ARMENIA
Submission
“Women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control”

The Government of the Republic of Armenia, represented by the Ministry of Defense, has embraced a policy aimed at augmenting the presence of women within the armed forces and fostering an environment conducive to their comprehensive and meaningful engagement. This commitment stems from both the imperatives outlined in the national legislation of the Republic of Armenia and the international commitments undertaken in this domain, notably the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), UN Security Council Resolution 1325, and other resolutions pertaining to the Women, Peace, and Security agenda, as well as the Armenia-NATO Individual Partnership Action Plan. The imperative to enhance the participation of women in the armed forces is reflected in various official documents, including the Modernization Plan of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Armenia for 2018-2024, endorsed by the decree of the President of the Republic of Armenia on February 17, 2018, as well as the Human Rights Protection 2020-2022 program within the government's national strategy for 2021-2026, and the second national program aligned with Security Council Resolution 1325 of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Since 2014, the Ministry of Defense has initiated specific measures to enhance women's participation in the armed forces. By 2016, efforts were intensified to ensure compliance with the provisions of Regulation 1325 regarding human rights protection within the RA Defense System, equal opportunity provision, elimination of discriminatory practices, and professional advancement. In 2016, the Ministry of Defense issued a decree endorsing the "Guidelines and Plan of Measures for Ensuring Equal Opportunities for Women's Rights Protection in the Defense System."

The primary and pivotal action entailed reviewing and removing legislative barriers hindering the engagement and advancement of women within the defense system, notably in military service. Consequently, as of the academic year 2013-2014, military educational institutions commenced admitting female cadets in specialized fields, marking a significant milestone in fostering gender inclusivity within the armed forces.

Starting from 2024, the compulsory fixed-term service for women was implemented on a voluntary basis for a duration of six months.

To guarantee substantive participation of women in decision-making procedures, the Ministry of Defense appoints women to diverse commissions and working groups.

Establishing institutional mechanisms dedicated to addressing women's issues within the armed forces marked a significant step. Since 2017, the coordination of efforts aimed at implementing this policy, inclusive of international commitments, has been entrusted to the RA Ministry of Defense Human Rights and Building Integrity Center.
In 2019, the Government of the Republic of Armenia approved the first national implementation programs aligning with the provisions of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on "Women and Security," and the second national programs through Government Decision N803-L dated June 2, 2022. This approval facilitated a more systematic implementation of initiatives aimed at involving women within the armed forces, in coordination with other relevant departments.

Under the framework of the "Women, Peace, and Security" agenda, awareness training sessions are being organized for Armed Forces personnel in collaboration with international partners.

The Ministry of Defense oversees the operations of the Center for Human Rights and Welfare (HRC), which serves to safeguard and raise awareness about the rights of servicemen, including female servicemen.

The Defense Hotline service, an internal mechanism dedicated to safeguarding the rights of servicemen, operates within the center. In the event of any infringement upon the rights of individuals serving in the armed forces, they may also communicate their concerns via email to the Center at center@mail.am. Representatives of the Center conduct visits to military units, engaging directly with servicemen on-site to apprise them of their rights.

Constitutionally, the reforms bolstered civilian and democratic oversight of the defense sector and the armed forces by increasing the role of the National Assembly and the government in defense affairs.

The Armenian armed forces are and will continue to be under democratic civilian control. The Ministry of Defense, in accordance with the state's affirmative duty to safeguard rights, persistently strives to ensure the comprehensive fulfillment of servicemen's entitlements, as stipulated in the "Law on Military Service and the Status of Servicemen." These entitlements encompass housing, allowances, pensions, educational opportunities, and comprehensive healthcare programs. Various support services are extended to the families of armed forces personnel, including educational assistance and access to healthcare at no cost.