

REPORT

**ON THE STATE OF PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS
FORCIBLY DISPLACED FROM NAGORNO KARABAKH IN
SEPTEMBER 2023 AND THE PROBLEMS OF THEIR
ACCESS TO STATE SUPPORT PROGRAMS**

Introduction

On September 19, 2023, the Armed Forces of the Republic of Azerbaijan carried out military operations against Nagorno-Karabakh in the zone of responsibility of the Russian peacekeeping forces. Under the threat of armed force, the population of Nagorno-Karabakh was forced to leave their homes and, within days, was forcibly displaced to the Republic of Armenia.

To support people who found themselves in a de facto refugee status, the Government of the Republic of Armenia undertook extensive humanitarian aid efforts, implementing various financial support programs and assessing needs. A registration system was created based on the location of displaced persons, established through working groups formed in local self-government bodies and regional administrations to register individuals forcibly displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh. The implementation of these support programs, along with the existing legislative gaps related to the legal status of forcibly displaced persons, negatively impacts the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance for individuals in difficult life situations due to the humanitarian crisis. For this reason, within the framework of legal support, the Organization also submits recommendations regarding legal regulations to state bodies, in order to make appropriate changes.

For the protection of the rights of forcibly displaced citizens, Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Vanadzor provided free legal support in the period of November 2023-June 2024 through contact persons and lawyers in all regions of the Republic of Armenia. The purpose of legal support is to facilitate the access of forcibly displaced persons to the social support programs provided by the government through legal and informational advice, to monitor the effectiveness of the implementation of state and community support programs in the regions, to present recommendations for increasing the effectiveness of the implemented programs and further policies and strategies.

Scope of legal support provided by the organization

Starting November 2023, the Organization provides legal support to forcibly displaced persons in the direction of ensuring accessibility, availability and implementation of social support approved by the RA government's decrees.

The legal support has been provided to 12 contact persons (two in each region, and two in Yerevan) and 7 lawyers, who establish contact through humanitarian aid with residents affected by displacement due to their actions, carrying out home visits, assessing needs, and in case of necessity, preparing legal documents of significant importance to the RA authorities for resolving issues concerning the problems of displaced Artsakh residents.

Legal support has been provided in Yerevan and the regions through 12 contact persons (one for each region, and two for Yerevan) and 7 lawyers. These individuals establish contact with forcibly displaced persons living in the region of their activity through an alarm, conduct home visits, assess needs, and when necessary, prepare legally significant documents addressed to the RA state departments to address the issues faced by forcibly displaced Artsakh residents.

From November 2023 to the present, the organization has provided more than 1,650 legal consultations.

As a result of the legal consultations, 259 letters have been sent to various state bodies regarding the documented issues.

- RA Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs 188 letters
- RA Ministry of Internal Affairs 43 letters
- RA Ministry of Health 10 letters
- RA Government Humanitarian Center 6 letters
- RA General Prosecutor's Office 2 crime reports
- RA Ministry of Justice 5 letters
- RA Ministry of Defense 3 letters
- RA Ministry of Finance 2 letters

1. Out of the 188 letters submitted to the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs of the Republic of Armenia:

1.1) According to the RA Government's decree No. 1675-L of October 3, 2023, 32 applications were submitted to become beneficiaries of one-time monetary social support, of which 12 forcibly displaced persons were recognized as beneficiaries of support, 16 forcibly displaced persons were denied support on the basis of not submitting an application by the deadline of January 31, 2024, the letters regarding the 2 forcibly displaced persons have not yet been answered, despite the fact that the letters were sent a month or more ago. In all cases when the organization's letters remain unanswered for more than a month, repeated letters are submitted by the organization. In all the cases when the rejections were related to the failure to submit applications within the deadline set by the government, we submitted recommendations to the Humanitarian Center of the RA Government, the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs of the RA to eliminate the time limits or establish a new procedure for the groups of people excluded from the program due to the violation of the deadlines.

