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REPORT

**STRENGTHENING ACCESS TO SOCIAL JUSTICE
FOR IDPS AND REFUGEES
IN ARMENIA**

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METHODOLOGY

On May 25, 2024, a training course was held in Yerevan, during which 20 paralegals received in-depth training on fundamental human rights, stigma and discrimination, documentation of violence cases, and case management, as well as on providing preliminary legal consultations and support to beneficiaries.

Among the trained paralegals, the top 10 were selected to provide consultations to displaced persons and refugees settled in Armenia.

A paralegal is a person without a formal law degree who has undergone training and provides basic legal advice, as well as directs beneficiaries to other services provided by non-governmental organizations.

This report will present cases identified during the consultations mentioned above. The data has been entered into the REAct system for monitoring and responding to rights violations by designated responders.

Data collection process: identify cases of human rights violations, in particular, violations of the rights of displaced persons and refugees in Armenia.

Data collection process: through interviews. All interviews were conducted in person and on a voluntary basis.

Sources of information: persons affected by offenses, as well as persons with relevant information.

Processing of collected data: the report highlights the cases in which the most widespread and strategically important rights violations are described.

RECORDED STORIES

1



An Indian woman living with HIV, who had informed the management of the hostel where she resides in Armenia, one day feels unwell and requires medical assistance. The hostel manager calls an ambulance. When the medical team arrives, it's already apparent that they react with disgust at the thought of providing care to the Indian woman. However, fearing a backlash, they proceed to check her blood pressure and temperature, informing her that there's nothing serious. Afterward, they ask the woman if she has any illnesses, and the woman answers honestly, thinking that her HIV status might be relevant to her feeling unwell. Upon learning of her status, the doctors avoid giving her an injection, which they had been preparing to do, and suggest it would be better to transfer her to a hospital. The hostel nurse offers to give the injection herself, as long as there's nothing serious and no need for hospitalization.

2

The displaced family from Artsakh was looking for an apartment for rent. They got acquainted with the owner of the apartment through an announcement posted on the Internet. At the meeting, they liked the conditions of the apartment and the low price. The owner said that in this way he wants to help compatriots who are in a difficult life situation. Trusting and leaving an advance payment, the victims started preparing to move. But the owner of the apartment had disappeared. They ended up on the street and penniless. It turned out that that person was not even the owner of the apartment. Fraudsters take advantage of the plight of the displaced and engage in fraud.

Help was provided to the victims in the form of temporary accommodation and when contacting the law enforcement agencies accompanied by the client.



SUCCESS STORIES

3



A young Indian man attended an event in a pub. The staff had already treated him very badly since the beginning of the evening. And also in the process, the boy notices that the waiters treat everyone except him. At this time, he decided to turn around and ask one of the waiters why they didn't give him anything. He was told that he had to pay for it.

Then the victim turns to the paralegal and tells the situation. The paralegal, in turn, contacts the pub and talks to the manager. After that, the manager approaches the victim and apologizes, and also says that his entire order will be free and he doesn't need to pay his bill.

4



The victim is a refugee from Ukraine. He has been living in Dilijan for two months now.

He developed a severe allergy and called an ambulance. The doctor arrived and said that an urgent hospitalization was needed.

At the hospital, the doctor asked what diseases the patient had and whether there had been allergies before. The client admitted that he has HIV.

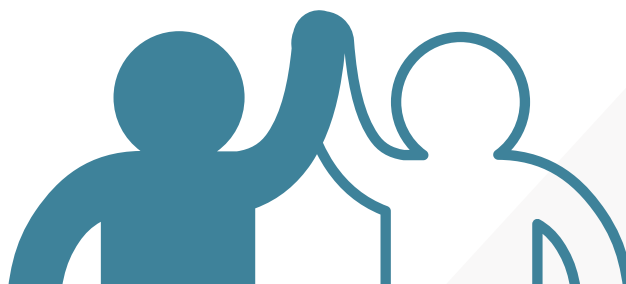
The doctor nervously left the room . And when he returned, he was already wearing gloves and a mask. He said that he could not help in any way and the patient had to go to another hospital in Yerevan.

After long negotiations, the patient turned to a paraplegal.

