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COMMUNICATION

In accordance with Rule 9.2. of the Rules of the Committee of Ministers regarding the supervision of the execution of judgments and of terms of friendly settlements by Helsinki Citizens' Assembly-Vanadzor in the case of

MURADYAN V. ARMENIA (no. 11275/07)

1537th meeting (September 2025) (DH)

Introduction

1. The case of *Muradyan v. Armenia* concerns the absence of an effective investigation into the death in 2002 of the applicant's son (procedural violation of Article 2 of the European Convention on Human Rights (the Convention)), an Armenian military conscript, as well as the authorities' failure to provide a plausible explanation for his injury and ensuing death (substantive violation of Article 2):
2. This submission is made in anticipation of the September CM-DIH meeting and in response to the August 2025 Action Report concerning the execution of the group of cases of *Muradyan v. Armenia* (no. 11275/07), submitted by the Armenian Government.

Brief information about the Organization

3. Helsinki Citizens' Assembly-Vanadzor (Organization) is a non-governmental human rights organization that unites individuals who value democracy, tolerance, pluralism and principles of human rights supremacy. In order to achieve its goal, the organization implements the following activities: monitoring and data collection, legal consultation and legislative analysis, advocacy and strategic litigation. Target groups of the NGO includes victims of torture.

General Measures

4. During its 1483rd meeting (5–7 December 2023), the Committee of Ministers adopted a Decision (reference document CM/Notes/1483/H46-2), in which the Deputies *as regards general measures*:

- invited the authorities to provide statistical data for the past five years regarding the investigation of non-combat deaths in the armed forces;
- encouraged the authorities to rapidly make progress in the establishment of an anonymous referral mechanism for reporting torture, inhuman or degrading treatment in the armed forces and to update the Committee in this regard, as well as invited them to report on the implementation of the relevant activities of the Human Rights Action Plan;
- invited further the authorities to provide information on targeted measures to prevent hazing of servicemen as well as their bullying and ill-treatment by military hierarchy;
- noting with interest the preparation of draft Suicide and Self-Harm Prevention Strategy, invited the authorities to inform the Committee about the actions envisaged in the Strategy, timing for its adoption and steps envisaged for its further implementation, as well as to provide information on the measures taken to ensure proper psychological assessment and assistance to military servicemen;
- requested information on the steps taken to exclude conscription in view of significant health problems of service personnel;
- decided to resume consideration of these cases at one of their DH meetings in 2025 at the latest.

This submission addresses the progress made in response to the above-mentioned observations of the Committee of Ministers, as well as the remaining issues identified.

Statistical data and other relevant information concerning the death cases recorded in the Armed forces of the Republic of Armenia

5. For years on end, HICAV has been publishing information about death cases of servicemen in Armed Forces, which was collected from information disseminated through mass media and official sources, as well as based on responses to information inquiries addressed by the Organization to official structures.
6. During 2023¹–2024², 123 deaths were recorded in the Armed Forces of the Republic of Armenia.

1 In 2023, 83 deaths of servicemen were recorded in the Armed Forces of the Republic of Armenia. The causes were: violation of the ceasefire regime – 19, violation of rules for handling weapons, ammunition, and hazardous materials – 17, car accidents – 14, health issues – 12, suicide or incitement to suicide – 10, accidents (vehicle explosion, explosion in a garage, lightning strike, drowning, electrocution, carbon monoxide poisoning) – 7, homicide – 4.

Available at: [2023 ԹՎԱԿԱՆԻՆ ՏՆ ՀԵՎ ԱՐ/ ԶԻՆՎԱԾ ՈՒՌԵՐՈՒՄ ՄԱՀԱՑՈՒԹՅԱՆ, ԴԵՊՐԵՐԻ ՄԱԿԻՆ Տղեկանք - Helsinki Citizens' Assembly-Vanadzor](#)

² In 2024, 40 deaths of servicemen were recorded in the Armed Forces of the Republic of Armenia. The causes were: car accidents – 13, suicide or incitement to suicide – 9, health issues – 5, violation of the ceasefire regime – 4, homicide – 3, accidents (electrocution – 1, avalanche – 1, unknown – 1) – 3, aircraft accident – 2, fire (officially

- As a result of suicide or incitement to suicide – 19 cases (approximately 15.4%),
 - As a result of non-combat-related homicide – 7 cases (approximately 5.7%),
 - Due to health issues – 17 cases (approximately 13.8%).
7. From January 1 to July 31, 2025, 12 deaths were recorded in the Armed Forces of the Republic of Armenia, of which:
- As a result of suicide or incitement to suicide – 4 cases (approximately 33.3%),
 - As a result of non-combat-related homicide – 2 cases (approximately 16.7%),
 - Due to health issues – 3 cases (approximately 25.0%),
 - As a result of accidents – 2 cases (approximately 16.7%),
 - Car accident – 1 case (approximately 8.3%).