1.2) 96 letters were submitted regarding the recognition of beneficiaries within the framework of the support program approved by the RA Government's decree N1763-L of October 12, 2023. As a result of the submitted letters, 34 forcibly displaced persons were recognized as beneficiaries of social support, 20 forcibly displaced persons were denied support, with the following reasons:

1.2.1) one of the letters was denied on the grounds that the beneficiary lives in a community institution,

1.2.2) one of the letters was denied on the grounds of the beneficiary's absence from Armenia for a period of 10 days or more,

1.2.3) in the case of 9 forcibly displaced beneficiaries on the grounds of being the owner of residential property in the RA territory,

1.2.4) In 5 cases, letters were denied on the grounds that the beneficiaries were not eligible for the 100,000 AMD one-time social support for forcibly displaced persons.

1.2.5) 4 beneficiaries on the basis of being displaced as a result of the 44-day war of 2020 and being a beneficiary of the housing support program, or on the basis of not having the data in the bases of the operational headquarters.

1.2.6) 40 of the letters submitted by the organization are still being processed.

1.2.7) Regarding 2 of the letters, no answer has been received yet, but repeated applications have been submitted.

Denials that unreasonably limit the rights of forcibly displaced persons are appealed by the Organization in order of precedence, and in cases where systemic approaches are necessary, appropriate recommendations are submitted to the RA government. In order to protect the rights of persons whose property rights have been denied in the territory of the Republic of Armenia, repeated letters were submitted, with a request to consider the operational significance of the property, the conditions of habitability. This issue was also discussed during the working meeting with the Deputy Minister of Labor and Social Affairs of the RA, however, we have not recorded a final solution yet.

The scope of beneficiaries under the RA Government's October 12 Decree No. 1763-L was expanded by the RA Government's March 28, 2024 Decree No. 447-L to include persons displaced in 2020. Regarding issues arising within the scope of the program's accessibility, 15 letters have been submitted, of which 5 displaced persons were denied support, and the remaining 10 applications are in progress. One of the 5 displaced persons from Artsakh who was denied support was refused on the grounds of owning property intended for residence in Armenia. The support for the other 4 individuals was denied due to the lack of data provided by the operational headquarters for the persons who applied to the organization. The issues of ensuring the accessibility of social support programs adopted for the protection of the rights of persons displaced in 2020 were also discussed within the framework of a working meeting with the Deputy Minister of Labor and Social Affairs of Armenia. During the meeting, representatives of the ministry stated that efforts are being made to address the recorded issues.

1.3) In accordance with RA Government Decree No. 1957-L of November 9, 2023, 52 letters were submitted for the purpose of involving beneficiaries. Out of these, social support was

provided to the beneficiaries represented in 48 letters. Support was denied to the beneficiaries represented in 3 letters due to the failure to provide their bank account details. The organization has not yet received a response regarding 1 beneficiary, despite more than two months having passed. We provided legal consultation to individuals whose provision of support through social support programs was denied due to issues with their documents. The consultation was aimed at addressing the identified problems and submitting complete applications with the necessary documentation.

1.4) For the purpose of ensuring the right to benefit from state pensions of the Republic of Armenia, 8 letters were submitted to the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs of the Republic of Armenia. Out of these, 4 were approved, and the previous rejections (including verbal ones) provided by the service were revoked. These rejections were related to incomplete documentation or inconsistencies in the documents. However, the provision of state pensions was denied for 2 letters due to the lack of registration in Armenia, and 2 letters were denied due to rejection from the Artsakh pension information database. Citizens who were initially denied on the grounds of not having registration in Armenia later registered in Armenia and subsequently obtained temporary protection status, based on which they were granted state pensions. Regarding the denial of pensions due to the absence of data in the Artsakh pension information database, a proposal for a systemic solution to this issue was also presented in this report. This issue was also discussed during the working meeting, where an agreement was reached to take specific steps towards resolving the problem.

2. Out of the 43 letters submitted to the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Armenia:

According to the RA Government's Decree No. 1864-N of October 26, 2023, regarding the provision of temporary protection for forcibly displaced persons from Nagorno-Karabakh, 41 letters were submitted. Out of these, 2 letters were approved, and documents confirming temporary protection status were issued to the refugees. 22 letters were denied on the grounds of dual citizenship. (A proposal to amend the government decree to remove the restriction based on citizenship has been submitted to the RA Government.) No response

has been received for 12 letters, despite more than a month having passed since their submission.

The next letter referred to invalidating the decision on the basis of sending the offense recorded by the road transport video recording devices to the address of the person in NK, but it was not satisfied.

