

TRANS NEWSLETTER

May 2023

IDAHOBIT

2023

No.26

A hand is shown holding the top of a rainbow flag, which is waving against a bright blue sky filled with soft, white clouds. The flag's colors are vibrant and clearly visible. The overall composition is clean and celebratory.

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WE ARE THE SAME IN DIVERSITY PODCAST SERIES

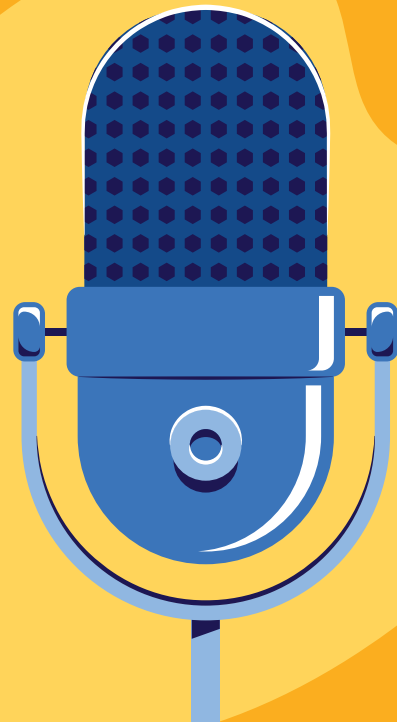
G | M | F The German Marshall Fund
of the United States
STRENGTHENING TRANSATLANTIC COOPERATION

B | S | T The Black Sea Trust
for Regional Cooperation
A PROJECT OF THE GERMAN MARSHALL FUND

RIGHT SIDE
HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER NGO

Those podcasts was made by the "Right Side" Human Rights Defender NGO with the financial support of the Black Sea Trust for Regional Cooperation.

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URGENT SUPPORT FOR TRANS VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE



With the financial support of the Urgent Action Fund, the Right Side human rights defender NGO initiates an urgent response support program to assist Trans victims of violence. The program is specially designed for those who have been subjected to physical, sexual, and other types of violence since the 1st of April of this year and notified the police about cases of violence against them, and currently, the case has been processed.

Within the framework of this program, applicants are required to submit a written application to the Right Side NGO, which must include the name of the applicant, the date(s) of the incident(s) of violence, the type of violence, the location, details of whether the violence was motivated by their gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation. They should also include information about the progress of the case after notifying the police about the incident. Applicants must be able to justify why the request is urgent, and the potential consequences if they do not receive funding.

The Right Side NGO will form a special committee responsible for the thorough examination and needs assessment of each application. After the examination of the applications by the members of the committee, the persons applying for support will receive an answer within ten days. By providing the help, the Right Side NGO hopes to alleviate the challenges abused Trans individuals face during this difficult phase.

Contact us:

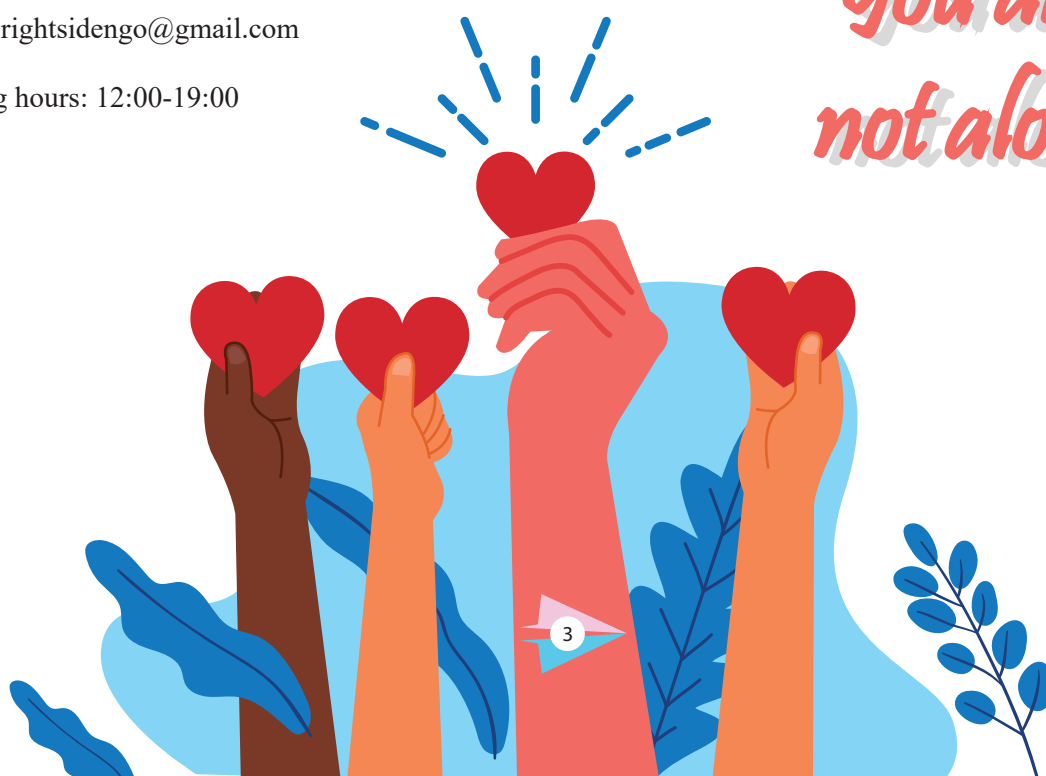
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*You are
not alone*



THE RIGHT SIDE NGO IS CONDUCTING RESEARCH

The Right Side Human Rights Defender organization is launching a research project “The situation of LGBTQI+ victims of domestic violence in Armenia” to analyze the prevalence of domestic violence among Trans and LGBTQI people in Armenia. Funded by ILGA Europe, the project aims to identify the forms and expression of domestic violence, the types, frequency, and regularity, as well as to identify the motives and motivations of the abuser’s use of violence, and physical, emotional, and psychological consequences of violence. The research will also collect statistical data from organizations operating in the field and competent authorities, such as Police, Prosecutor’s Office, Investigative Committee, and Special Investigative Service, and analyze existing legislation to highlight existing legislative and institutional gaps, to study and come up with recommendations to the bodies related to the sector.

While Armenia has taken steps to address domestic violence, with a law “On prevention of family violence, protection of persons subjected to family violence and restoration of family solidarity” passed in 2017 criminalizing domestic violence, Trans and LGBTQI people often don’t report the cases of domestic violence against them because of discrimination. Besides that, as the inquiries to state bodies show, the lack of legal protection against hate crimes and lack of reporting has resulted in limited data on the prevalence of domestic violence towards Trans and LGBTQI people.

Within the framework of the research, 300 cases will be studied through a standardized survey and an online questionnaire. Cases of physical, psychological, sexual, and economic violence and neglect toward the interviewed persons will be considered. The participants will be given an opportunity to participate in the interview by phone or online.

Who can take the survey?

Trans and LGBTQI people who are 16 and older, can participate in the survey. The Right Side NGO will ensure the anonymity and security of survey participants’ data and provide legal and psychological support to individuals subjected to domestic violence within the limits of available resources.

the research is essential to bringing to light the prevalence of domestic violence towards Trans and LGBTQI people in Armenia, identifying the challenges and barriers to addressing this issue, providing recommendations to the state bodies, and cooperating with them.

“The situation of LGBTQI+ victims of domestic violence in Armenia”



ENGLISH COURSES

THE RIGHT SIDE NGO ANNOUNCES NEW COURSES FOR TRANS AND LGBIQ INDIVIDUALS

The Right Side human rights defender NGO dedicated to supporting and empowering the LGBTQ+ community has announced the launch of two new courses for Trans and LGBIQ individuals. The courses, which will focus on English language and Graphic design, aim to provide participants with valuable skills and knowledge to enhance their professional lives.

Each course will consist of two one-hour group meetings per week and will take place in the community safe space of the Right Side NGO. The English language course will focus on practical language skills, including reading, writing, and speaking, while the Graphic design course will introduce participants to design principles, software, and techniques. The courses will be conducted by the volunteers of the Right Side NGO and will start on the 1st of June.

