

STUDY OF PERCEPTIONS, ATTITUDES AND EXPERIENCES OF DISCRIMINATION IN ARMENIA

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DANISH
INSTITUTE FOR
HUMAN RIGHTS



Caucasus
Research
Resource
Center
Armenia



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The “Study of Perceptions, Attitudes and Experiences of Discrimination in Armenia”

was conducted by the Caucasus Research Resource Center (CRRC)-Armenia Foundation. The study was commissioned by the Danish Institute for Human Rights (DIHR) in cooperation with the Human Rights Defender’s Office of the Republic of Armenia. The study was produced with the financial support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark.

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Foreword

Yes, we are coming
From the forgotten darkness of torture and pain,
Poverty, persecution and slavery,
To destroy your tyranny,
To break the chains of slavery,
To forge a new road for ones like us
Who deserves equality.
This is how we are coming!
— Shushanik Kurghinian —

Հա՛, մենք ենք գալիս
Դարեւոր վշտի զրկանքի բովից,
Հալածանքների, գարշ ստրկութեան
Մոռացուած խաւից՝
Կրճքով փշրելու փառքը տիրողին,
Գահը բռնութեան, ստրուկի շղթան,
Նոր ուղի հարթել մեր նմաններին,
Արժանի կոչման, հաւասարութեան՝
Այդպէ՛ս ենք գալիս...:
— Շուշանիկ Կուրղինյան —

This report is the first comprehensive population-based survey on discrimination in Armenia and constitutes a significant contribution to the national evidence base. It offers valuable insights into how discrimination is understood, perceived and experienced across society, while also highlighting its limited visibility and lack of systematic research in this area.

The findings show that a clear majority of Armenians consider discrimination to be a serious societal problem. Notably, discrimination in Armenia is shaped largely by social perceptions and norms. In many cases, it is viewed as an ordinary aspect of social relations, particularly within family and community settings. Discriminatory attitudes toward certain groups remain widespread and are often perceived as traditional or socially acceptable, reinforcing their persistence in everyday life.

Armenia still lacks a comprehensive anti-discrimination framework, as the long-awaited draft law has yet to be adopted. The institutions behind this study call for the prompt adoption of a comprehensive anti-discrimination law, accompanied by an effective institutional mechanism for its implementation and enforcement. This is a key recommendation and necessary precondition for the effectiveness of the broader policy measures proposed in this report.

At the same time, strengthening the legal framework and the institutional capacity to effectively address discrimination must be complemented by efforts to tackle its root causes. Sustainable progress will require addressing the social norms and structural barriers that perpetuate discriminatory attitudes and discourage individuals from seeking protection. Combating discrimination therefore involves not only raising awareness and promoting rights but also fostering an environment in which individuals feel empowered to claim them.

It is our hope that this report will inform and inspire all actors engaged in addressing discrimination in Armenia, including policymakers, legislators, frontline professionals, members of civil society and the academic community.



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Contents

List of Abbreviations.....	5
Executive Summary	6
Introduction	10
Purpose and scope of the study.....	11
Research objectives	11
Rationale and contribution of the study	11
Why perception matters for this study	12
Chapter 1. Legal framework	13
Chapter 2. Data and Methodology.....	18
Chapter 3. Results	22
3.1. Perception of and attitudes towards discrimination.....	23
3.1.1 "Discrimination" as a concept.....	24
3.1.2 Discrimination Perceived as a Problem.....	26
3.1.3 Attitudes and social distancing towards certain groups	29
3.1.4 Groups in need of legal protection.....	32
3.2. Witnessed discrimination	33
3.2.1 Encountering discrimination	34
3.2.2 Groups at heightened risk of discrimination	35
3.2.3 Causes of witnessed discrimination	38
3.3. Personal experiences of discrimination.....	39
3.3.1 Personal experiences of discrimination.....	40
3.3.2 Causes of discrimination	45
3.3.3 Intersectional vulnerability	48
3.4 Main settings where discrimination occurs.....	50
3.4.1 Visible settings where discrimination occurs.....	51
3.4.2 Less visible settings where discrimination occurs	56

3.5. Practices of responding to experienced discrimination	59
3.5.1 Practices of confronting discrimination and willingness to speak out.....	60
3.5.2 Reasons for “remaining silent” about discrimination	63
3.6 Summary analysis of data on three target groups of discrimination.....	71
3.6.1 Persons with disabilities as targets of discrimination.....	73
3.6.2 Women as targets of discrimination	80
3.6.3 National minorities as targets of discrimination	88
3.7 Experiences of relevant institutions regarding manifestations of discrimination.....	91
3.7.1 Actions for identifying, preventing, and mitigating the consequences of discrimination	92
3.7.2 Actions aimed at enhancing the professional capacities of sectoral stakeholders	95
Chapter 4. Conclusions and Recommendations	96
4.1. Conclusions	97
4.2. Recommendations.....	99
Sources and Literature.....	106
Annexes	110
Annex 1. Data and Methodology.....	110
Annex 2. Qualitative Analysis on Settings of Discrimination	121
Annex 3. Survey Questionnaire.....	124
Annex 4. Figure 40	145
Which of the following statements best describes the current economic situation of your household? (%)	145
Annex 5. Policy recommendation matrix	146

List of Abbreviations

CATI	Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing
CRRC-Armenia	Caucasus Research Resource Center-Armenia
DEFF	Design Effect
DEx	Discrimination Experience
DIHR	Danish Institute for Human Rights
ECHR	European Convention on Human Rights
ECtHR	European Court of Human Rights
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HRDO	Human Rights Defender's Office
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
IDI / IDIs	In-Depth Interview(s)
IQR	Interquartile Range
KI	Key Informant
KII(s)	Key Informant Interview(s)
LGBTQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and others
LSG	Local Self-Government
NK	Nagorno-Karabakh
RDD	Random Digit Dialing

Executive Summary

This report examines how people in Armenia perceive, understand, witness, and experience discrimination. It explores whether discrimination is recognized as a social problem, how the public interprets the concept, which groups are seen as most exposed to unequal treatment, where discriminatory practices are believed to occur, and what people do when they experience or observe such treatment.

The purpose of the study is to generate evidence on discrimination as it is lived, perceived, and narrated in Armenian society. It aims to support policy interventions, awareness-raising, capacity-building and trust-building by providing a broad empirical picture of public attitudes, stereotypes, reporting practices, institutional gaps, and the social norms that shape recognition of discrimination. The study is especially attentive to the gap between formal rights and everyday practice: a behavior may be discriminatory in effect, yet remain socially normalized and therefore unnamed by those who experience, witness, or reproduce it.

The findings are based on a mixed-methods study conducted by the Caucasus Research Resource Center (CRRC)-Armenia Foundation, commissioned and funded by the Danish Institute for Human Rights (DIHR) in cooperation with the Human Rights Defender's Office (HRDO) of the Republic of Armenia. Primary data collection was carried out between November and December 2025. The quantitative component consisted of a nationally representative CATI survey of 2,200 adults residing in Armenia, selected through Random Digit Dialing (RDD) and weighted by key demographic characteristics. The qualitative component included key informant (KI) interviews and in-depth case-study (IDI) interviews, bringing institutional, expert, practitioner, and lived-experience perspectives into the analysis.

The report uses the term “discrimination” primarily in its social and experiential sense, referring to perceived unequal treatment, exclusion, stigmatization, or differential treatment as reported by respondents and interviewees. It does not make legal determinations on individual incidents. This distinction is important because perceptions and experiences do not provide a direct legal assessment of discrimination, but they reveal how discrimination is recognized, normalized, avoided, or challenged in practice. Hence, the central premise of this study is that perception matters: where discriminatory practices become part of the ordinary “code” of social life, the first barrier to protection is often the inability to name the problem.

KEY FINDINGS

- **Recognition of discrimination is high, but understanding remains limited.** Once introduced to the concept, 70.4% of respondents considered discrimination in Armenia to be a serious or somewhat serious problem, and this view remained above roughly two thirds across socio-demographic groups. Yet baseline understanding is limited: fewer than half were able to describe discrimination in relevant terms when asked in their own words, and 23.4% could not provide a clear answer at all. Moreover, among the responses categorized as relevant to discrimination, only 5.0% offered a more or less detailed description. As a result, discrimination is socially visible but only weakly translated into a rights-based vocabulary. Many people perceive that a problem exists, but lack the conceptual tools to name it, legally interpret it, or distinguish it from ordinary unfairness.