The paralegal asked to hand over the phone to the doctor. But he didn't want to talk. Then the paralegal urgently headed to hospital and asked the client to tell the doctor about it, and also contacted the health hotline on the way. When he arrived at the scene, it turned out that the health service had already contacted the doctor and the doctor had already put the patient on an IV and allocated a room. He apologized for a long time and said that this was the first case in his practice, so he was scared. Then the paralegal held a training conversation with the doctor on the topic of HIV.

5

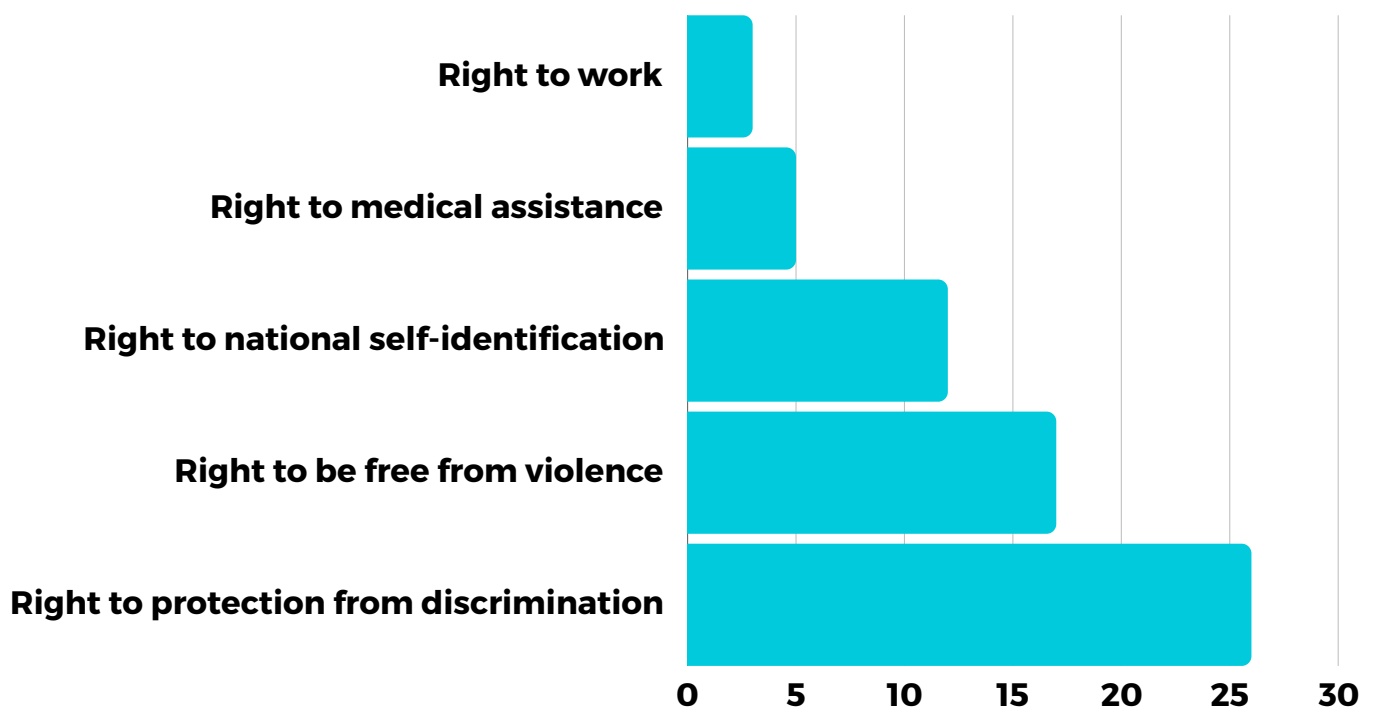
The victim was providing sex services on the street when the police approached her. Knowing that she is not a citizen of the Republic of Armenia, they demanded a large amount of money from her in the form of a fine for sex work. She was accused of not respecting Armenian laws. When the victim refused to pay the fine because she did not have that much money, she was taken to the police. At the department, a paralegal came to her aid and spoke with the police. They admitted that they have no right to demand such a large amount of money and released the victim.



CONCLUSION

Paralegals trained within the program provided **62** legal consultations, of which they recorded **26** cases of human rights violations among displaced persons and refugees.