The courses are open for all interested Trans and LGBIQ individuals, although the preference will be given to first applicants as the places are limited. Those interested in participating should contact the Right Side NGO by email or phone to apply.



GRAPHIC DESIGN COURSES



 Adobe Photoshop

 Adobe Illustrator

EVENTS HELD IN APRIL



In the month of April 2023, The Right Side human rights defender NGO carried out the following 4 events in the organization’s safe space

On April 7, the “Day of Silence” community meeting was attended by 12 Trans and LGBIQ+ people, sex workers, and supporters.

On April 18, the “National Transgender HIV Testing Day” community meeting was attended by 17 Trans and LGBIQ+ people, sex workers, and supporters.

On April 26, the “Lesbian Visibility Day” group meeting and film screening was attended by 14 Trans and LGBIQ+ people, sex workers, and supporters.

On April 28, the “Domestic violence against members of the LGBTIQ+ community” community meeting was attended by 12 Trans and LGBIQ+ people, sex workers, and supporters.

During the month of April, The Right Side NGO accepted a number of 190 Trans LGBIQ+ people and sex workers, who used the services provided within the legal, educational, and informational, social programs implemented by the organization.



April 2023 report

on cases in the legal department of the
Right Side Human Rights Defender NGO

APRIL 2023 REPORT ON CASES IN THE LEGAL DEPARTMENT OF THE RIGHT SIDE HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER NGO

As of May 4, 2023, a total of 22 cases are being handled by the Right Side human rights defender NGO, of which 2 are in the ECHR, 7 are in the trial stage, and 11 are in the preliminary investigation stages.

In April 2023, 21 beneficiaries were provided with legal counseling by the Right Side NGO.

The lawyers of the Right Side NGO ensured the current maintenance of the cases in the organization, in particular, the lawyers participated in 7 court hearings and took part in investigation operations in 7 cases.

During the month of April 2023, 6 new applications for legal aid were received.

The Right Side NGO Legal Department



IDAHOBIT 2023



PUBLIC STATEMENT: THE INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST HOMOPHOBIA, BIPHOBIA, AND TRANSPHOBIA IN ARMENIA

Around the world, May 17 is celebrated as the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT). The purpose of this day is to raise the visibility of LGBTIQ people and public awareness of LGBTIQ people's issues and discrimination and hate crimes against them, as well as prejudices caused by sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender self-expression. Homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia are expressions of anxiety, hatred, anger, discomfort, and fear towards LGBTIQ people.

As the first and leading Trans, LGBTIQ, and sex workers' community-based organization in Armenia and the South Caucasus, the Right Side human rights defender NGO has been working to protect the rights of trans, LGBTIQ, and sex workers since 2016. Today, one of our priorities is to challenge the social norms that perpetuate discrimination and prejudice, because it is because of these notions that homophobia, biphobia, interphobia, and transphobia are so deeply rooted in our society.

According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights (Article 1) and everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status (Article 2). Regardless of this equality established by the RA Constitution and international law, Trans and LGBTIQ people in Armenia still continue to face discrimination, oppression, and violence in various areas of their lives, as evidenced by the many cases of physical violence and hate speech in recent years. Non-acceptance by society and inaction by the state system, particularly the police, often renders Trans and LGBTIQ people unprotected, homeless, and sometimes even forced to flee the country.

Unfortunately, the RA government does not pay the necessary attention to solving these urgent problems, the anti-discrimination policy is ineffective, and the challenges of Trans and LGBTIQ people are marginalized, which leads to a lack of trust in the state by community representatives.

The mass media do not cover discrimination and violence against Trans and LGBTIQ people, and the topic is addressed only within the framework of internal political speculation, strengthening of discrimination, and spreading of hate speech.

It is important to note that due to the lack of legal acts related to gender-based hate crimes, protection from discrimination, legal recognition of gender, sex reassignment surgery, and hormone therapy in the Republic of Armenia, the fundamental freedoms of transgender people are limited, such as the right to free movement, the right to education, family the right to draw up, etc. These problems isolate transgender people from society, transgender people in many cases lead a closed life and are subjected to ridicule and hatred.

