

Armenia



Population: 2,967,004 (July 2009 est.)
Population Growth Rate: -0.03% (2009 est.)
Birth Rate: 12.65 births/1,000 population (2009 est.)
Life Expectancy: total population: 72.68 years; male: 69.06 years; female: 76.81 years (2009 est.)
Literacy Rate: total population: 99.4%; male: 99.7%; female: 99.2% (2001 census)
Net Migration Rate: -4.56 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2009 est.)
Unemployment Rate: 7.1% (2007 est.)
Gross Domestic Product per Capita: \$5,900 (2009 est.)
Religions: Armenian Apostolic 94.7%, other Christian 4%, Yezidi (monotheist with elements of nature worship) 1.3%
Languages: Armenian 97.7%, Yezidi 1%, Russian 0.9%, other 0.4% (2001 census)
Ethnic Groups: Armenian 97.9%, Yezidi (Kurd) 1.3%, Russian 0.5%, other 0.3% (2001 census)
Capital: Yerevan¹

Trafficking Routes

Armenia is a transit country for victims from Eastern European and Central Asian countries.² It is a source country for women and men trafficked primarily to the United Arab Emirates,³ Turkey, and Russia.⁴ Armenia has also been reported as a destination country for Ukrainian women trafficked for sexual exploitation.⁵

Factors That Contribute to the Trafficking Infrastructure

¹ CIA, THE WORLD FACTBOOK (2009), <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/am.html>.

² *Armenian Parliament Passes Act on Human Trafficking*, HULIQ NEWS, Oct. 15, 2007, available at: <http://www.huliq.com/38002/armenian-parliament-passes-act-on-human-trafficking>.

³ Anwar Ahmad, *Armenia, UAE to Sign Pact on Human Trafficking*, ZAYWA, May 19, 2009, available at: <http://www.zawya.com/Story.cfm/sidZAWYA20090519043055/Armenia,%20UAE%20to%20Sign%20Pact%20on%20Human%20Trafficking/>.

⁴ *Greatest Occurrence of Trafficking Victims from Armenia Found in Turkey, UAE, and Russia*, ARKA NEWS AGENCY, May 8, 2009, available at: <http://www.arka.am/eng/society/2009/05/09/14676.html>.

⁵ Liana Sayadyan, *Ukrainian Girls Exploited in Armenia*, INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISTS OF ARMENIA, Feb. 20, 2006, available at: <http://archive.hetq.am/eng/court/0602-club.html>.

Factors that have promoted trafficking in Armenia include “manmade and natural disasters ... transitional processes ... porous borders; weak legislative protection and legal processes.”⁶

The fall of the Soviet Union changed the economic landscape of Armenia and caused many individuals to travel abroad for employment opportunities.⁷ Numerous Armenians migrate to find employment, seeking higher wages; because there are few legal means for migration, Armenians find alternative channels, where they are often exploited by traffickers.⁸

Besides economic hardship, stereotypical gender roles and gender inequality continue to factor into the trafficking of women for sexual exploitation.⁹ Women who are not permitted to work in legitimate vocations are easy targets for traffickers wishing to exploit their situation.

Forms of Trafficking

The most common purpose of trafficking from Armenia is sexual exploitation, including forced prostitution.¹⁰ Trafficking of individuals for forced labor has also been reported.¹¹

Government Responses

In 2007, then Armenian President Robert Kocharyan signed the Anti-Human Trafficking on Air Act into law. The act enforces several measures designed to circumvent trafficking by targeting potential victims on airplanes departing from Armenia. Before takeoff, all passengers are given a brochure describing human trafficking and encouraging them to inform the airline attendants if they are victims of trafficking. An announcement is made informing passengers that children traveling with someone else’s passport are at risk of exploitation in other countries; in addition, a two-minute presentation explains how to identify human trafficking. Victims who identify themselves are assisted by enforcement agents aboard the flight.¹²

From 2004 to 2006, a National Action Plan to combat trafficking was implemented by the Armenian government. The plan combined the efforts of police personnel, the Ministry of

⁶ UMCOR, *Capacity Building Support and Victims Assistance*, <http://umcor.am/traffick.htm> (last visited July 23, 2009).