In the educational complex of the RA Ministry of Internal Affairs of Police, 1 letter was submitted regarding the application of a student tuition fee discount. The response clarified the conditions for applying the discount, noting that the discount system is applied based on the student's academic progress. Since the student who applied to the organization did not exceed the set threshold, the discount was not applied.

3. 10 letters were submitted to the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Armenia in order to receive state-guaranteed and preferential medical care in the health sector, of which 7 letters were satisfied and the 7 persons mentioned in the letters were provided with state-guaranteed and preferential medical care.

2 of the submitted letters were rejected on the basis of not being defined by the state with the free and preferential conditions set by the RA Government's decree No. 318-N of March 4, 2004 (on the basis of medical care provided using the latest and expensive technologies). The other 1 letter has not received a response yet. The organization has submitted a repeated letter to the RA ministry of health in March, however the issue has not been addressed yet.

4. 6 letters were submitted to the "Humanitarian" center of the RA government.

Out of the 6 submitted letters, 1 referred to the provision of benefits assigned on the basis of the accrued interest of deposits provided in Nagorno Karabakh, in response to which the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs of the Republic of Armenia informed that the payments of benefits designated by the legislation of the Republic of Artsakh are not implemented in the Republic of Armenia, 4 letters referred to the legality of refusals regarding social

support, one of the letters referred to the registration of legal entities registered in Nagorno Karabakh in the State Register of the Republic of Armenia, regarding which legislative changes are planned according to the answers received.

5. Two reports about the crime were submitted to the **RA General Prosecutor's Office**. One of the submitted crime reports referred to the 2-month rental amount fraudulently taken from several families forcibly displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh for renting an apartment, but the apartment was not rented to any family.

Next, in order to register the data under the name of the parent for children forcibly displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh to receive social support approved by the decree of the Government of the Republic of Armenia, the data was filled in under the name of another person by an employee of the Unified Social Service, who for months received the social support intended for the children. Based on the two reports submitted, a criminal proceeding has been initiated under Articles 255 and 457 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Armenia, which are in the preliminary investigation stage.

6. 5 letters were submitted to the **Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Armenia** on the issue of providing a copy of the birth certificate of forcibly displaced persons from Nagorno Karabakh, to which the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Armenia replied that in order to receive a copy of the birth certificate, it is necessary to present at any Civil Acts Registration Services center and submit an application with an identity document, then based on the applications persons are denied a copy of the birth certificate due to the lack of basic documents in the document archive. The organization submitted administrative complaints based on the refusal of two citizens, and after the decisions are made regarding these, it will be possible to plan further actions.

7. 3 letters were submitted to the RA ministry of defense

1 letter was submitted to the RA Ministry of Defense for the assignment of a military pension, which was accepted and a forcibly displaced person who applied to the organization was assigned a military pension.

On 1 March, 2024, 1 letter was submitted regarding the provision of the copies of military documents, about which no response has been received yet, anyway, we have been informed through a phone call that it is still under discussion.

1 letter was submitted about receiving compensation for working on Saturdays during military service, which has not yet received a response, despite the fact that a month has passed since the submission of the letter.

8. Two letters have been submitted to the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Armenia and the Central Bank of the Republic of Armenia about the concession of obligations in the VTB bank approved by the RA Government's decree N 2326 of December 28, 2023. In response, the Central Bank of the Republic of Armenia has stated that the criteria on which the concession of obligations in banks was based were developed by the banks themselves.

9. 178 applications were sent to the **European Court of Human Rights** on the basis of violations of the right to property, the right to freedom from ill-treatment, the right to respect for private and family life, the right to life, the right to freedom from discrimination and the right to prohibition against collective expulsion. The applications were received in the court.

System problems recorded during the legal support provided by the Organization

Within the framework of legal support provided by the organization to forcibly displaced people from Nagorno Karabakh, systemic problems were recorded, which we present below.

1) According to subclause 3 of clause 20 of appendix 2 of the decree of the Government of the Republic of Armenia No. 1763-L dated October 12, 2023, "On approving the social support measure and the procedure for providing assistance for covering the expenses of temporary accommodation and utility services for those forcibly displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh since September 19, 2023,"

"20. The application is rejected

3) on the part of the person and his family members (husband, minor child) who has real estate intended for residence in the Republic of Armenia with the right of ownership (including joint or shared ownership).