One of the priorities of Right Side NGO is to increase the visibility of Trans and LGBTIQ people, to record cases of hate crimes and discrimination, and to present these issues on national and international platforms. Since its establishment, on the basis of the work directed to the protection of the rights of Trans and LGBTIQ individuals by the Right Side NGO with RA state bodies, we have registered the following advances in recent years:

As a result of cooperation with the Agency for the Registration of Civil Residence Acts (CCRA), the process of the name change of transgender persons has been facilitated, which is now possible to do without the testimony of 3 persons certifying the transgender status of the person changing the name, which was previously considered mandatory, and without a mandatory psychological conclusion.

In 2018, due to the efforts of the legal team of the Right Side NGO, the Court recognized for the first time the violation of rights based on discrimination based on sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

In 2022, the Rights Side NGO established a Trans LGBTIQ community safe center, where already hundreds of LGBTIQ people, as well as their family members, have received legal and psychological counseling and support, participated in various educational, entertainment meetings and discussions, used equipment, and benefited from the opportunity to participate in foreign language courses.

This year, to mark the IDAHOBIT, the Right Side NGO, among other activities, also carried out a social survey in Yerevan, the aim of which was to reveal the attitude of the society towards LGBTIQ people, and the answers received prove that discrimination against LGBTIQI people is still big in Armenia. These statistics are worrying and reinforce the urgency of awareness and rights protection work. The Right Side NGO remains committed to ending discrimination and supporting reforms for a world free of discrimination and violence, where every individual is treated with dignity and respect, regardless of gender identity, sexual orientation, and gender expression.



IDAHOBIT

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Celebrating the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia in Armenia, we are calling:

State bodies:

- take appropriate legal steps to ensure the legal gender recognition and name change of transgender persons, based on the right to self-determination, psychological and physical integrity, eliminating the need for coercive medical interventions.
- update the draft law on equality to include the prohibition of discrimination based on gender identity and gender self-expression.
- to ensure the protection of transgender persons from hate crimes and hate speech by law, documenting incidents and how to submit reports to other OSCE participating countries.
- to make current curricula in RA educational system inclusive from the point of view of transgender people's rights and to teach inclusiveness, sexuality and gender issues.
- implement appropriate measures to fairly investigate all cases of violence, hatred and discrimination against transgender people.
- stop encouraging hatred, discrimination and ridicule towards transgender people through the politicization of LGBT issues.

To RA Police:

- Ensure the safety of Trans LGBIQ persons and all the rights granted to them by the RA constitution to the RA police, the prosecutor's office, the human rights defender and relevant bodies.

To the Mass Media:

- avoid the use of incorrect and misleading terminology and stop promoting discrimination against transgender people.
- cover issues related to transgender people based on the principles of inclusiveness and sensitivity.
- stop feeding wrong prejudices and stereotypes about transgender people, presenting them as sick people who want to destroy Armenian traditions and culture.
- respect the personal life of transgender persons and cooperate with transgender persons when preparing news materials about them..

RIGHT SIDE NGO PROGRAMS MANAGER PARTICIPATED IN IDAHOT+ FORUM

On May 11 of this year the Programs Manager of the Right Side Human Rights Defender NGO participated in the IDAHOT+ forum in Reykjavík, which aimed to promote the rights of LGBTI+ people and strengthen cooperation between key stakeholders. The Forum, supported by the Council of Europe, served as a platform for European governments, international organizations, civil society groups and key stakeholders to assess progress on LGBTI+ rights, celebrate achievements and set new goals for LGBTI+ rights. As the first and leading Trans, LGBIQ and sex workers' community based organization in Armenia and South Caucasus, Right Side Human Rights Defender NGO also participated in the IDAHOT+ forum. The Programs Manager of the NGO spoke in the "Supporting LGBTI human rights defenders under threat" section of the forum, which focused on the challenges faced by LGBTI+ human rights defenders working and doing activism in countries with high levels of discrimination. During her speech, she presented the situation of LGBTI+ people in Armenia, mentioning the existing legislative gaps and the work carried out by the organization. During the discussion, the necessary support from international organizations was also highlighted, which would ensure the safety and well-being of LGBTI+ human rights defenders.