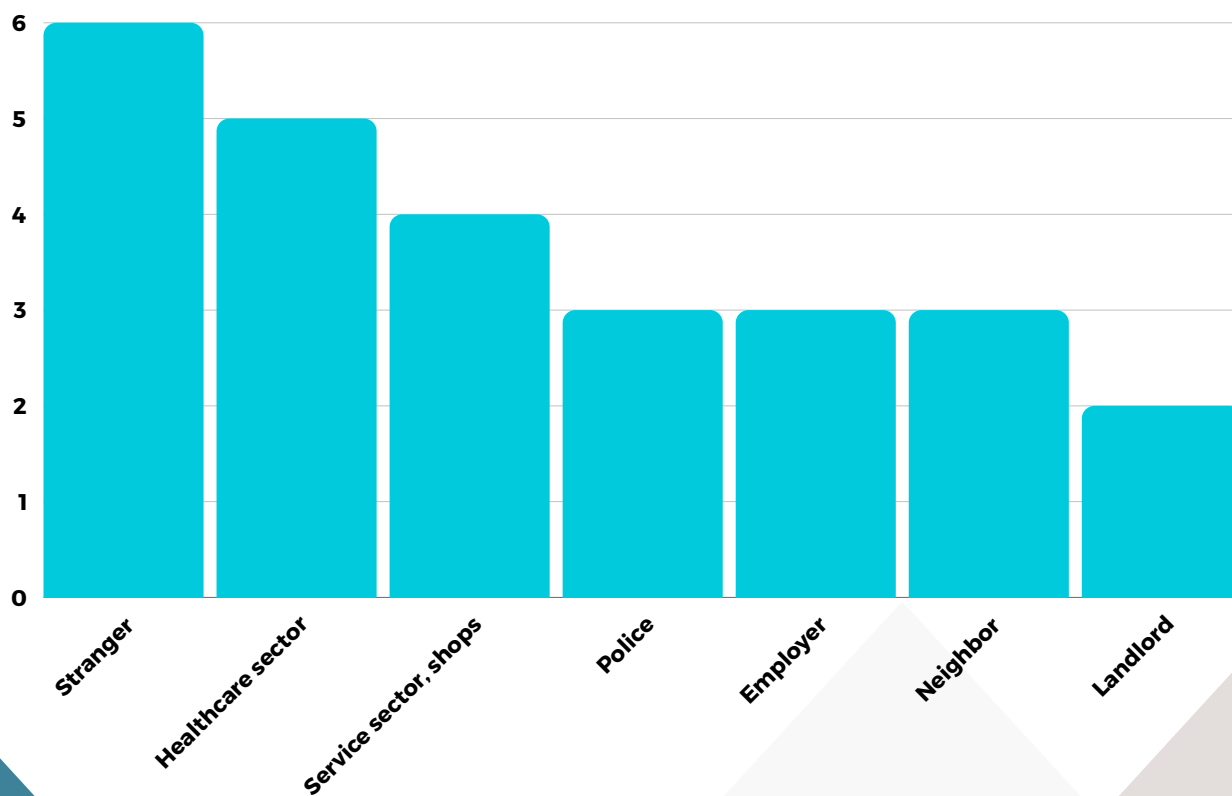
Such rights were often violated as



In some cases, more than one human right was violated.

As the statistics show, the majority of offenses are committed by unknowns. This once again confirms the high levels of intolerance, stigma, and discrimination faced by displaced persons and refugees in Armenia.

Most victims do not want to report offenses to legal authorities, as they experience biased treatment from these institutions. For these and other reasons, individuals largely prefer not to pursue their cases further.



RECOMMENDATIONS

To improve conditions for migrants and refugees in Armenia, comprehensive measures are needed that encompass legal, social, economic, and educational aspects. Here are some key areas:

1. Legal framework and law enforcement enhancement:

- Develop a clear legal framework aligned with international standards to protect migrant rights and ensure access to employment rights and legal protections.
- Simplify bureaucratic processes for obtaining status and other necessary documentation.

2. Social integration and anti-discrimination efforts:

- Conduct awareness campaigns for the local population to promote understanding of the role and contributions of migrants and refugees.
- Strengthen measures against discrimination and stigmatization by creating platforms for dialogue between migrants and the local community.

3. Economic support and employment opportunities:

- Expand professional training programs for migrants and refugees to help them integrate into the economy more effectively.
- Create job opportunities, especially for skilled migrants, to help them contribute to Armenia's economy.

4. Access to healthcare and social services:

- Improve access to healthcare services, including psychological and social support, considering that many migrants and refugees experience trauma.
- Ensure educational access for children of refugees and migrants to support their integration into society.