To recognize forcibly displaced persons as beneficiaries of support, information about real estate is obtained from the Cadastre Committee of the Republic of Armenia. According to the available facts, the designated purpose of the real estate is listed as residential. However, the state and conditions of the property are not sufficient to consider it residential. Regarding this registered systemic problem, the organization applied to the RA Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, to which we received the following response:

"The issue of making certain reservations regarding having real estate intended for living has been discussed in a working order with the Cadastre Committee. A request was made regarding the possibility of providing information on the list of co-owners of the registered right to real estate and the availability of shares of co-owners in the case of joint ownership.

After summarizing the results of the study by the Ministry, the question of the advisability of making certain reservations regarding the ownership of real estate intended for living in the decree will be discussed at the Humanitarian Center."

As a result, to date, the Organization has not received any information regarding making certain reservations about the aforementioned issue, and rejections on this basis continue.

By the decree of the Government of the Republic of Armenia No. 299-L dated February 29, 2024, "On making amendments and additions to the decrees of the Government of the Republic of Armenia No. 1675-L dated October 3, 2023, No. 1763-L dated October 12, 2023, and No. 1957-L dated November 9, 2023," an amendment was made to the decree No. 1763-L dated October 12, 2023. According to the amendment, "the monthly amount of social support for living in a temporary accommodation is AMD 40,000 even in cases when the beneficiary has only one real estate for living in the Republic of Armenia owned by the right of shared or common joint ownership, (in the case of joint ownership of the co-owners shares are considered equal) where the **area corresponding to the share is less than 20 square meters**".

The presented systemic problem was solved only for those persons whose property area did not exceed 20 square meters. However, others whose property is owned by the right of ownership, even if it is not residential, continue not to be recognized as beneficiaries of support.

We recommend making an amendment in the decree N 1763-L of October 12, 2023 and to consider the beneficiaries of the provided social support those persons who have registered real estate, but that property does not have sufficient conditions for living, regardless of the size of the surface. At the same time, set new deadlines for accepting applications within the framework of this exception.

1.2) The range of beneficiaries defined by the RA Government decree 1763-L of **October 12, 2023** was expanded by the RA Government decree of March 28, 2024 N 447-L and those displaced in 2020 were also considered beneficiaries of support, but in this case there is the problem that the applications of displaced Artsakh citizens to be beneficiaries of support in 2020 are rejected on the grounds of not being beneficiaries of one-time social

support (100,000 drams) or not being included in the lists of persons issued by the operational headquarters, while the latter were beneficiaries of the support provided to displaced persons in 2020 without any problems, which definitely implies that the data of these persons were present in the databases of the operational headquarters.

By the same decree, a restriction is defined on the basis of being a beneficiary of the housing support program, while those persons who have not actually been recognized as a beneficiary of the housing support program are also rejected. In other words, either they have not submitted an application yet, or after submitting they have not received a relevant decision and housing mortgage loan, or they have not been informed that they are beneficiaries of the program. It turns out that the applied restrictions are not appropriate and, in essence, those persons who are not yet recognized as beneficiaries of the housing support program are deprived of support programs.

We recommend removing the restriction applied to forcibly displaced people from separate regions of Nagorno Karabakh in 2020 by the RA Government's decree N 1763-L of October 12, 2023, and to apply this restriction only to those persons who acquired an apartment through the housing support program, and not to those persons , who are beneficiaries, but have not yet acquired an apartment.

2) According to the decrees N 1763-L of the Government of the Republic of Armenia dated October 12, 2023 "On approving the procedure for providing the social support measure to those forcibly displaced from Nagorno Karabakh from September 19, 2023 to live in a temporary shelter and to assist them in meeting the costs of utility services" and November 9, 2023 N 1957-L "On approving the measure of social support to cover the primary consumer expenses for those forcibly displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh and the procedure for providing it", it is confirmed, that in order to be a beneficiary of the provided social support, it is necessary to submit applications online, although forcibly displaced persons filled out their applications in the prescribed manner and became beneficiaries of the support, but not receiving the available funds for months, they applied to the regional centers of the unified

social service, from where the latter were informed that their data was not entered in the social support system for technical reasons, but the applicants were not informed about the reasons why the data was not included in the system and were actually deprived of the right to receive support through no fault of their own, but just because of the system's technical problems.