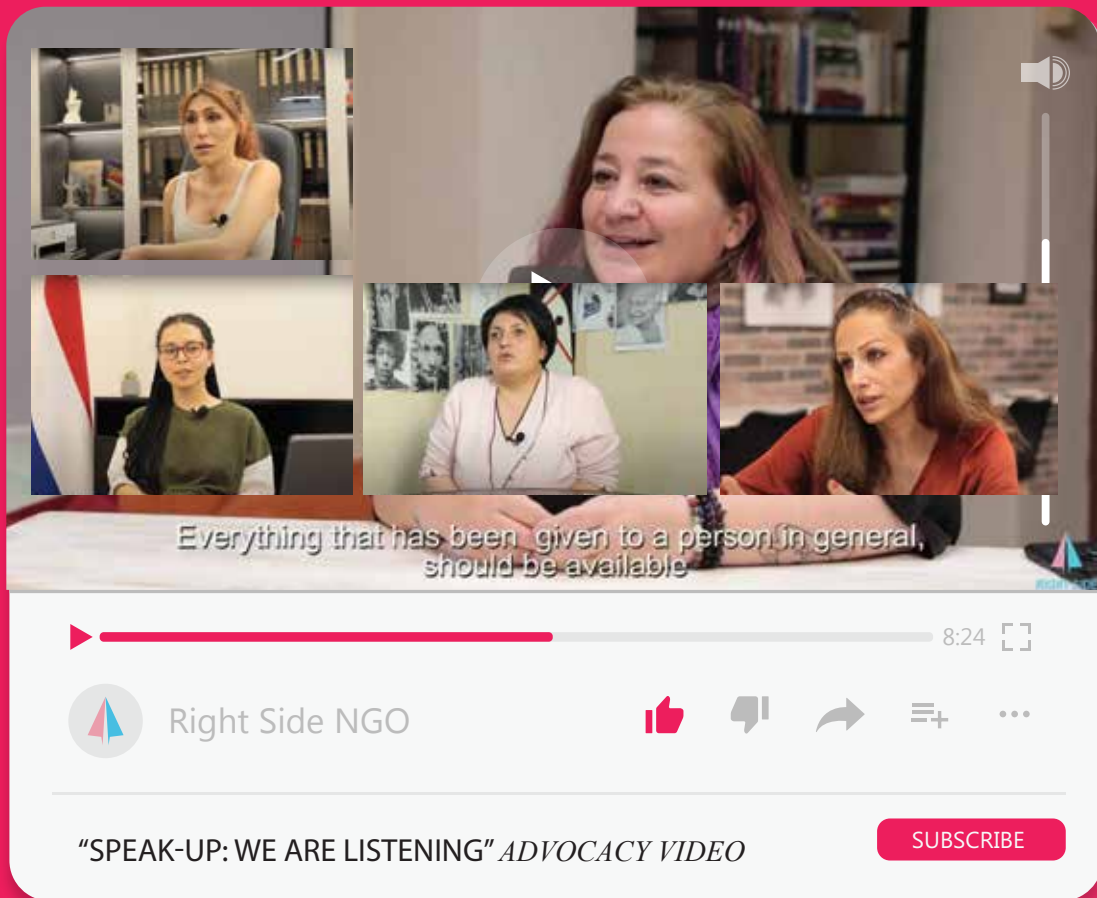
The Right Side NGO gives high importance to participation in the IDAHOT+ forum and the exchange of experience with partner organizations, which contributes to the improvement of the quality of life of LGBTI+ people and the protection of their rights in RA.