- **Public concern is filtered through visibility, sympathy, and moral deservingness.** The groups most commonly perceived as frequently subjected to discrimination are LGBTQ+ people (68.0%), people with mental disabilities (35.1%), and Armenians displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh (32.4%). A different pattern emerges when considering support for additional legal protection under a potential anti-discrimination law: the strongest support is expressed for people with physical disabilities (30.4%), people with mental disabilities (23.6%), and women (8.2%), while LGBTQ+ people receive the lowest level of support (2.1%) among the groups examined. This suggests that public support for legal protection is shaped not only by perceptions of discrimination but also by perceptions of deservingness and social distance.
- **Everyday exposure correlates with poverty, disability, and social status.** Among all reported cases of witnessed discrimination, the groups most frequently identified as affected are people living in poverty (14.4% of reported cases), people with physical disabilities (13.4% of reported cases), and people with mental disabilities (12.4% of reported cases). Personal experience of discriminatory treatment is also closely linked to socio-economic vulnerability: 16.5% of the population reported at least one experience of discrimination in the past five years, rising to 28.3% among households without enough money for food and 24.0% among those with enough money for food but not clothes. The most common perceived reasons for being discriminated against were socio-economic status (21.5%), position at work (17.0%), and age (10.4%).
- **Discrimination is embedded within ordinary institutions, not only exceptional incidents.** Workplaces and educational institutions are the most visible settings in general public perceptions, with the workplace becoming even more prominent when respondents draw on personal experience. Reported experiences of discrimination span hiring, remuneration, task assignments, promotion prospects, and gender-based harassment. Healthcare institutions become more prominent in accounts from IDI and KI interviewees, who highlight accounts of inaccessible infrastructure, confidentiality breaches, age-based neglect, and discriminatory treatment of women with disabilities. Witnessed incidents of discrimination tend to cluster in public spaces, workplaces, and educational institutions, while KI interviewees also highlighted family, community, and online spaces as important and underreported arenas where stigma and exclusion are reproduced.
- **Silence is the dominant response to discrimination.** Formal reporting is exceedingly rare: 92.3% of those who personally experienced discrimination did not report their most recent incident anywhere, and only 1.7% contacted relevant authorities. Many respondents preferred to handle such situations on their own (43.1%) or choose not to seek help at all (10.4%). When people do speak out, they are far more likely to turn to their family, friends, or relatives rather than to formal mechanisms. This reluctance is driven by multiple overlapping factors: distrust, expectations that nothing will change, fear of retaliation, bureaucratic fatigue, shame, and social stigma. A lack of knowledge of how or where to file a complaint was also a widespread barrier, with 78.6% of Armenians reporting they are unaware of complaint procedures.
- **Group-specific findings reveal the limits of surface-level equality.** Persons with disabilities enjoy broad declarative support, with 95.8% agreeing that the state must ensure accessibility of public spaces, yet KI interviewees described physical and communication barriers, restrictions on legal-capacity, paternalism, and social media labelling. Women reported discrimination at almost the same rate as men, but this parity obscures strong qualitative evidence of discrimination in workplaces, families, and institutional settings, reinforced by traditional gender-role attitudes shared across gender lines. Discrimination against national minorities was the least recognized by the public, with only 12.6% of Armenians considering it widespread;

yet KI Interviewees pointed to linguistic invisibility, closed community structures, and limited socio-economic mobility as persistent sources of disadvantage.

- **Institutions lack the legal and operational framework needed for a systematic response.**
KI interviewees reported that many state institutions and civil society organizations working with groups at heightened risk do not have internal guidelines for identifying discrimination, relying instead on international documents, European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) case law, UN approaches, or ad hoc professional judgement. The absence of comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation further complicates efforts to define, detect, and address discriminatory practices in a consistent manner. As a result, capacity-building should be understood not as a one-off training need, but a sustained institutional process. An effective response requires clearer legal definitions, practical tools, continuous professional development, local outreach, and mechanisms that translate rights awareness into accessible remedies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Establish a comprehensive legal and institutional framework for protection against discrimination**
Adopt a comprehensive anti-discrimination law aligned with international standards, supported by effective implementation mechanisms, clear institutional mandates, and accessible remedies. Strengthen the enforcement of existing legislation, review relevant provisions of the Criminal and Labor Codes, and expand access to legal aid and complaint mechanisms for victims of discrimination.
- **Increase public awareness and promote a culture of equality and inclusion.**
Implement sustained, multi-year public awareness and education initiatives to improve understanding of discrimination, equality, diversity, and human rights. Awareness efforts should combine information on rights and legal protections with practical guidance on available remedies, and should be integrated into formal education, public communication, and community engagement activities.
- **Strengthen socio-economic inclusion of groups at heightened risk of discrimination**
Address the structural conditions that make individuals at high risk of discrimination by improving access to employment, vocational training, childcare, social services, legal assistance, and crisis support. Particular attention should be paid to women, persons with disabilities, displaced persons from Nagorno-Karabakh, national minorities, and individuals facing multiple and intersecting forms of disadvantage.
- **Build the capacity of institutions responsible for preventing and responding to discrimination**
Develop institutional guidelines and provide continuous professional training for public officials, law enforcement personnel, judges, teachers, healthcare workers, social workers, employers, and other frontline professionals. Capacity-building efforts should equip institutions with the conceptual, legal, and practical tools needed to identify, prevent, and respond effectively to both direct and indirect forms of discrimination.
- **Improve reporting mechanisms and support for victims**
Establish accessible and user-friendly mechanisms for reporting discrimination through a clearly identifiable, discrimination-specific digital entry point (either as a standalone platform or as a dedicated section within the HRDO's official website) and a strengthened hotline. Ensure secure (including anonymous) reporting and referral, simplified complaint procedures, and access to information, legal support, and other relevant services.

- **Strengthen monitoring, data collection, and evidence generation**

Develop a sustainable national system for monitoring discrimination by integrating discrimination-related indicators into official statistics, systematically collecting and publishing administrative data, and institutionalizing regular nationwide surveys on discrimination. Data collection and analysis should allow for the identification of intersectional forms of discrimination and support evidence-based policymaking.

- **Cross-cutting principle: Address structural and intersectional discrimination**

Across all interventions, policymakers should recognize that discrimination is frequently reproduced through structural conditions, including economic dependence, accessibility barriers, and unequal access to services, rather than through individual attitudes alone. At the same time, individuals may face compounded disadvantages when multiple characteristics overlap, such as being a woman with a disability or a displaced person living in poverty. Policies should therefore be designed to remove structural barriers and to account for these overlapping disadvantages, rather than treating each group or issue in isolation.

Introduction

The sub-sections below set out the purpose of the study, its research objectives, and its rationale and contribution. They are followed by Chapter 1, which presents the international, regional and Armenian legal framework on non-discrimination within which the findings of the study should be read.

Purpose and scope of the study

The Danish Institute for Human Rights (DIHR), in cooperation with the Human Rights Defender's Office of the Republic of Armenia (HRDO) have commissioned this study to gain insights into public perceptions, attitudes, and experiences of discrimination in Armenia. The study aims to generate knowledge about how discrimination is perceived and experienced by the broader population and provide evidence-based insights to inform policy interventions, awareness-raising efforts, and trust-building initiatives by key stakeholders.

This study employed a mixed-methods design, where quantitative data were collected from a random sample of 2,200 individuals from the general population via a survey, and qualitative data were gathered through interviews with key informants.

The findings in this report are based on respondents' *subjective* experiences and own perceptions and understandings of the concept "discrimination". Hence, throughout this report, the term "discrimination" is used primarily in its social and experiential sense, referring to perceived unequal treatment or exclusion. It falls outside the scope of this report to conduct a legal assessment of the reported experiences and unless explicitly stated, references to discrimination do not constitute legal determinations under Armenian or international law.

While respondents' personal experiences with and perceptions of discrimination do not in themselves provide a precise picture of the actual extent of discrimination, the results of the quantitative analysis, taken together with the qualitative findings, provide valuable insights on where there are problems that need to be addressed.

The research was carried out by the Caucasus Research Resource Center (CRRC)-Armenia Foundation with the primary data collection carried out between November and December 2025.

Research objectives

The following key research objectives were identified:

- To assess what is understood by "discrimination" among the general population.
- To measure prevailing perceptions/attitudes, perceived extent, and comfort with different groups in various situations.
- To explore prevalence and nature of discriminatory stereotypes and the rationales behind them.
- To identify individuals' experiences of discrimination in concrete situations and barriers to reporting.
- To measure public awareness of policies, mechanisms, and trust in institutions.
- To identify main information sources shaping opinions.
- To identify channels for awareness-raising.

Rationale and contribution of the study

This study is unique in the breadth of discrimination-related aspects it addresses. In Armenia, numerous studies and reports on discrimination have been conducted and published; however, they have focused only on specific aspects of discrimination, such as groups at heightened risk of

discrimination¹, particular settings in which discrimination manifests (the workplace², the family³), stereotypes and perceptions associated with specific settings of discrimination⁴, or the legal frameworks for the prevention and redress of discrimination⁵.