Beneficiaries of the above-mentioned social supports are persons forcibly displaced as a result of the military operations unleashed by Azerbaijan against Nagorno-Karabakh from September 19, 2023, but those who were in RA before being forcibly displaced due to business trips and other similar reasons, and their address of residence and registration was Nagorno-Karabakh, since December 12, 2022, as a result of the blocking of the Lachin Corridor, they did not have an objective opportunity to return to Nagorno-Karabakh, and at this moment they are not considered beneficiaries.

2.1. According to the decree of the Government of the Republic of Armenia No. 299-L dated February 29, 2024, "On Amendments and Additions to the Decrees of the Government of the Republic of Armenia No. 1675-L dated October 3, 2023, No. 1763-L dated October 12, 2023, and No. 1957-L dated November 9, 2023," amendments have been made to the Government's decree No. 1675-L dated October 3, 2023. According to these amendments, the accompanying person of an individual referred by medical organizations of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) and treated in hospital conditions in the Republic of Armenia (including diagnostic tests and rehabilitation treatment in hospital conditions) at any time from December 1, 2022, to September 19, 2023, is considered a beneficiary if they have submitted an application defined by point 26 of Appendix 2 of the Government's decree No. 1675-L dated October 3, 2023, for receiving one-time financial support, and their data is available in the information provided by the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Armenia in accordance with point 7 of that decree.

Thus, with the amendment made, only the people who applied for hospital (conditions) treatment in the Republic of Armenia were considered beneficiaries of the program, but those residents who did not have an objective opportunity to return to Nagorno Karabakh as a result of the blockade, are deprived of the right to use social support.

For example, one of the forcibly displaced persons, who was a NKR Armed Forces soldier, was sent to the Russian Federation in 2021, then returned from there in 2023 when there was already a blockade, on the basis of which he could not go to Nagorno-Karabakh, and for this reason he was not a beneficiary of support.

We recommend that the residents of Nagorno Karabakh, who were outside of Nagorno Karabakh before December 12, 2022 due to a business trip or for other reasons, and at the same time throughout the entire period, did not change their address in the Nagorno-Karabakh registration, to be recognized as beneficiaries of the provided social support.

3) Points 1 and 2 of the annex to the RA government's decree No. 1864 of October 26, 2023 "On taking under temporary protection the forcibly displaced persons from Nagorno-Karabakh, approving the description of the identity document of the refugee who received temporary protection and the procedure for its issuance" define:

1. *To take under temporary protection:*

1) *Persons registered in the population register of Nagorno Karabakh.*

2) *Persons residing in the territory of the Republic of Armenia or outside the Republic of Armenia, whose last registered address was in Nagorno Karabakh;*

3) *those persons who were not registered in the population register of Nagorno-Karabakh, but lived in Nagorno-Karabakh and were registered with the Migration and Citizenship Service (hereinafter referred to as service) of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Armenia after being forcibly displaced as a result of the military operations unleashed by Azerbaijan against Nagorno-Karabakh from September 19, 2023.*

2. *To define that this decree does not apply to the persons mentioned in point 1 of this decree, who hold citizenship of another country.*

Point 2 of the mentioned decree of the Government of the Republic of Armenia stipulates that those residents of Nagorno Karabakh who have the citizenship of another state cannot be taken under protection. This restriction defined by the government's decree hinders the

provision of RA state pension or state benefits to persons forcibly displaced from Nagorno Karabakh, as refugee status is a mandatory condition for the appointment of pensions and benefits.

In order to solve the mentioned problem, we recommend after having the citizenship of another state mentioned in point 2 of the RA government's decree N 1864-N of October 26, 2023, mentioning the term "citizenship of the Republic of Armenia" as an exception.

4) As a result of the Azerbaijani aggression of September 19, 2023, the forcibly displaced persons did not manage to take with them or could not take with them the ownership certificates of the properties they own in Nagorno Karabakh, and the RA Cadastre Committee still does not have an information base about the properties and owners registered in Nagorno Karabakh.