⁷ Sofie Westerberg, *Preventing Trafficking in Armenia*, KVINNA TILL KVINNA, Mar. 3, 2006, available at: <http://www.kvinnatillkvinna.se/en/article/3603>.

⁸ INTERNATIONAL LABOR ORGANIZATION (ILO), DEVELOPMENT OF A COMPREHENSIVE ANTI-TRAFFICKING RESPONSE IN ARMENIA, AZERBAIJAN AND GEORGIA, available at: http://www.ilo.org/sapfl/Projects/lang--en/WCMS_082035/index.htm (last visited July 24, 2009).

⁹ U.N. Committee on the Elimination of Violence against Women, *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women-Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women*, U.N. Doc. CEDAW/C/ARM/CO/4/Rev.1 (Feb. 2, 2009), available at: <http://www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/ws.asp?m=CEDAW/C/ARM/CO/4/Rev.1>.

¹⁰ *Greatest Occurrence of Trafficking Victims from Armenia Found in Turkey, UAE, and Russia*, ARKA NEWS AGENCY, May 8, 2009, available at: <http://www.arka.am/eng/society/2009/05/09/14676.html>.

¹¹ DEMOCRACY TODAY & ALL ARMENIAN UNION OF WOMEN, IMPLEMENTATION OF UN CONVENTION ON ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN, PERIOD 2002-2007, available at: http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/docs/ngos/DTAAUWArmenia_43.pdf (last visited July 23, 2009).

¹² Huliq News *supra* at 2.

Foreign Affairs, National Security, and the Department of Migration and Refugees, among others. Initiatives included establishing an antitrafficking service center, drafting legislative amendments, hosting training seminars, and establishing a rehabilitation center for victims.¹³ Currently a second National Action Plan is in effect from 2007 to 2009.

Article 32 of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia states that “everyone shall have the freedom to choose his/her occupation” and orders “fair remuneration in the amount no less than the minimum set by law.” The article also mandates that working conditions shall comply with “safety and hygiene requirements.”¹⁴

The Labor Code of Armenia prohibits forced labor and illegal labor, defined as labor performed in the absence of a lawful labor contract.¹⁵

The 2003 Criminal Code of the Republic of Armenia prohibits child trafficking in article 168, for which the punishment is three to seven years’ imprisonment.¹⁶ Under the 2003 code, article 131 forbids kidnapping for the purposes of “sex exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs,” which is punishable with up to 10 years’ imprisonment.¹⁷

Before 2006, article 132 defined and criminalized human trafficking; “recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring, or receipt of persons for the purpose of sexual exploitation or forced labor” was punishable by a fine, correctional labor, or imprisonment.¹⁸

In 2006, several articles of the criminal code were amended, including articles 132, 132-1, 261, and 262.¹⁹ Notable changes have included an increased prison sentence from three to 15 years, the criminalization of labor trafficking, and a clearer definition of child trafficking.²⁰ Specifically, the definition of human trafficking in article 132 was altered to comply with that of the Palermo Protocol, the trafficking of minors is now considered an aggravating circumstance, and “exploitation” is defined. The introduction of article 132-1 prohibits the act of exploitation, defines slavery as involving the transportation of individuals to another country, and includes the

¹³ Stop Violence against Women-The Advocates for Human Rights, *Action Plan for Prevention of Trafficking in Persons from the Republic of Armenia 2004-2006*, Sept. 24, 2008, <http://www.stopvaw.org/Armenia.html>.

¹⁴ The Constitution of the Republic of Armenia art. 32, *available at*: <http://legislationline.org/documents/action/popup/id/8782/preview>.

¹⁵ THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE (OSCE), REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA LAW ENFORCEMENT ANTI-TRAFFICKING TRAINING NEEDS ASSESSMENT (2007), *available at*: http://www.osce.org/documents/oy/2008/02/29884_en.pdf.

¹⁶ Criminal Code of the Republic of Armenia art. 168, *available at*: <http://www.legislationline.org/documents/section/criminal-codes/country/45> (last visited July 23, 2009).