In the present study, an attempt has been made to combine all of these aspects and subject them to analysis, based on the prior hypothesis that there are points of connection and fields of interaction among different groups with heightened risk of discrimination, the manifestations of discrimination against them, the contexts in which discrimination occurs, and its underlying causes. In addition, the study includes a dedicated subchapter examining the challenges faced by employees of various institutions (state and civil society) engaged in work related to discrimination. A comprehensive examination of these issues can provide reliable, evidence-based and research-based foundations for effective practical decision-making.

Focused on an in-depth analysis of practices and perceptions related to discrimination in Armenian society, the present study has, as much as possible, avoided concepts and approaches that are strictly used within legal and professional frameworks. Instead, it has remained faithful to the concepts and formulations employed by the surveyed residents and key informants.

Why perception matters for this study

A central analytical premise of this study is that discrimination often goes unrecognized, both by those who experience it and by those who witness it, when the underlying behaviors have been socially normalized. A substantial body of sociological work, ranging from Bourdieu's⁶ concept of cultural codes to the phenomenological traditions of Schutz⁷ and of Berger and Luckmann⁸, as well as Weber's⁹ grounding of values in utility and interest, converges on the insight that behavior not typified as problematic within a society's shared "stock of knowledge" is reproduced as ordinary. Consequently, any legal initiative that seeks to redefine such behaviors as discriminatory is likely to encounter a barrier of social non-receptiveness. For this reason, the present study combines a population-level measurement of perceptions and attitudes with a measurement of witnessed and experienced discrimination. The divergence among these three measures is itself diagnostic of the degree to which discrimination is - or is not - recognized in everyday Armenian life.

1. See [Discrimination on the Ground of Disability in Armenia \(Survey\): Freedom of religion and children and youth belonging to national minorities \(Armenian\)](#).

2. See ["On gender issues in the workplace"](#) guide, Armenian

3. See [SURVEY ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN Analytical Report](#), 2021

4. See [The manual of "Anatomy of Gender, Gender Stereotypes, Gender Discrimination, and Inequality"](#)

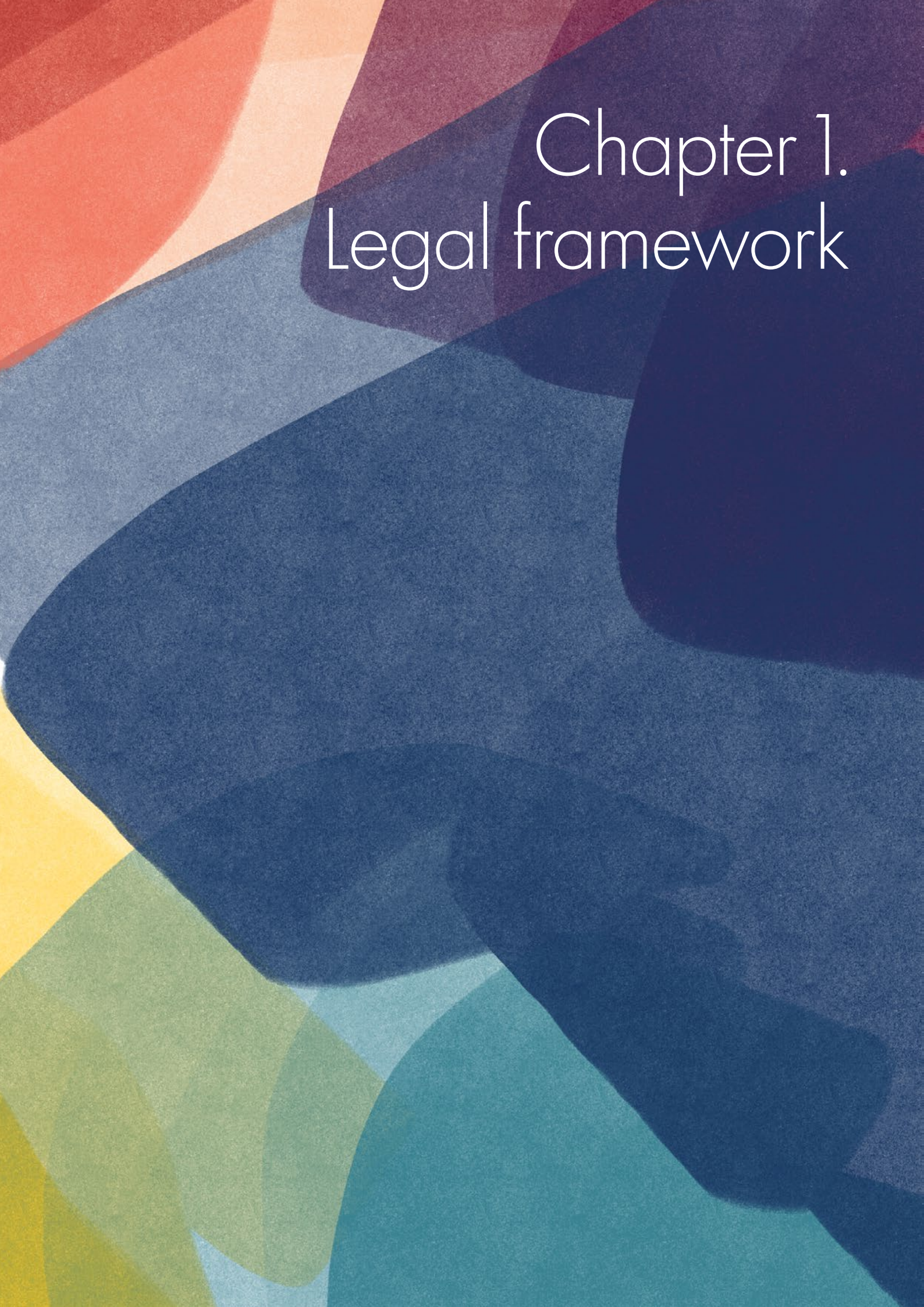
5. See Minasyan A., Toneyan M., [National Minorities' Rights in Armenia: Problems and Solutions](#); Ghazaryan A., [Research on Alleged Indirect Discrimination against Vulnerable Groups: Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence](#) (Istanbul Convention); [Sixth Periodic Report of the Republic of Armenia under Article 25\(2\) of the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities](#); [Report on the Implementation of the Concluding Observations of the UN Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women \(CEDAW\) addressed to Armenia](#).

6. See The French cultural anthropologist and sociologist P. Bourdieu has addressed the role of cultural codes in particular in the following works: 1. Bourdieu P. *Distinction*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1994; 2. Bourdieu P. *Artistic Taste and Cultural Capital*, Culture & Society. Cambridge University Press. 1995.

7. See Schütz, A. *The Meaningful Structure of the Everyday World: Essays in Phenomenological Sociology*, Moscow: Public Opinion Foundation Institute, 2003.

8. See Berger P. and Luckmann T. *Social Construction of Reality. A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*, New York, 1966.

9. See Weber M. *Economy and Society: Essays in Understanding Sociology*. T. III. Right. - Publishing House of the Higher School of Economics, 2018.



Chapter 1. Legal framework

Core international obligations

Since independence, the Republic of Armenia has ratified several core international human rights instruments¹⁰ that prohibit discrimination and guarantee the equal enjoyment of human rights. These include, inter alia, the **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)** and the **International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)**.

Under these treaties, States parties undertake to respect and ensure the rights enshrined in the Covenants to all individuals within their territory and subject to their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind. Prohibited grounds include race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.¹¹

In addition, Armenia is also party to several other international conventions that prohibit discrimination on specific grounds. These include:

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) which defines discrimination against women as any distinction, exclusion or restriction based on sex that impairs women's equal enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.¹²

The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) which defines racial discrimination as any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, color, descent, or national or ethnic origin that impairs the equal enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.¹³

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRDP) which prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability and guarantees persons with disabilities equal and effective legal protection against discrimination on all grounds.¹⁴

Regional framework: The European Convention on Human Rights

At the regional level, Armenia is also bound by the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and its Protocol no. 12, which establishes a general prohibition of discrimination in the enjoyment of any right set forth by law.¹⁵

Article 14 of the Convention prohibits discrimination in the enjoyment of the rights and freedoms set forth in the Convention. Its non-exhaustive list of prohibited grounds¹⁶ allows the European Court of Human Rights to recognize and include grounds not expressly mentioned in Article 14.¹⁷

10. See These include the "Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women" (1993), the "International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination" (1993), the "Convention concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation" (1995), the "Convention against Discrimination in Education" (1993), "Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities" (2010), and "Violence and Harassment Convention (C190)" (2025), among others.