Anonymous referral mechanism for reporting torture, inhuman or degrading treatment in the armed forces

8. Within the framework of cooperation with the Council of Europe Office in Yerevan, the "Citizen in Uniform" mobile application has been developed and is currently in the pilot phase. The application will serve as a mechanism for submitting anonymous reports within the Ministry of Defense.
9. The organization has encountered a practical issue related to the launch of the application. Due to existing restrictions in the Armed Forces of the Republic of Armenia, the use of smartphones is prohibited for conscripted servicemen, which prevents them from personally submitting reports on violations of their rights through the application. According to the clarification from the Ministry of Defense, such reports can be conveyed through the servicemen's family members, as has been the practice until now.
10. As a result, the "Citizen in Uniform" application currently cannot fully ensure the effective reception of anonymous reports within the armed forces, indicating the need to continue systemic reforms and develop appropriate solutions.
11. Regarding the "Hotline" operating within the Human Rights and Ethics Coordination Center of the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Armenia, which is considered by

the ministry as a platform for submitting anonymous reports, the following needs to be clarified:

12. The "Hotline" cannot be considered an effective mechanism for reporting cases of mistreatment because it does not fully ensure the confidentiality of the reporting individual. This circumstance reduces the tool's trustworthiness among servicemen.

13. In this context, it is advisable to request additional information from the Government of the Republic of Armenia regarding statistical data, specifically:

- How many reports have been received from servicemen about ill-treatment in the armed forces,
- And how many criminal cases have been initiated based on those reports.

Preventing hazing of servicemen as well as their bullying and ill-treatment by military hierarchy

14. The results of the ongoing monitoring conducted by the organization indicate that among the causes of recorded suicide cases in the armed forces are ill-treatment and incidents humiliating the dignity of servicemen.

15. The organization is involved as a representative of the victim's legal successor in connection with the case where the body of Narek Khachatur Grigoryan, a serviceman of Unit N of the RA Ministry of Defense, was found hanging in the disciplinary battalion of the Military Police Department of the RA Ministry of Defense.³

16. The organization's staff visited the deceased serviceman's family and spoke with his relatives. According to them, eight servicemen involved in combat duty were transferred to the disciplinary battalion after one of them was found to have a shared-use mobile phone.⁴

17. According to the serviceman's relatives, their son may have feared a possible confrontation with a serviceman considered an "authority" within the unit. They believe that this individual might have sought revenge against him after he returned to the unit from the military discipline facility.

18. During their time in the disciplinary unit, one serviceman took a book temporarily kept by another serviceman, which belonged to a third serviceman who holds

³ <https://www.investigative.am/news/zincarayogh-narek-xachatouri-grigoryani-mahvan-depqi-artiv-qreakan-varouyt-e-naxadzernvel>

⁴ <https://hcav.am/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/%D5%84%D5%A1%D5%B0%D5%BE%D5%A1%D5%B6-%D5%A4%D5%A5%D5%BA%D6%84%D5%A5%D6%80%D5%AB-%D5%8F%D5%A5%D5%B2%D5%A5%D5%AF%D5%A1%D5%B6%D6%84-2024-FIN.pdf> (pages 51-52)
Reference on the death cases in the RA Armed Forces in 2024 - Helsinki Citizens' Assembly-Vanadzor

authority within the unit. He tore out pages from the book to use as toilet paper, after which the serviceman expressed serious concern.

19. On November 13, 2024, a criminal case was initiated regarding the above-mentioned incident, which is currently ongoing at the pre-investigation stage.
20. These and similar cases indicate that incidents of mistreatment within the Armed Forces of the Republic of Armenia are of a persistent nature, due to the absence of appropriate preventive mechanisms as well as insufficient and inadequate provision of psychological services.

Issues related to the functioning of officer-psychologists in the RA

21. The institution of officer-psychologists in the Armed Forces of the Republic of Armenia is still not functioning effectively, as evidenced by the presence of criminal offenses, murders, cases of suicide or attempted suicide, and non-regulatory relations within the armed forces.

For many years, HCA Vanadzor has been consistently addressing issues related to the moral and psychological preparedness of servicemen in the Armed Forces.