THE PROJECTS MANAGER OF THE
"RIGHT SIDE" HRD NGO PARTICIPATED IN

IDAHOT+
FORUM 2023
Reykjavík · Iceland



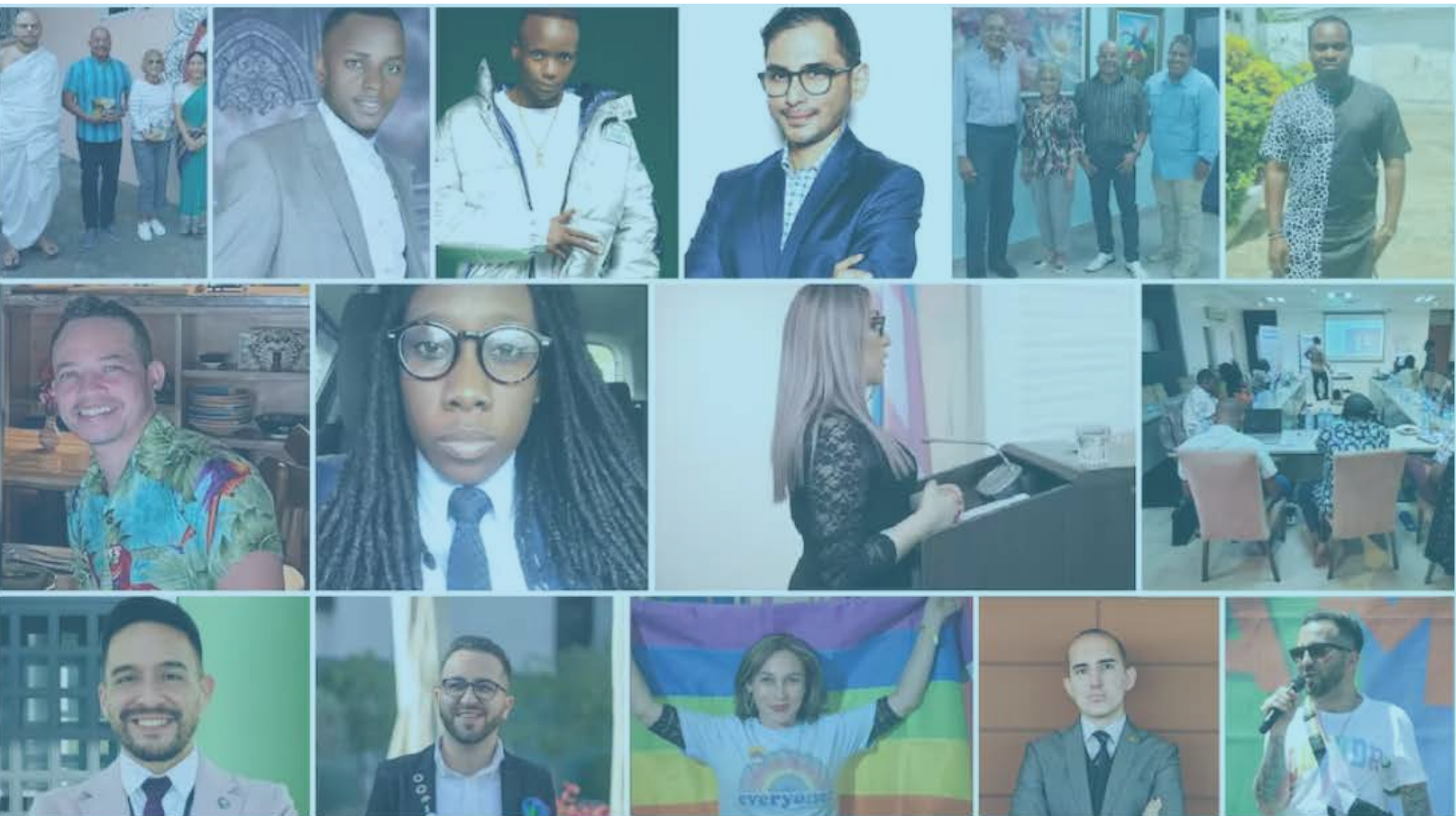


This video presents a series of interviews with the representatives of LGBTIQ human rights defender organizations in Armenia (Lilit Martirosyan - Right Side HRD NGO, Lara Aharonian - Women's Resource Centre in Yerevan, Nina Karapetyants - The Helsinki Association for Human Rights in Armenia, Anush Gabrielyan - Sexual Assault Crisis Center, Armenia, Gohar Shahnazaryan - Women's Fund Armenia) to mark **#IDAHOBIT** - the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia; it also includes a social survey conducted in Yerevan to find out public attitudes towards LGBTIQ people.