11. See Article 2, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and Article 2, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), available at: [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights | OHCHR](#) and [International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights | OHCHR](#)

12. See Article 1, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), New York, 18 December 1979, available at: [Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women New York, 18 December 1979 | OHCHR](#)

13. See Article 1, International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD), available at: [International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination | OHCHR](#)

14. See Article 5, Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), available at: [Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities | OHCHR](#)

15. See European Court of Human Rights, Guide on Article 14 of the Convention (prohibition of discrimination) and on Article 1 of Protocol No. 12 (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2026), para. 1.

16. See [European Convention on Human Rights](#)

17. See ECtHR, [Guide on Article 14 of the Convention \(prohibition of discrimination\) and on Article 1 of Protocol No. 12](#), Para. 51.

The Court's dynamic and evolutive approach to interpretation reflects the understanding that protected grounds are not exhaustive and may include characteristics such as sexual orientation, gender identity, health status and other grounds not explicitly listed in treaties.

According to the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights, the principle of non-discrimination under Article 14 is of a "fundamental" nature and underlies the Convention, alongside the rule of law, and the values of tolerance and social peace.¹⁸

Nature and scope of state obligations

International human rights law requires more than the formal prohibition of discrimination; it imposes both negative and positive obligations on states. In other words, States must not only refrain from engaging in discriminatory conduct but must also take appropriate measures to prevent discrimination by private actors, ensure effective protection mechanisms, investigate discriminatory practices, and provide accessible remedies to victims.

States must for instance ensure that violence, hate speech and other hate-driven crimes, including those based on ethnic origin, are criminalized and effectively combatted. This includes banning the spreading of ideas founded on racial superiority or hatred, incitement to racial discrimination, and acts of violence (or incitement to such acts), against individuals or groups defined by their race, color, or ethnic origin. States must also prohibit any support for racist activities and ensure that advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that leads to discrimination, hostility or violence is prohibited by law.^{19 20}

Forms of discrimination

International and regional human rights bodies recognize that discrimination may arise not only from intentional unequal treatment, but also from measures that have discriminatory effects in practice.

Direct discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favorably than another in a comparable situation on the basis of an identifiable characteristic or protected 'status'. This requires that persons in relevantly similar situations be treated equally.²¹ Harassment and instruction to discriminate may also constitute forms of direct discrimination.²²

Indirect discrimination can take place when a general policy or measure, even though it is formulated in neutral terms, has a disproportionately prejudicial effect on a particular group.²³

Not all differences in treatment – or failure to treat persons in relevantly different situations differently – constitute discrimination. Only differences in treatment that lack an objective and reasonable justification will amount to discrimination.²⁴ The difference in treatment must pursue a legitimate aim, and the means employed must be reasonably proportionate to that aim.²⁵

18. See ECtHR, [Guide on Article 14 of the Convention \(prohibition of discrimination\) and on Article 1 of Protocol No. 12](#), Para. 1.

19. See CERD article 4(a) and ICCPR article 20(2)

20. See ICCPR article 20(2)).

21. See Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, General Comment No. 20 (2009); Committee on the Rights of Persons With Disabilities, General Comment No. 6 (2018); ECtHR, [Guide on Article 14 of the Convention \(prohibition of discrimination\) and on Article 1 of Protocol No. 12](#), para. 32.

22. See ECtHR, [Guide on Article 14 of the Convention \(prohibition of discrimination\) and on Article 1 of Protocol No. 12](#)), para. 34.

23. See ECtHR, paragraph 35 [Guide on Article 14 of the Convention \(prohibition of discrimination\) and on Article 1 of Protocol No. 12](#)). Para. 35.

24. See ECtHR, [Guide on Article 14 of the Convention \(prohibition of discrimination\) and on Article 1 of Protocol No. 12](#) para. 57.

25. See ECtHR, [Guide on Article 14 of the Convention \(prohibition of discrimination\) and on Article 1 of Protocol No. 12](#)), para. 58.

There is also growing jurisprudence across international, regional and certain domestic legal systems recognizing that discrimination may arise on multiple grounds simultaneously or take an intersectional form through the interaction of different characteristics.²⁶ When discrimination occurs in these combined ways, the effects can be more severe, often intensifying the vulnerability of the affected individuals and making it harder for them to fully participate in society.

Armenian domestic legal framework

The Armenian domestic framework on non-discrimination is anchored in Article 29 of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia (2015, as amended²⁷), which prohibits discrimination on an open list of grounds including sex, race, skin color, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion, world-view, political or other views, belonging to a national minority, property status, birth, disability, age, or other personal or social circumstances.

In addition to this general constitutional guarantee, several sectoral laws address discrimination in specific domains. These include the Law on Ensuring Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (2013²⁸); the Law on Prevention of Violence within the Family, Protection of Persons Subjected to Violence within the Family, and Restoration of Peace in the Family (2017²⁹, as amended³⁰); the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2021³¹); the Labor Code³², which prohibits discrimination in employment relations and, following recent amendments, regulates workplace sexual harassment. The Criminal Code³³ further criminalizes violations of the principle of equal rights and the incitement of national, racial or religious hatred.

Armenia has ratified the core international instruments, and Protocol No. 12 to the European Convention on Human Rights³⁴ has been in force in Armenia since 2004. However, Armenia still lacks a comprehensive anti-discrimination law that provides a unified definition of discrimination, establishes a coherent system of remedies across all protected grounds, and ensures a dedicated enforcement framework.

A draft Law on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection from Discrimination has been under consideration since 2018. An interim opinion was issued by OSCE ODIHR on 6 September 2019³⁵,

26. See *B.S. v. Spain*, European Court of Human Rights, 2012; *Carvalho Pinto de Sousa Morais v. Portugal*, European Court of Human Rights, 2017; *J.D. and A. v. United Kingdom*, European Court of Human Rights, 2019; Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, General Comment No. 3: Women and Girls with Disabilities (2016); Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, General Recommendation No. 28 (2010).

27. See Constitution of the Republic of Armenia, adopted by referendum 6 December 2015, Article 29 (Prohibition of Discrimination). See <https://www.arlis.am/hy/acts/102510>.

28. Law of the Republic of Armenia on Ensuring Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, adopted 20 May 2013, HO-57-N. See <https://www.arlis.am/DocumentView.aspx?DocID=83841>.

29. Law of the Republic of Armenia on Prevention of Violence within the Family, Protection of Persons Subjected to Violence within the Family, and Restoration of Peace in the Family, adopted 13 December 2017. See <https://www.refworld.org/legal/legislation/natlegbod/2017/120293>.

30. Law of the Republic of Armenia on Prevention of Violence within the Family, Protection of Persons Subjected to Violence within the Family, and Restoration of Peace in the Family, amended by National Assembly decision of 12 April 2024. See http://parliament.am/draftreading_docs8/P-743-1_DR2.pdf.

31. Law of the Republic of Armenia on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, adopted 5 May 2021, No. ZR-194 (entered into force 1 September 2021). See <https://www.arlis.am/hy/acts/152960>.

32. Workplace sexual harassment was introduced by amendments in force from 2022. See also Ghazaryan, A., and Grigoryan, V., *Is it expedient to adopt a separate 'non-discrimination law'?*, Yerevan, 2015, pp. 14–15; See https://epfarmeria.am/sites/default/files/Document/Is_it_expedient_to_adopt_separate_nondiscrimination_law_research_2015_0.pdf.

33. Ghazaryan, A., “Discrimination, Hate Crimes and Hate Speech in Armenia — Situational Analysis Report”, Council of Europe / Yerevan, 2019: <https://rm.coe.int/situational-analysis-armenia-hye/16809e49f2>.

34. Protocol No. 12 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (CETS No. 177), opened for signature 4 November 2000. Armenia ratified on 1 October 2004. See the Council of Europe Treaty Office for signature and ratification status: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list?module=treaty-detail&treatyid=177>.