We recommend that the RA Government collect information about the properties owned by the residents of Nagorno Karabakh from the leaders of the communities or relevant responsible persons, compare them with the testimonies of the owners and create a unified and complete information base about the properties and owners registered in Nagorno Karabakh.

5) Legal entities registered in the State Register of Nagorno-Karabakh have registered movable property, after the forced displacement they brought the movable property to RA, but did not manage to re-register as a legal entity in the RA State Register within the specified period, and at the moment they want to alienate their properties, however, not having legal status of a person in the Republic of Armenia, property cannot be alienated, in particular, on November 22, 2023, an amendment HO-374-N was made to the RA Law "On State Registration of Legal Entities, State Accounting of Separate Subdivisions of Legal Entities, Institutions and Individual Entrepreneurs" according to which Articles 27.2 and 35.1

stipulate that *"Applications for recognizing the state accounting of an individual entrepreneur or the state registration of a legal entity can be submitted to the state registration and state accounting body and are accepted by it up to and including January 31, 2024"*, as a result, in the Nagorno Karabakh State Register registered legal entities, not being aware of the established legal regulation, did not submit applications for recognizing the state accounting of an individual entrepreneur or the state registration of a legal entity to the state registration and state accounting body.

We recommend that the Government of the Republic of Armenia once again amend Articles 27.2 and 35.1 of the Law "On state registration of legal entities, separate divisions of legal entities, state accounting of institutions and individual entrepreneurs", by extending the deadline for submitting "applications to recognize the state accounting of an individual entrepreneur or the state registration of a legal entity" by setting a new deadline.

Regarding the solution to the presented problem, the Ministry of Justice informed that the legal solution to the problem will be discussed in the framework of legislative amendments in the near future, but the problem is still relevant.

6) According to the Decree No. 2326-N of the Government of the Republic of Armenia, dated December 28, 2023, "On the issuance, allocation, circulation, redemption, and repayment characteristics of government treasury bonds in exchange for the cession of monetary claims (property rights) of financial organizations of the Republic of Armenia against the Government of Nagorno-Karabakh and its established foundations, individual legal and physical entities, the criteria for selecting the obligations of individual legal and physical entities, the procedure for the transfer of monetary claims (property rights) by financial organizations, and the publication of information regarding the transferred monetary claims (property rights)," the Government of the Republic of Armenia has paid the credit obligations of the residents of Nagorno-Karabakh. However, there have been cases reported where individuals have stated that these obligations have not yet been settled, and banks and credit organizations are demanding payment of their obligations.

We recommend that the Government of RA and the Central Bank of RA give a clear instruction to banks and credit organizations at the level of adoption of the legal act, publish the legal grounds for non-repayment of loans for those of their customers who are forcibly displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh but are not categorized as borrowers under certain criteria.

7) In the course of providing legal support to the forcibly displaced persons, the organization's contact persons and lawyers recorded unkind and disrespectful treatment of the forcibly displaced persons by some employees of the state and local self-government bodies. In particular, from the employees of the passport departments of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, as well as the employees of the Unified Social Service located in the Kotayk, Ararat, and Armavir regions, and at 13 Nalbandyan Street in Yerevan, who show a negative attitude towards the persons who apply to the same service or department more than once and to those who have not received their available monetary transfers for more than 2 months and are trying to understand the reasons. Reports of disrespectful treatment have been received throughout the entire mission.

In order to solve the mentioned problem, we recommend carrying out professional retraining and capacity building with the employees of the passport departments of the RA Ministry of Internal Affairs and the unified social service, who work with people in difficult life situations within the framework of their professional activities. As well as to carry out a corresponding change in the law on public service and the law on civil service, including in it the assessment of the ability to work with people in difficult life conditions, as a qualitative indicator.

The needs recorded during the meetings with the people of Artsakh forcibly displaced from Nagorno Karabakh

8) Artsakh citizens forcibly displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh, who engaged in business activities in Nagorno-Karabakh, had a furniture workshop or were engaged in agriculture after moving to Armenia, try to continue their activities in Armenia due to their knowledge and experience, however, not having enough funds, they cannot buy the necessary equipment, or other funds for agriculture, and banks offer loans with high interest rates.