The video was prepared by the Right Side Human Rights Defender NGO with the financial support of the Black Sea Trust for Regional Cooperation.

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THE RIGHT SIDE NGO HIGHLIGHTS
THE IMPACTS OF HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN'S GLOBAL SMALL GRANTS PROGRAM

During the past three years, The Human Rights Campaign has focused attention on the continuing violence and discrimination experienced by LGBTQ+ communities around the world. For years, the organization has been providing small grants to LGBTIQ organizations around the world, within the framework of which this year the Right Side human rights defender NGO organized a training for LGBTIQ+ activists on the topic “Advocating for our Rights.” The participants gained human rights advocacy and strategic communication skills, which they are now using to initiate activities in different communities.

@Human Rights Campaign

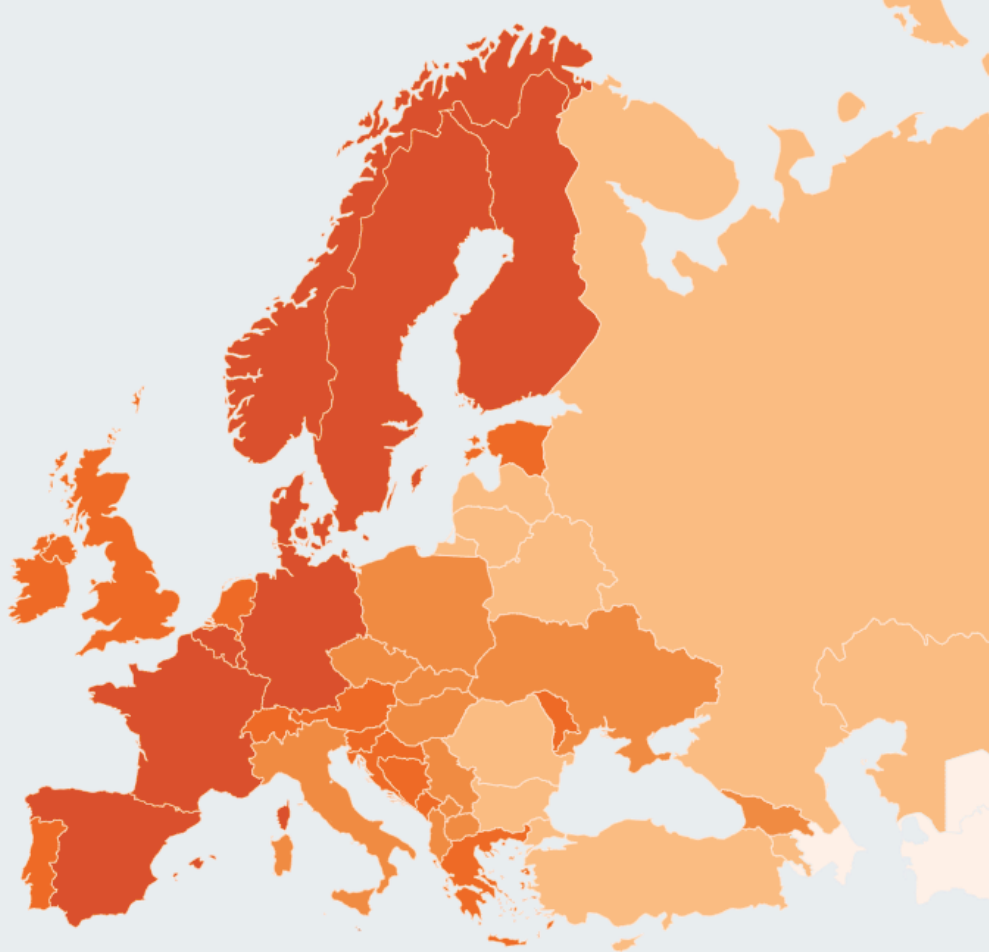


TRANS RIGHTS MAP

Europe & Central Asia 2023



Trans Rights Map



This map illustrates how trans people are protected across different areas of life. The darker the colour the higher the level of protection.