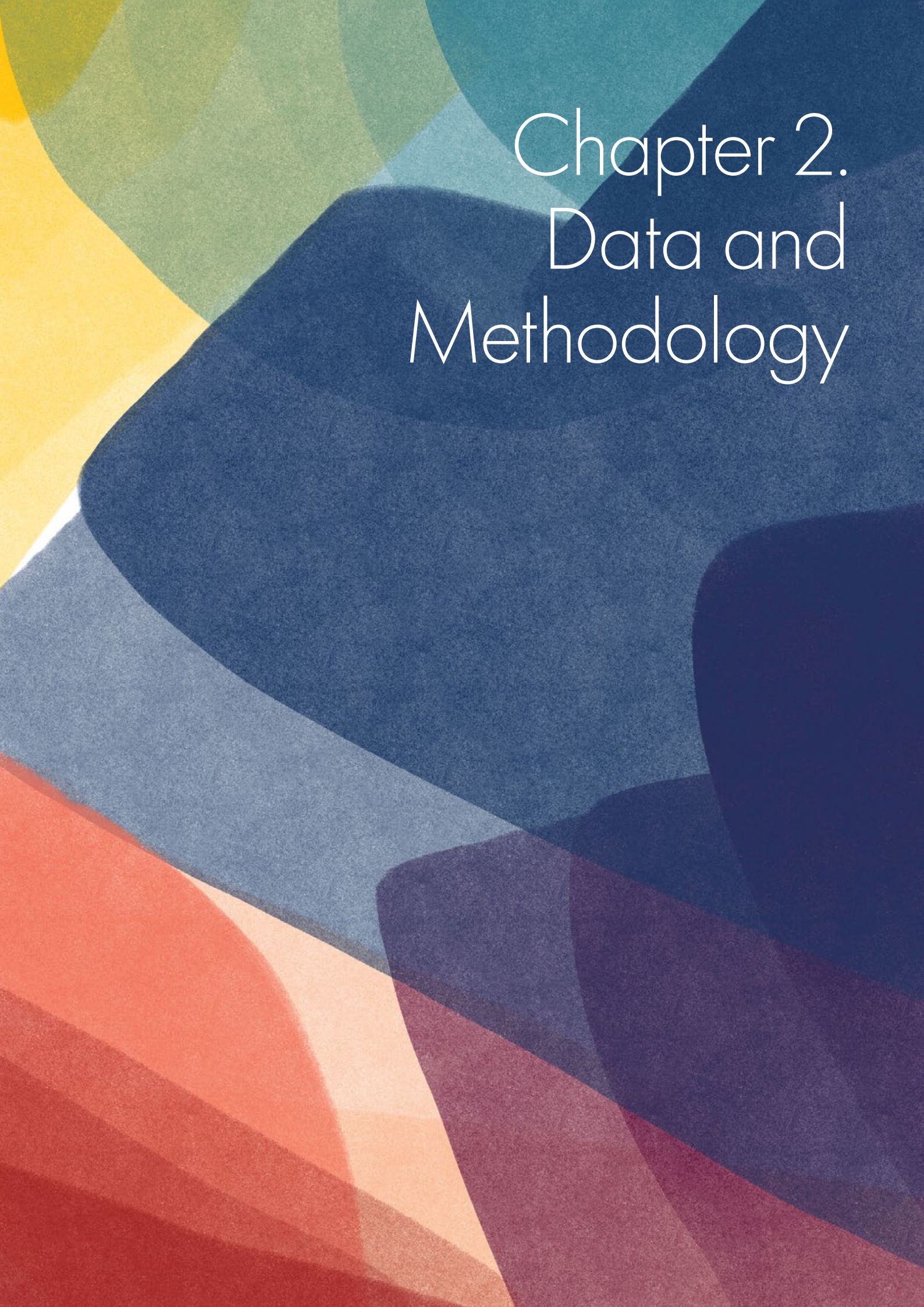
35. OSCE/ODIHR, “Interim Opinion on the Draft Law of the Republic of Armenia on Ensuring Equality before the Law (as of November 2018)”, issued 6 September 2019, ODIHR.GAL/25/19.

and a revised draft was published for public consultation between 28 June and 13 July 2024³⁶. However, the draft law had not been adopted at the time this report went to print.³⁷

The Human Rights Defender of the Republic of Armenia is expected to serve as the national equality body following the adoption of the draft law “On Prevention of Discrimination and Protection from Discrimination”. In this role, the institution would be responsible for monitoring and reporting on discrimination and for receiving individual complaints. Its mandate is defined in the Constitutional Law on the Human Rights Defender (2016).

36. Package of Draft Laws on Ensuring Legal Equality and Protection from Discrimination, published for public online discussion 28 June–13 July 2024 under the Government of the Republic of Armenia’s e-draft platform. Not adopted as of the time of fieldwork (December 2025). <https://www.e-draft.am/projects/7408/about>

37. The draft law was prepared in 2018. It was subsequently submitted to the OSCE/ODIHR for assessment, and the interim opinion was received on 6 September 2019 (See, “[Interim Opinion on the Draft Law of the Republic of Armenia on Ensuring Legal Equality](#)” (November 2018 version)). On 26 December 2019, the RA Government adopted another decision – [No. 1978-L - approving the National Strategy for the Protection of Human Rights and the 2020-2022 Action Plan derived therefrom](#). This was followed by Decision [No. 1674-L of 28 September 2023 on making amendments and supplements to Government Decision No. 1978-L of 26 December 2019](#). Both action plans emphasized the importance of revising and further developing the above-mentioned draft law. The revised draft was published for public online discussion from 28 June 2024 to 13 July 2024 under the title “[Package of Draft Laws on Ensuring Legal Equality and Protection from Discrimination](#)”; however, it has not yet been adopted.



Chapter 2. Data and Methodology

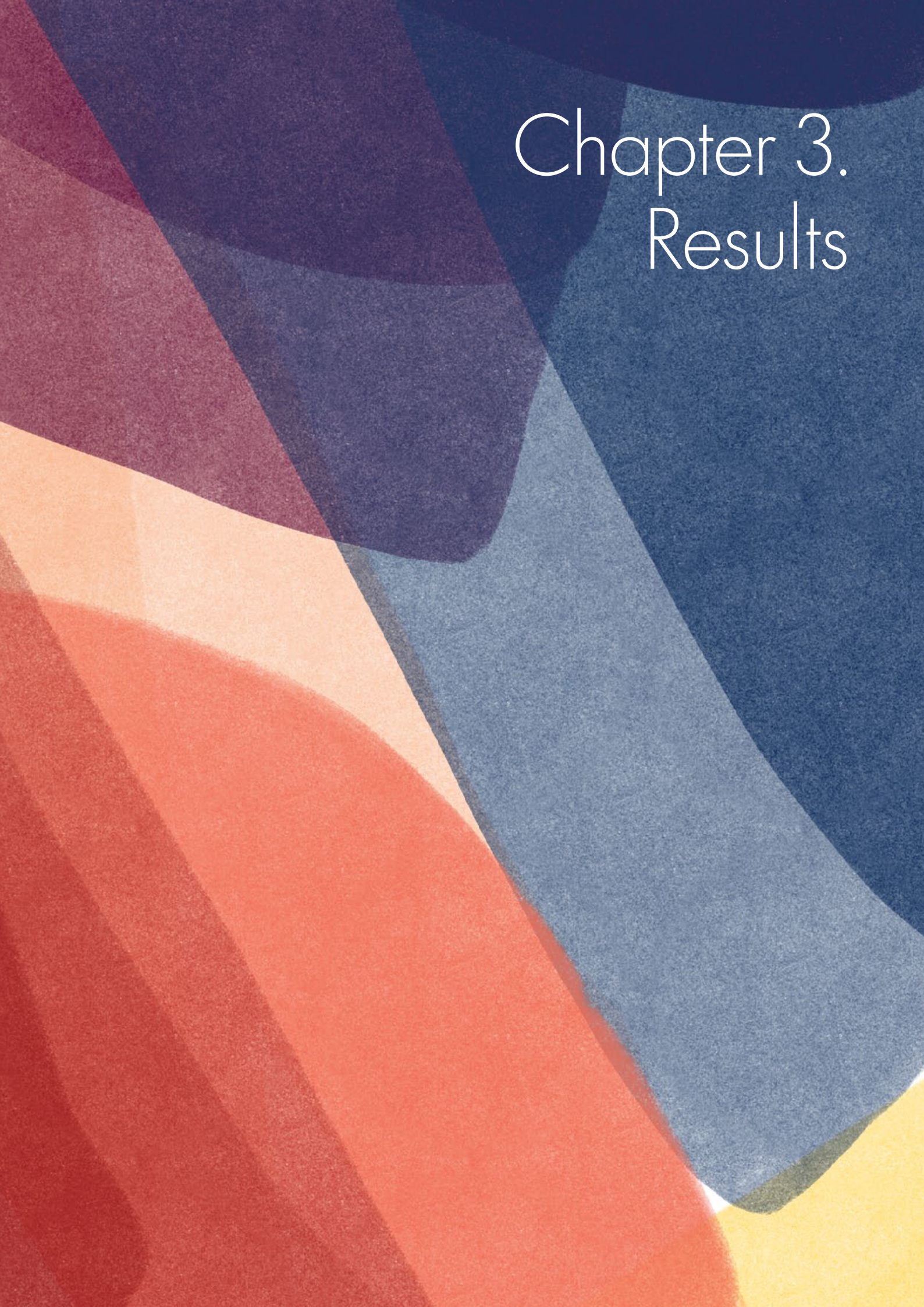
This study used a mixed-methods design to examine perceptions, attitudes, and experiences of discrimination in Armenia. The table below summarizes the main methodological choices, including the quantitative survey, qualitative interviews, sampling logic, data processing, analytical approach, ethical safeguards, and key limitations. A fuller methodological description, including detailed fieldwork procedures, quality assurance protocols, instruments, and technical notes, is provided in Table 1. See the detailed Data and Methodology in Annex 1.

