the Red Umbrella Fund.



# TRANS 8 CAMP 8



Trans Camp 8 was organized from December 20 to 23 of this year, which brought together TRANS LGBTIQ activists living in Yerevan and different regions of Armenia.

The aim of the training was to promote the capacity building and empowerment of TRANS LGBTIQ people, improve the level of community involvement in the socio-cultural and civic environment, enhance their safety in both the family and the society, raise the awareness of TRANS LGBTIQ people by providing community members with new knowledge and skills that would enhance their well-being and secure life.

The official opening of the Camp was made by Lilit Martirosyan, the President of the NGO, who congratulated all the participants on their election, noting that the opportunity should be used to be educated, to become stronger, to be an activist in Armenia, to discover available resources and to be involved in protecting the community interests. Then, she added that over the years, the Camps had been playing a very important role in educating hundreds of TRANS LGBTIQ people, sex workers, their parents and supporters, who had used and were using the knowledge they had gained to reduce stigma and discrimination around them.

Topics such as:

- Human rights and fundamental freedoms.
- The situation of Trans LGBTIQ people in Armenia.
- Gender-based violence and hate speech.
- The situation of trans activism in Armenia.
- The structure and role of the judicial system of the Republic of Armenia.
- Procedure for filing a lawsuit.
- The role and significance of the European Court of Human Rights.

The participants gained knowledge on human rights and fundamental freedoms, prevention of human rights violation cases, activism, advocacy and campaigning skills, writing and filing lawsuits, the importance of the European Court of Human Rights and precedent decisions.



At the end of the camp Lilit Martirosyan had a closing speech, handed over certificates, thanked all the participants for their active participation, then added that the Right Side Human Rights Defender NGO, being the first Trans organization in Armenia and in the Caucasus, would spare no effort to implement a number of legislative reforms for the benefit of TRANS LGBIQ people so that the community members could live a secure and prosperous life.

“The years have proved that TRANS camps should be continuous, every time I take new information with me and use it to make my life better, I thank the organization for the opportunities given to me and all of us.”

Transgender woman

“TRANS camps have already been expected for all of us, we are looking forward to the applications to fill in, to participate, they give us new knowledge, during the camps we get to know each other, exchange our experience and knowledge; thank you for giving me another opportunity.”

Transgender man

“I have not received so much new knowledge, information neither at school, nor at university, this was a database of new knowledge for me, I thank all the organizers who do all this to strengthen us all.”

Transgender woman, activist

“The topics were chosen correctly and in a targeted way, I knew almost nothing about the judicial system. I have learned how to make the right lawsuits. I have learned about a number of rights that will help me be more protected in different institutions, thank you.”

Non-binary person

**The Trans Camp 8 was funded by the Global Found for Women.**



## IMPLEMENTATION OF A THREE-DAY MEETING WITH LGBTIQ PEOPLE AND THEIR PARENTS



Guided by its strategic goals, the Right Side Human Rights Defender NGO has been working with the parents of LGBTIQ people since its inception, thus, it organizes a three-day outgoing meetings for LGBTIQ people and their parents each year.

In January of this year, a meeting was held with the representatives of the LGBTIQ community and a group of parents, who had arrived from Yerevan and different regions of Armenia.

The topics of the meeting were:

- Strengthening harmony in the family.
- How to work properly with LGBTIQ parents?
- How can parents work properly with LGBTIQ family members?
- Human rights.
- Security.
- Panel discussions with parents.

Lilit Martirosyan, the President of the organization made an opening speech, thanked the group of parents and LGBTIQ people who had expressed a wish to participate in the meeting, which was very important for every member of the community to build a harmonious family.

Lilit Martirosyan highlighted the importance of such meetings, as the hard work of previous years with the parents of LGBTIQ people had had a positive impact on the lives of the community members.

During the three-day seminar, the participants performed various practical activities, which were entirely aimed at creating a harmonious and mutually understandable atmosphere in families. LGBTIQ people have acquired skills that will enable them to be understood and accepted by their families. The participants have learned how to work properly with the parents who do not yet have sufficient knowledge of gender identity and sexual orientation, and how to work properly with LGBTIQ family members. They also raised a number of issues faced both parents and LGBTIQ family members. In addition, it was suggested that a booklet be developed to help the parents who did not have enough information to work with their LGBTIQ family members.

As every year, this year also a panel discussion with the title of “There are speaking the parents of LGBTIQ people” has been organized. During the discussion the parents talked about the difficult path they had gone through, told how they had accepted their LGBTIQ children and family members. At the end of the discussion, the participants received their answers through questions.

The first day was very exciting, impressive and full of knowledge.

During the following days of the training, the parents and LGBTIQ people were informed about the role and significance of the RA judicial system, the European Court of Human Rights.

The participants watched informative videos on human rights, talked about the best European practice and discussed how to apply the gained knowledge at the local level.

At the end of the training, all the participants were handed certificates and letters of gratitude.

Quotes from the participants:

“It was a very successful meeting, full of information, exchange of experience. Thank you for this meeting. I was able to voice all the difficulties I had faced, but overcome. And today I am standing by my child.”

Parent of an LGBTIQ person

“I would like many parents to be here, to listen to their children, what difficulties they are going through for fear of speaking out about their sexual orientation and gender identity in the family. I think that the time will come when all the parents will understand their children, will accept them as they are, and we must all do that through the education we have received.”

Parent of an LGBTIQ person

“I’m excited, I can hardly say what I have to say, I’m so impressed with this meeting that I want to tell my mother everything about me, how I feel, to say that I love her very much and I do not want to lose her.”

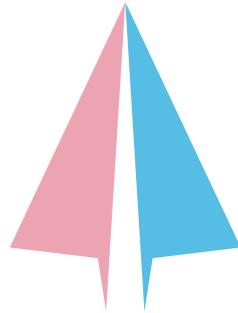
LGBTIQ person

“Thank you very much for this important meeting, please organize such meetings a lot, we need it very much, and who knows, maybe one day my mother will be sitting here too.”

LGBTIQ person

**The training was possible with the financial support of the Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice.:**





# RIGHT SIDE

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER NGO



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