We recommend that the Government of the Republic of Armenia arrange low-interest, subsidized loans for Artsakh citizens displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh to continue their professional activities in the Republic of Armenia, at the same time this support will contribute to the development of employment.

9) Article 9 of the Law on State Pensions of the Republic of Armenia defines the appointment of an old-age labor pension, which the forcibly displaced Artsakh residents have the opportunity to use. Applications for the appointment of a pension are rejected on the basis of the lack of a database of individual (individualized) registration of social payments for a person in the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh. It turns out that the state has given the opportunity to apply and receive a pension, knowing clearly that the bases and the necessary information have not been moved, and the applications of people are rejected on this basis.

We recommend that the Government of the Republic of Armenia take such actions, which will not be related to proving the existence of bases or documents, in the direction of ensuring the right to receive a pension for persons who have acquired the right to an old-age labor pension.

10. According to the decree of the RA Government No. 1675 L dated 03.10.2023 (100,000 AMD), it was established that the beneficiaries are the persons who submitted an application before January 31, 2024.

Within the framework of providing legal support by the organization, we have recorded cases that due to lack of awareness, there are about two dozen people who were forcibly displaced and who did not apply to become beneficiaries within the specified period, and in fact are deprived of all support. Thus, in the case of the limitation of the term, especially when the possibility of benefiting from future programs directly depends on the mandatory requirement of being a beneficiary of decree No. 1675-L, it is highly concerning and unacceptable.

We recommend that the Government of the Republic of Armenia give an opportunity to be recognized as a beneficiary and to benefit from support programs by making amendments in the government's decree to those persons who have not submitted applications to be beneficiaries of support for objective and valid reasons until January 31, 2024.

Finally, we record that the Republic of Armenia has undertaken a positive duty to accept and take under its care the persons forcibly displaced under the threat of armed force and aggression unleashed by Azerbaijan against Nagorno Karabakh on September 19, 2023, therefore, it is obligated to ensure the accessibility and availability of the implemented programs to the individuals for whom these programs were adopted to protect and restore their rights.

Lawyers and contact persons included in the mission to provide legal support to the forcibly displaced Artsakh residents from Nagorno Karabakh

N.	Name Surname	Area for providing support	Activity
1	<i>Albert Nalbandyan</i>	<i>Yerevan HCAV employee</i>	<i>Legal advisor documenter</i>
2	<i>Samson Galstyan</i>	<i>Yerevan HCAV employee</i>	<i>Legal advisor documenter</i>
3	<i>Rafik Vardazaryan</i>	<i>Kotayk, Ararat</i>	<i>Lawyer</i>
4	<i>Arina Metsoyan</i>	<i>Armavir, Shirak, Aragatsotn</i>	<i>Lawyer</i>
5	<i>Arevhat Petrosyan</i>	<i>Lori, Tavush</i>	<i>Lawyer</i>
6	<i>Lusine Martirosyan</i>	<i>Vayots Dzor, Gegharkunik</i>	<i>Lawyer</i>
7	<i>Sirarpi Margaryan</i>	<i>Syunik</i>	<i>Lawyer</i>
8	<i>Arpi Hovhannisyan</i>	<i>Yerevan</i>	<i>Contact person</i>
9	<i>Lilit Gevorgyan</i>	<i>Yerevan</i>	<i>Contact person</i>

10	<i>Ani Hovhannisyan</i>	<i>Kotayk</i>	<i>Contact person</i>
11	<i>Mher Karagozyan</i>	<i>Ararat</i>	<i>Contact person</i>
12	<i>Susanna Matinyan</i>	<i>Armavir</i>	<i>Contact person</i>
13	<i>Gohar Gharibyan</i>	<i>Shirak</i>	<i>Contact person</i>
14	<i>Narek Botsinyan</i>	<i>Aragatsotn</i>	<i>Contact person</i>
15	<i>Gevorg Kotanjyan</i>	<i>Lori</i>	<i>Contact person</i>
16	<i>Mariam Aghinyan</i>	<i>Tavush</i>	<i>Contact person</i>
17	<i>Nane Asatryan</i>	<i>Vayots Dzor</i>	<i>Contact person</i>
18	<i>Manan Mkhitaryan</i>	<i>Gegharkunik</i>	<i>Contact person</i>