Table 1. Methodological overview

OVERVIEW	
Overall research design	Convergent parallel mixed-methods design, combining a nationally representative survey with qualitative interviews.
Conceptual understanding of discrimination	Discrimination is understood in this report primarily as perceived unequal treatment or exclusion, based on respondents' own experiences, observations, and interpretations.
Operationalization of disability	Persons with disabilities were identified using the Washington Group Short Set, based on functional limitations rather than only formal disability status.
Fieldwork period	November through December 2025
Ethical safeguards	The study followed internal ethical procedures, including informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, respondent safety, and a "do no harm" approach.
Quality assurance	QA included interviewer training, real-time field monitoring, review of audio recordings, back-checks, paradata review, transcript review, coding checks, and documentation of quality-control decisions.
QUANTITATIVE COMPONENT	
Quantitative method	Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) survey
Target population	Adults aged 18+ who had resided in Armenia for at least three consecutive years.
Survey sample size	2,200
Sampling approach	Random Digit Dialing (RDD) of mobile phone numbers
Margin of error	Approximately $\pm 2.1\%$ at the 95% confidence level, or around $\pm 2.4\text{--}2.5\%$ after accounting for design effect.
Pilot testing	A pilot study of 30 CATI interviews was conducted before the main fieldwork to test the questionnaire, skip logic, wording, sensitivity, and technical setup.
Data collection instrument	A standardized survey questionnaire was used, covering understanding of discrimination, attitudes and stereotypes, personal and witnessed experiences, reporting practices, institutional awareness and trust, information sources, and demographics.
Handling sensitive topics	Sensitive themes, including sexual orientation and discrimination by law enforcement, were approached through indirect or experience-first wording.
Data processing	Post-fieldwork procedures included logical and statistical checks, integration of paradata and back-checks, coding of open-ended responses, weighting, anonymization, and removal of personal identifiers.

Weighting	Survey weights were applied to align the achieved sample with the population distribution by key demographic characteristics, including gender, age, settlement/region, and education.
QUALITATIVE COMPONENT	
Qualitative component	The qualitative component included two methods: key informant interviews and in-depth case-study interviews.
Target population	The qualitative component covered two groups: key informants with institutional, expert, and practitioner knowledge of discrimination, and survey respondents selected for follow-up in-depth interviews based on their vulnerability characteristics and reported discrimination experience.
Sampling approach	KIs were selected purposively, including consultative interviews from education, civil society, legal, and public administration sectors, followed by additional expert/institutional interviews. IDIs were selected from CATI respondents through an opt-in mechanism, using a 2x2 model combining vulnerability traits and prior discrimination experience. Additional variation was sought by settlement type, age, political perspective, and intersecting characteristics such as gender, disability, displacement, and ethnicity.
Sample size	16
Key informant interviews	Four consultative KIs were conducted before fieldwork, followed by eight additional KIs with institutional, expert, and practitioner respondents.
In-depth interviews	Four IDIs were conducted as intersectional case studies, selected through a 2x2 logic combining vulnerability characteristics and prior discrimination experience.
Qualitative instruments	The study used a flexible consultative KI guide, a semi-structured KI guide, and a tailored IDI guide. All tools were trauma-informed and informed by desk review, expert input, and quantitative findings.
ANALYTICAL APPROACH	
Quantitative analysis	Survey data were analyzed using weighted percentages, confidence intervals, and, where relevant, non-parametric tests.
Reporting of statistical significance	The report is primarily descriptive, but differences between groups are interpreted as meaningful only when they are statistically and substantively relevant. Where group comparisons are discussed, the interpretation takes into account confidence intervals, the size and direction of differences, and, where applicable, statistical testing. Small or unstable differences are not over-interpreted.
Treatment of “Don’t know” and “Refuse to answer” responses	“Don’t know” and “Refuse to answer” responses are included when they have analytical value, especially when uncertainty, lack of awareness, or reluctance to answer is itself meaningful. For scale-based questions, the focus is usually placed on substantive responses.
Analysis of multiple-choice questions	For multiple-choice questions, response options are calculated as a share of the total number of selected answers, not as a share of respondents, unless otherwise specified. From these calculations it is possible to assess the distribution of selected options but not to say anything about the share of respondents that selected each option. Respondents who answered “Don’t know” or refused to answer are excluded from the calculation. Therefore, these calculations allow assessment of the distribution of selected options among substantive responses, but they cannot be used to determine the share of respondents who selected each option.

Qualitative analysis	Qualitative data were analyzed thematically using a coding framework aligned with the main survey modules. Transcripts were organized and coded in NVivo to identify recurring patterns in narratives, institutional experiences, rationales, barriers, and coping strategies.
Presentation of qualitative findings	Qualitative findings are presented as analytical themes, supported by examples, paraphrased accounts, and selected direct quotations where they clarify a pattern or reveal an important lived experience. The qualitative material is not presented as statistically representative, but as explanatory and interpretive evidence.
Integration of quantitative and qualitative findings	Quantitative and qualitative findings are integrated during interpretation. Survey data identify broader patterns, while interviews help explain the meanings, mechanisms, and institutional dynamics behind those patterns.



Chapter 3. Results

This chapter presents and analyzes the data through a mixed-methods approach with the purpose of addressing the research objectives of this study - hence presenting and analyzing data on discrimination-related issues. The chapter consists of seven subchapters, each devoted to a specific aspect of discrimination requiring separate analysis. First-person material from the four in-depth case-study interviews is integrated throughout the relevant sections.

3.1. Perception of and attitudes towards discrimination

The first subchapter analyzes prevailing public and expert perceptions of discrimination, attitudes towards discrimination as a societal problem, and stereotypes and attitudes towards different social groups.

Summary Takeaways

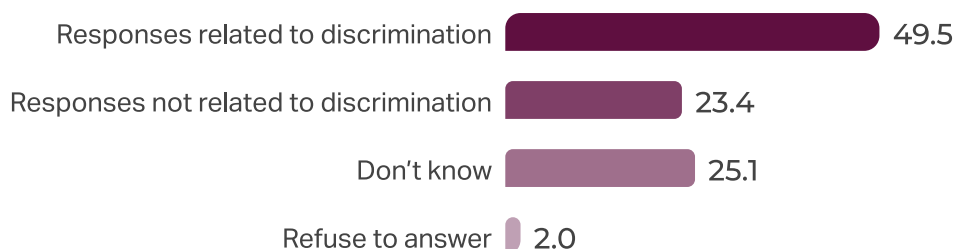
- Public understanding of the concept of discrimination remains limited. Fewer than half of Armenians are able to identify in relevant terms, and even when the concept is recognized, perceptions are largely superficial (in roughly 95% of cases). It is more often described in terms such as “difference” or “unequal treatment” than as a conduct prohibited by law.
- Discrimination is widely perceived as a societal problem. After respondents were familiarized with the concept, a clear majority assessed discrimination in Armenia as a serious or somewhat serious problem, and this share did not fall below roughly two thirds in any socio-demographic group.
- According to the public, discrimination in Armenia is perceived as most widespread against LGBTQ+ people (68.0%), people with mental disabilities (35.1%), and Armenians displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh, regardless of formal legal status (32.4%). Migrants, women, and people with physical disabilities were each perceived as at higher risk of discriminatory treatment by around 29% of respondents, while national minorities were mentioned least often (12.6%).
- Attitudinal data indicate that discriminatory views remain widespread toward several groups. High shares of respondents endorsed exclusionary or stigmatizing statements regarding LGBTQ+ people, migrants, refugees, and national minorities, while traditional gender-role expectations also remain strong. This suggests that discrimination is not only perceived as a problem, but is also reproduced through everyday norms and social attitudes.
- The survey indicates stronger support for inclusion-related responsibilities toward people with disabilities, particularly regarding accessibility and institutional adaptation.
- Perceptions of some groups are marked by ambivalence rather than simple acceptance or rejection. This is especially visible in attitudes toward Armenians displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh), who are seen by many respondents as needing priority support but are also associated with dependency and preferential treatment.
- Qualitative interviews complement the quantitative findings by showing that perceptions of discrimination are shaped largely by legal ignorance, deeply rooted stereotypes, and the social distinction between “us” and “others.” According to Key Informants (KIs), many discriminatory attitudes are normalized and not understood as infringement of rights but rather as traditional, ordinary, or socially acceptable behavior.