22. Persistent challenges remain, including insufficient professional qualifications of officer-psychologists' responsible for individual work with servicemen, the need to improve the quality of their work, ensure continuous capacity building, and increase their overall number within the military structure.⁵

Issues related to the conscription of individuals with serious health problems for military service

23. The conscription of individuals with serious health problems continues. For example, during the 2025 summer conscription (June–July), one of the conscripts who applied to the Organization had multiple physical and mental health issues; however, at the Medical Board session, he was examined and presented based on only one specific problem. In addition, the conscript had several health complaints that were not recorded by the conscription medical commission and, therefore, were not subjected to further evaluation or examination.⁶
24. The Organization has applied the Minister of Defense of the Republic of Armenia, stating that several complaints and health issues of the conscript were not recorded

⁵ See, for more detail, Communication from an NGO (Helsinki Citizens' Assembly – Vanadzor) (24/10/2023) in the case of Muradyan v. Armenia (Application No. 11275/07), available at: [https://hudoc.exec.coe.int/?i=DH-DD\(2023\)1339-revE](https://hudoc.exec.coe.int/?i=DH-DD(2023)1339-revE).

⁶ <https://hcav.am/army-15-07-2025/>

and properly examined by the bodies involved in the conscription process, particularly by the Central Medical Commission.

25. As a result, the conscript was granted a deferral for up to one year, since repeated examinations confirmed health problems that are currently incompatible with military service, which had not been initially detected during the conscription examinations.
26. In another case, due to inadequate instrumental examinations, the conscript's actual health condition was not revealed, and he was deemed fit for service. The Organization appealed to the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Armenia to refer the conscript for the necessary medical examinations regarding his health condition, arrange for his surgical treatment, and only after that determine his fitness for military service. As a result, the conscript was declared temporarily unfit for military service.⁷
27. Another serviceman, who had regularly attempted suicide and engaged in self-harm prior to conscription, and who has been diagnosed with "mental retardation" accompanied by behavioral disorders and mental health issues, was nevertheless conscripted for military service. According to the diagnoses related to his health problems, the serviceman should have been declared unfit for military service. The Organization has appealed to the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Armenia to subject the serviceman to appropriate medical examinations, document his actual health condition, medically evaluate him according to the relevant health-related articles, and arrange for his early discharge from military service. The appeal is currently in progress.
28. The above cases demonstrate serious systemic shortcomings in the conscription process, caused by incomplete assessment of health conditions and ineffective functioning of medical commissions. Such violations pose a significant threat to the health and life safety of conscripts. They underscore the urgent need for radical reforms in the sector and the implementation of effective oversight.

Democratic Control of Armed Forces

29. The recommendation consistently made by HCA Vanadzor over the years regarding the establishment of a dedicated mechanism for the protection of human rights in the Armed Forces—namely, the institution of a military ombudsman—remains highly relevant⁸. Such a mechanism would enhance democratic oversight in the defense

⁷ <https://hcav.am/army-call-31-07-2025/>

⁸ See, for more detail, Communication from an NGO (Helsinki Citizens' Assembly – Vanadzor) (24/10/2023) in the case of Muradyan v. Armenia (Application No. 11275/07), available at: [https://hudoc.exec.coe.int/?i=DH-DD\(2023\)1339-revE](https://hudoc.exec.coe.int/?i=DH-DD(2023)1339-revE).

sector, ensure political neutrality, safeguard servicemen's rights and legal interests, and promote transparency within the Armed Forces' activities.⁹

30. The organization emphasizes the necessity to sustain the proposed reforms, continue collaboration with civil society groups, and implement their recommendations to ensure that the political will for ongoing reforms remains strong and uninterrupted.

Recommendations

31. **For the reasons above, HCA Vanadzor respectfully makes recommendations to the Government of the Republic of Armenia and Committee of Ministers to continue examining execution of the judgments in the group of cases under enhanced supervision.**

We hereby call on the Government of Armenia to:

32. Enhance the professional qualifications of officer-psychologists and ensure all military units are staffed with an adequate number of qualified officer-psychologists.
33. Guarantee the functional independence of officer-psychologists so that their psychological assessments have binding authority in determining servicemen's assignment to combat duties.
34. Implement a mechanism for anonymous reporting of torture, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment.
35. Establish the institution of a military ombudsman.


We hereby call on the Committee of Minister to:

36. Follow up on the work aimed at introducing mechanisms for making anonymous reports of cases of torture, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment in the RA Armed Forces and invite the RA Government to regularly present summary information on introduction of the mechanism and results of further functioning.
37. It is recommended to request from the Government of the Republic of Armenia comprehensive information concerning the activities of officer-psychologists within the Armed Forces. This should include data on the total number of officer-psychologists employed, their professional qualifications and training, the extent of their functional independence in the decision-making process, as well as an assessment of the effectiveness of the psychological services and interventions they provide.
38. Request additional statistical information from the Government of the Republic of Armenia, specifically:

⁹ <https://hcav.am/en/ombudsman-military-2020/>

- How many reports of ill-treatment in the Armed Forces have been submitted by servicemen via the hotline,
- And how many of those reports have resulted in the initiation of criminal proceedings.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Artur Sakunts', written in a cursive style.

Artur Sakunts,

Chairperson of Helsinki Citizens' Assembly-Vanadzor