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Oral Statement
Minority Rights Group International
HRC 29th session
Adoption of UPR report
Armenia
25 June 2015

Speaker: Mr Glenn Payot

Thank you Mr. President,

Minority Rights Group (MRG) and the Analytical Centre on Globalization and Regional Cooperation (ACGRC), our partner in Armenia, would like to make three points with regard to the UPR of Armenia.

To begin with, MRG and ACGRC welcome Armenia's acceptance of the numerous recommendations calling on the authorities to adopt a comprehensive anti-discrimination law. In the past 3 years, both the Human Rights Committee and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural rights stressed the need for Armenia to adopt such a law, in order to put its legislation in line with both Covenants. The state under review in its written reply mentions that "The adoption of such legislation has been considered appropriate". We call on the Armenian government to take immediate steps toward the design and adoption of such a law, in cooperation with civil society organizations and representatives from marginalized groups.

Secondly, we welcome the support extended by Armenia to most of the recommendations related to ethnic and national minorities. These minorities represent less than 3% of the population of Armenia and include Yezidis, Assyrians, Greeks, Russians, Ukrainians and Kurds. Our organizations are however not encouraged by Armenia's rejection of a recommendation from Namibia under the claim that "[t]here is no discriminatory treatment of ethnic minorities in Armenia". It is self-evident that the Armenian authorities must accept and recognize that discrimination of minorities is an issue, in order to be able to combat it.

Finally, our organizations would like to echo the numerous expressions of concern over the excessive force used by the police in the repression of current peaceful demonstrations in Yerevan. Armenia supported the two recommendations on freedom of assembly and rights of demonstrators. The current events vividly contradict this commitment. We call on Armenia to put an immediate end to this police practice and to ensure that those responsible for violations of human rights law are held accountable.

I thank you.