3.1.1 “Discrimination” as a concept

Before presenting respondents with a formal definition of discrimination, survey respondents were asked to describe in their own words what the concept meant to them. This approach was intended to assess their baseline understanding of discrimination and their ability to recognize its different manifestations in everyday life.

Perceptions and understandings are expressed through specific verbal descriptions and formulations. Examining this language helps assess the extent to which people can identify different behavioral phenomena as manifestations of discrimination when they encounter them. When asked to define the word “discrimination” in literal terms, 23.4% of respondents were unable to provide a clear answer. An analysis of the remaining responses shows that 49.5% referred to discrimination in relevant³⁸ terms (*see Figure 1*).

Figure 1. Frequency of relevant and irrelevant responses. (%)

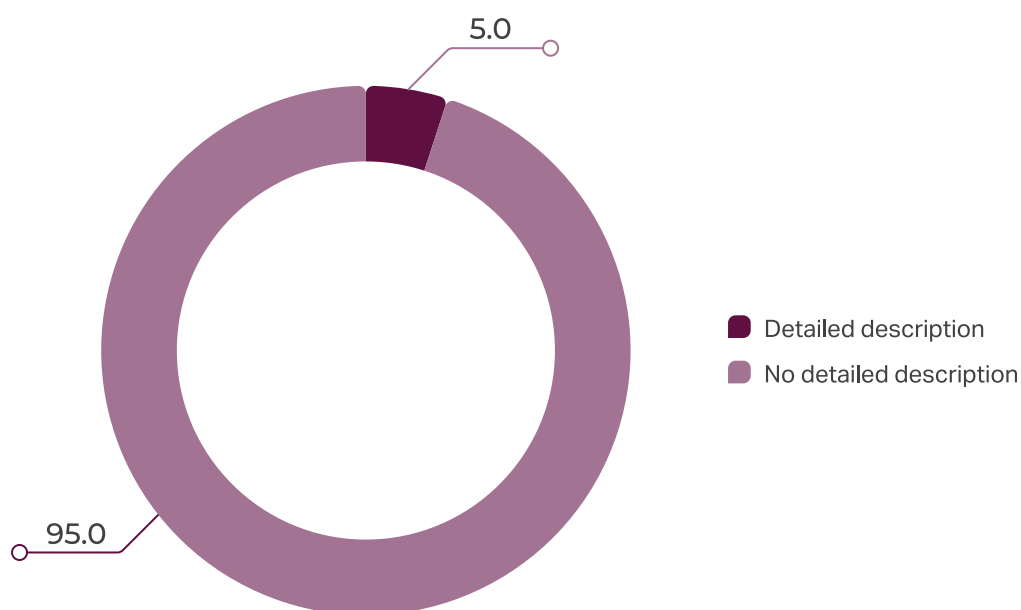


Note: This was an open-ended question, and responses were coded into categories that were either related or not related to discrimination. It should also be noted that, given the nature of the question (open-ended), the responses were not weighted (N = 2200). Therefore, any generalizations based on these responses should be made with caution, and statistically significant differences between response groups should not be assumed.

Among the responses categorized as relevant to discrimination, a more or less detailed description of the phenomenon appears in only 5.0% of cases. In the remaining 95.0%, respondents used various descriptors associated with the word “discrimination” (*see Figure 2*), such as “difference,” “privilege,” and “intolerance.” The most frequently mentioned descriptor was “difference” (79.8%). The five most commonly cited descriptors also included “inequality,” “separation,” “bias,” “placing one above another,” and “violation of rights.” Overall, these responses suggest that public understanding of discrimination is more often rooted in its social and experiential manifestations—such as perceived unequal treatment, exclusion, or difference—rather than in a more formal or legal understanding of discrimination as a prohibited practice.

38. By “relevant,” we mean when responses have either an associative or a connotative connection to the concept of discrimination. For example, words such as “difference,” “privilege,” “advantage,” and “bias” reflect an associative connection, while the phrase “violation of rights” reflects a connotative connection.

Figure 2. Frequency of detailed and non-detailed descriptions among responses relevant to discrimination: (%)



Note: This was an open-ended question, in which responses related to discrimination were coded into the categories “detailed” and “non-detailed” description. It should also be noted that, due to the nature of the question (open-ended), the responses were not weighted (n = 1100). Therefore, any generalizations based on these responses should be made with caution, and statistically significant differences between response groups should not be assumed.

Survey respondents identified certain characteristics of people they considered at risk of discrimination. It is important to mention that this question did not explicitly ask respondents to identify specific groups at risk of discrimination; rather, it sought to capture their understanding of the concept of discrimination. References to particular groups therefore emerged spontaneously in respondents’ answers. In 15.8% of the responses related to discrimination, respondents also identified groups they considered at risk of discrimination, including ethnicity, race, gender, and social status, amounting to roughly 13 distinct targets in total. Here, too, a degree of polarization in responses is evident: the three most frequently mentioned targets, i.e., nationality (42.1%), gender (24.6%), and race (10.9%), account for nearly 80% of all such responses. Fewer than 7% of respondents identified social status (6.5%), children (3.5%), language (3.5%), and similar characteristics with heightened risk of discrimination. It should be noted that, due to the nature of this question (open-ended), the responses were not weighted (n=228). Therefore, any generalizations based on these responses should be made with caution, and statistically significant differences between response categories should not be assumed.

Key Informant (KI) experts interviewed for this study attribute perceptions of discrimination in Armenia to legal gaps, entrenched stereotypes, and limited awareness of discrimination, not only among the general public but also among mid-level government officials and public servants:

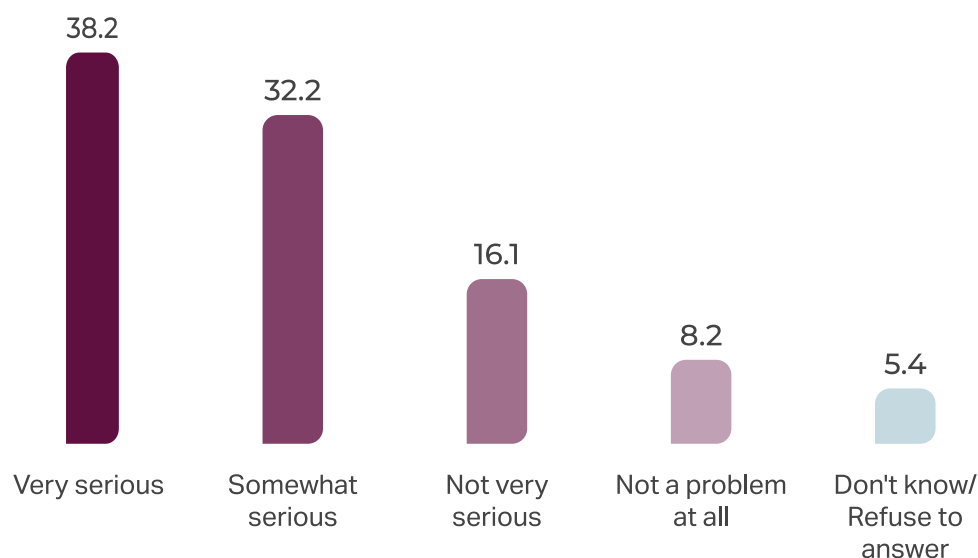
“The peculiarity of our country is that people very often simply do not recognize it as discrimination, and even if they do perceive it, they do not consider it some kind of legal offense or something problematic.”

Key Informant, legal sector

3.1.2 Discrimination Perceived as a Problem

Before proceeding to survey questions on perceptions, attitudes, and experiences, the interviewer introduced the survey respondents with a common definition of discrimination³⁹. When asked, “In your opinion, how serious of a problem is discrimination in Armenia?”, most Armenians perceived discrimination as a problem of at least some concern (70.4%). One quarter of the population (24.3%) did not consider discrimination to be a serious problem or did not see it as a problem at all (see Figure 3)⁴⁰.

Figure 3. In your opinion, how serious of a problem is discrimination in Armenia? (%)



Perceptions of the seriousness of discrimination vary across socio-demographic groups. For example, women were 9.3 percentage points more likely than men to view discrimination as a serious problem⁴¹. Respondents with lower socio-economic status were also more likely to consider discrimination a serious problem than those with medium or higher status (with differences ranging from 11 to 15 percentage points)⁴².