Downloaded from transrightsmap.tgeu.org on 5/26/2023

TGEU has published the 2023 trans rights map and index. It is a comprehensive analysis of trans rights in Europe and Central Asia and has been collecting data on the legal and political processes applied to trans people for a decade.

*SMALL GRANTS FOR ADVANCING SOCIAL INCLUSION
OF SEX WORKERS IN ARMENIA*



Ahead of International Sex Workers' Day on June 2, the Right Side human rights defender NGO, with the financial support of the Red Umbrella Fund, announces a sub-grant program for sex workers, activists, groups of community representatives, and non-governmental organizations dealing with the issue of sex workers from Yerevan and all regions of RA.

The sub-grant projects should be goal-oriented and serve the social inclusion of sex workers in Armenia (civic activism, empowerment of young sex workers and community representatives, etc.). The budget of the planned project should not exceed 500 euros (202,490 drams), including taxes. Priority will be given to initiatives that raise the visibility of sex workers' issues, reduce stigma and discrimination against the community, and provide correct information. Projects can have creative content, for example, creating videos, podcasts, and organizing photo exhibitions, as well as meetings, discussions, etc., promoting the social inclusion of sex workers.

To apply, please fill out the attached Application .

The deadline for applying to the competition is July 15. The Right Side NGO will form a competition committee to examine the applications, which will evaluate the projects presented by the applicants according to the feasibility of the planned actions, needs assessment, cost-effectiveness, clarity of the project description, and compliance with the competition objectives. The tender committee will inform about the results on the 1st of August.

Contact us for questions or additional information:

Right Side human rights defender NGO



 *ARMENIAN FORUM FOR DEMOCRACY*
May 31, 2023

Defending Democracy: Safeguarding Rights Amid National Security Challenges



UNION OF INFORMED CITIZENS

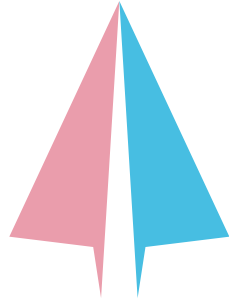
*THE PRESIDENT OF THE RIGHT SIDE NGO PARTICIPATED
IN THE ARMENIAN FORUM FOR DEMOCRACY*

Today, on the 31st of May, the Union of Informed Citizens NGO and Freedom House collaborated to organize the Armenian Forum For Democracy, an event focused on the theme “Defending Democracy: Safeguarding Rights Amid National Security Challenges.” It aimed to unite the stakeholders of the political society, RA state bodies, mass media representatives, and diplomatic and expert communities to jointly analyze and discuss the urgent issues facing democratic reforms in Armenia in the presence of current security challenges. Lilit Martirosyan, the president of Right Side human rights NGO, was also invited to the forum.

Attendees were welcomed with opening remarks from Armenian prime minister Nikol Pashinyan as well as from Ambassador Andrea Wiktorin, head of the European Union’s delegation to Armenia, and Marc Behrendt, director for Europe and Eurasia programs at Freedom House. During the forum’s “Promoting and Protecting Human Rights in a Complex Security Environment” panel discussion, Marc Behrendt, the Regional Director for Europe and Eurasia Programs at Freedom House, delivered a speech about different challenges of Armenia, where he mentioned the documented cases of violence against transgender individuals detailed in the legal report of the Right Side human rights defender NGO.

The Right Side NGO gives importance to the organization of the Armenian Forum For Democracy, where, among other challenges, the problems of the beneficiaries of the Right Side NGO are raised and the next steps necessary to solve these problems are discussed. Supporting Trans and LGBTIQ individuals is an integral part of strengthening democracy and establishing legal equality in Armenia and the Right Side NGO will continue to document the cases of violence and discrimination against Trans and LGBTIQ people, and raise our voice about them on national and international platforms, until every individual is treated with dignity and respect, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.





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