



# ACTIVITY REPORT ARMENIA

## National CSO mid-term workshop

25 October 2017

### Timeline for UPR engagement in the current cycle



UPR  
INFO

## 1. Introduction

On 25 October 2017, some 50 civil society representatives from Armenia, as well as officials from UN agencies and the EU delegation, participated in the National CSO mid-term workshop co-organised by *OSF Armenia*, *UNDP Armenia* and *UPR Info*. The purpose of the event was to measure implementation levels of second cycle recommendations halfway between reviews. The meeting built on [previous UPR activities in Armenia](#) and constituted the initial step towards developing a CSO UPR mid-term report.

## 2. Activity

### 2.1. Overview

The workshop started with *UPR Info* introducing Armenia's UPR performance and spotlighted the main building blocks of successful CSO mid-term reporting:

- ✓ Consultations with UPR stakeholders to collect credible data;
- ✓ Reporting on all recommendations;
- ✓ Thematically clustered, colour-coded evaluation of implementation levels<sup>1</sup>;
- ✓ Outreach activities to boost the visibility of the report.

Following a presentation by UNDP Armenia on synergies between Armenia's national human rights action plan and UPR implementation, participants divided into thematic working groups. These were created at the [CSO coordination meeting](#) in 2015 and they have since tracked implementation of for them relevant UPR recommendations. The six groups covered; justice, women's rights, rights of the child, discrimination, freedom of expression, and social security. At the mid-term workshop, they revisited, and updated were necessarily, the benchmarks for implementation that had been developed at the coordination meeting. Implementation was discussed based on four levels; **fully implemented**, **perceived progress**, **technically implemented** (no perceived progress), and **not implemented**. As a host of recommendations touched upon issues relevant for several thematic working groups, the evaluation of these recommendations benefitted from the perspective of more than one group.

The day prior to the workshop, *Article 3 Club* together with *OSF Armenia* hosted a UPR event for journalists. *UPR Info* presented on the critical role of media in the UPR and shared good

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<sup>1</sup> See for example the respective mid-term reports by *Americans for Democracy and Human Rights in Bahrain*: <https://s.upr-info.org/2A571GV>, and *Your Rights Right Now*: <https://s.upr-info.org/2yna8Nc>

practices of journalists' engagement at the various stages of the mechanism. Key issues discussed with the 20 participants included how to integrate UPR recommendations into local day-to-day reporting and ways to optimise human rights reporting around Armenia's 2020-2022 Human Rights Council candidacy.

*UPR Info* also seized the opportunity to meet with the Division of Human Rights and Humanitarian Issues at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Government of Armenia is committed to submit a mid-term report, and the meeting succeeded in sharing practical advice on how to enhance the structure of the report and ways to consult CSOs in the process.

## 2.2. Achievements

The National CSO mid-term workshop provided a timely exercise to reinvigorate the UPR momentum in Armenia. The event gathered a cross-section of civil society representatives, including seasoned human rights defenders, newcomers and representatives from UNDP, UNICEF and the EU Delegation. The workshop succeeded in;

- ❖ Assessing implementation of all recommendations Armenia received in the second cycle;
- ❖ Laying the foundation for a CSO mid-term report;
- ❖ Identifying entry points to the UPR for journalists;
- ❖ Introducing the UPR to newcomers.

## 2.3. Lessons learnt

It will be important to increase participation of groups working on minority rights and the rights of persons living with disabilities in future activities. Additional efforts must be made to ensure that the concept, and utility, of benchmarks is fully understood.

## 3. Way forward

The Group Rapporteur of each thematic working group will submit the information they compiled during the workshop to *OSF Armenia*. This will constitute the baseline for the CSO mid-term report. When the draft version is developed, it will be circulated to Group Rapporteurs for a final round of comments. Finally, the report will be discussed at a validation meeting that is foreseen to gather Government officials, CSOs, journalists, UN agencies, the EU Delegation, and diplomatic missions. Once the feedback from this event has been taken into consideration, the report will be made public in Armenian and English.

## 4. Testimonies



*UPR proved to be a framework and platform to allow broad-based and multi-dimension dialogue on human rights. And the joint workshop of UPR-Info, Open Society Foundations and UNDP, was yet another evidence and opportunity for the broad range of stakeholders to come on board together to jointly discuss the progress of follow-up on recommendations under Armenia’s second review. This was a great joint exercise of civil society partners on the eve of mid-term review and in preparation to the next human rights dialogue with the Government under the UPR umbrella.*

**Marina Malkhasyan**, Project Coordinator/Human Rights Focal Point, UNDP Armenia

*The recent meeting between UPR Info’s programme manager and Armenian journalists working in the field provided the journalist with concrete and concise information on the UPR procedures and opportunities, which will definitely change the attitude. In this context, the Governmental officials will not face a lack of uneasy questions in between the interim or periodic reports, which will make the officials take steps towards implementation of Armenia’s international commitments.*

**Gayane Abrahamyan**, President of “For Equal Rights” NGO, founder and the head of “Article 3 Club”



*The workshop brought together all the civil society actors, fostering a one-voice approach and mutually strengthening the power of human rights advocacy.*

**Artak Shakaryan**, Child Protection Officer, UNICEF Armenia

*Thanks to this training I had a unique chance to get more insight and skills in how to practically use the UPR in my work.*

**Sona Makasyan**, Project Coordinator, Armenian United Nations Associations



*CSOs jointly and constructively practicing an essential technical language on identifying, reporting on and promoting human rights progress in UPR workshop - what could be better*

**Armen Bezhanyan**, Armenia Country Director, Mission East

*The UPR facilitates inter-ministerial coordination on human rights issues. The mechanism is also useful for our treaty body reporting as it addresses cross-cutting human rights issues*

**Karine Soudjian**, Head of the Division of Human Rights and Humanitarian Issues, Department of International Organisations for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia





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