¹⁷ *Supra* at 16, art. 131.

¹⁸ *Id.* at 16, art. 132.

¹⁹ OSCE OFFICE FOR DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS AND HUMAN RIGHTS (ODIHR), OPINION ON THE AMENDMENTS TO ARTICLE 132, ARTICLE 132-1, ARTICLE 261, AND ARTICLE 262 OF THE CRIMINAL CODE OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA (2006), *available at*: <http://docs.google.com/gview?a=v&q=cache:k5A-cprNmbUJ:www.legislationline.org/download/action/download/id/775/file/6b496cd99f5eec3d8c36e295c4bc.pdf+Armenian+Criminal+Code+amendments+2006&hl=en&gl=us>.

²⁰ OSCE, REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA LAW ENFORCEMENT ANTI-TRAFFICKING TRAINING NEEDS ASSESSMENT (2007), *available at*: http://www.osce.org/documents/oy/2008/02/29884_en.pdf.

criminalization of “slave-like practices” such as debt bondage, servitude, and forced labor. Article 261 prohibits engaging someone in prostitution for profit, regardless of exploitive intent, and article 262 criminalizes the incitement of an individual into prostitution.²¹

Nongovernmental and International Organizations Responses

The United Methodist Committee on Relief’s nongovernmental organization, UMCOR-NGO, has been present in Armenia since 1994. Its Anti-Human Trafficking Program combines prosecutorial and aftercare initiatives through training border guards and police and providing a telephone hotline, medical services, and vocational training for victims.²²

The NGO Hope and Help works to protect the “sexual, reproductive, and mental health” of individuals in Armenia, including victims of trafficking. As part of its Prevention of Trafficking, Support for Victims of Trafficking, and Social Rehabilitation initiative, Hope and Help sponsors a hotline, operates a shelter, and distributes trafficking information to raise public awareness.²³

Multilateral Initiatives

In 2008, the Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs of the U.S. State Department funded a \$90,000 grant to UMCOR. The grant assists the second phase of UMCOR’s Strengthening of Law Enforcement Response to Human Trafficking program, which focuses on training investigators from central and regional police departments to respond to trafficking cases by identifying and protecting victims.²⁴

UMCOR has also partnered with the NGO Democracy Today since 2004 in implementing the project, Assisting Victims of Trafficking and Building Society Inclusive and Sensitive to Victims of Trafficking. Goals have included distributing awareness materials through various regions of Armenia, identifying and referring victims to the UMCOR shelter, and reintegrating victims into their communities.²⁵

The United Nations Development Programme has collaborated with the Government of Armenia to establish an Anti-Trafficking Programme in Armenia. Initiatives include developing

²¹OSCE ODIHR *supra* at 19.

²² Press Release, UMCOR, UMCOR Armenia Receives Grant from State Department (Dec. 12, 2008), *available at*: <http://new.gbgm-umc.org/umcor/newsroom/releases/archives08/umcorarmenia/>.

²³ Stop Violence against Women-The Advocates for Human Rights, Hope and Help, http://www.stopvaw.org/Hope_and_Help2.html (last visited July 23, 2009).

²⁴ UMCOR *supra* at 22.

²⁵ Young Women’s Network, *Democracy Today* (May 31, 2009), http://www.ywnsc.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=17%3Ademocracy-today&catid=14&Itemid=28&lang=en.

a national antitrafficking framework, strengthening the capacity of law enforcement and the judiciary to prosecute trafficking cases, and furthering the protection of victims' rights.²⁶

The International Center for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), and the Ministries of Labor in Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia supported a collaborative antitrafficking program effective December 2006 to December 2009. The program has focused on encouraging legal migration and has included translating and publishing ICMPD, OSCE, and International Labour Organization training materials, organizing workshops and training seminars, improving regulation of private employment agencies, and raising awareness among potential migrants.²⁷

²⁶ United Nations Development Program (UNDP), *Armenia, Latest News and Press Releases* (Dec. 4, 2008), available at: <http://www.undp.am/?page=LatestNews&id=464>.

²⁷ ILO *supra* at 8.