Beyond the differences between groups, one broader pattern stands out: in every group, at least 68% of respondents considered discrimination to be a serious problem. This suggests that discrimination is perceived as a widespread and significant social issue across different segments of Armenian society⁴³ (see Figure 4).

39. The interviewer would tell the respondents “Discrimination means treating people unfairly or excluding them because of their personal characteristics or group membership, this can be done directly by people or indirectly by (state) institutions. Discrimination can be direct, but also indirect through, for example, seemingly fair policies that have unintended negative impacts on specific groups. For example, when someone is denied a job or treated unfairly because of their gender, ethnicity, or disability.”

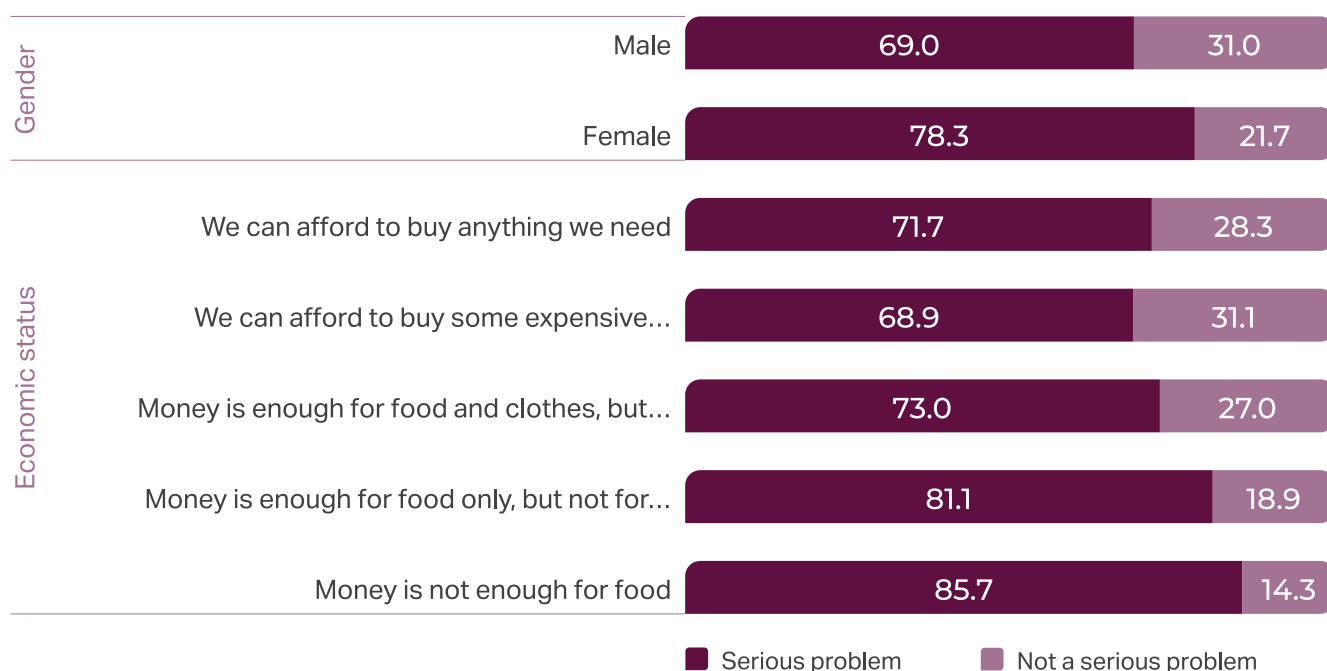
40. The numerical findings presented in this report are based on weighted data and are representative of the population of the Republic of Armenia aged 18 and over, allowing for generalization to the adult population of Armenia.

41. Survey-adjusted $\chi^2 = 6.53$, p-value < 0.001, post-hoc pairwise comparison: men were significantly more likely than women to view discrimination as a serious problem; survey-weighted logistic regression, $\Delta = 9.3$ percentage points, p < 0.001.

42. Survey-adjusted $\chi^2 = 1.88$, p-value = 0.010 post-hoc pairwise comparisons: low-income respondents were significantly more likely than both medium-income respondents and high-income respondents to view discrimination as a serious problem; survey-weighted logistic regression with estimated marginal means, OR = 1.87, Bonferroni-adjusted p < 0.001 for Low vs. Medium and p = 0.002 for Low vs. High.

43. The review of applications and complaints submitted to the Human Rights Defender of the Republic of Armenia shows that discriminatory attitudes and stereotypes are deeply rooted across society and cut across all social strata, including groups that are themselves responsible for responding to cases of violence. See [On the Activities of the Human Rights Defender, the State of Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms: Annual Report 2024](#).

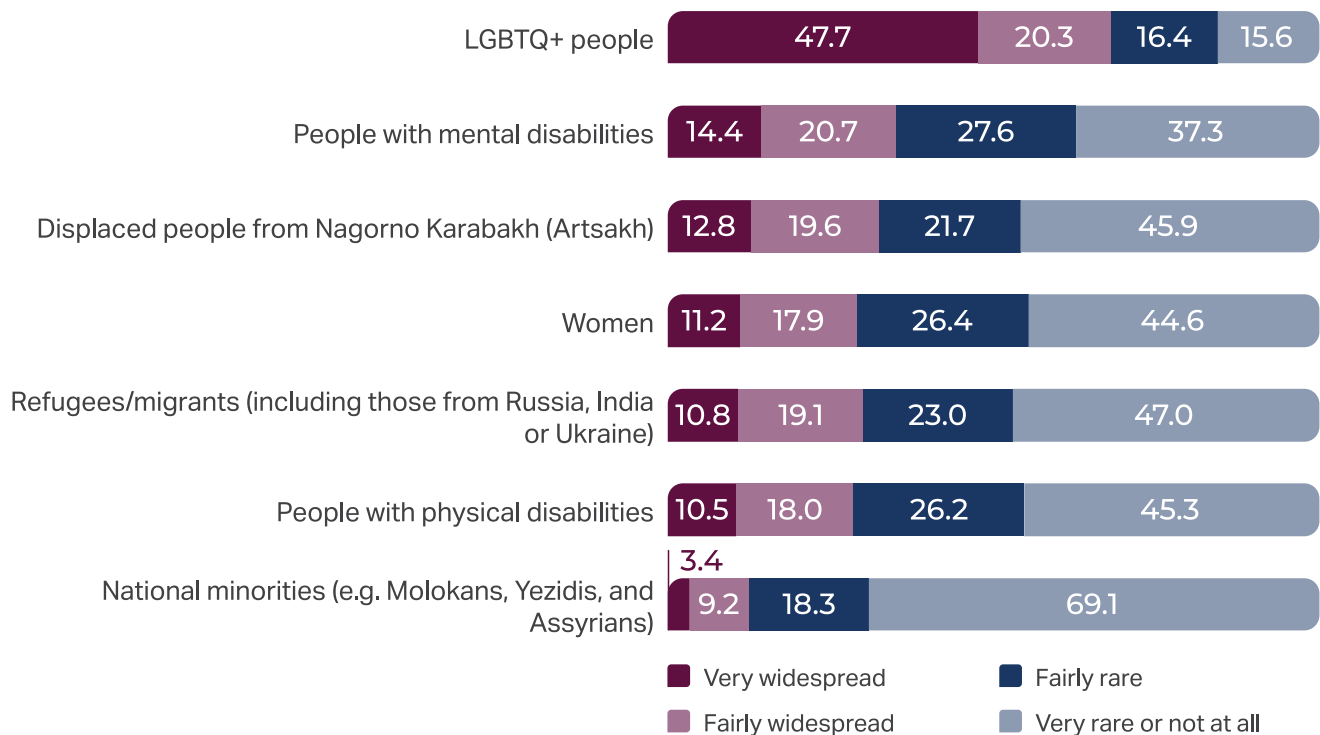
Figure 4. Responses to the question “How serious of a problem is discrimination in Armenia?” by socio-demographic characteristics (%)



Note: Response categories have been combined: “very serious” and “somewhat serious” are presented together, as are “not very serious” and “not a problem at all.”

Respondents were additionally asked to assess how widespread, in their own opinion, discrimination is in Armenia towards certain groups. Responses to the question, “In your opinion, how widespread is discrimination in Armenia towards the following social groups?” show that, in public perceptions, discrimination is most widespread against LGBTQ+ people (68.0%). The second most frequently identified target group is people with mental disabilities (35.1%), followed by Armenians displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh (32.4%). Perceived levels of discrimination against migrants, women, and people with physical disabilities are nearly identical, at around 29.0%. According to prevailing public perceptions, discrimination against national minorities is seen as the least widespread (12.6%) (see Figure 5).

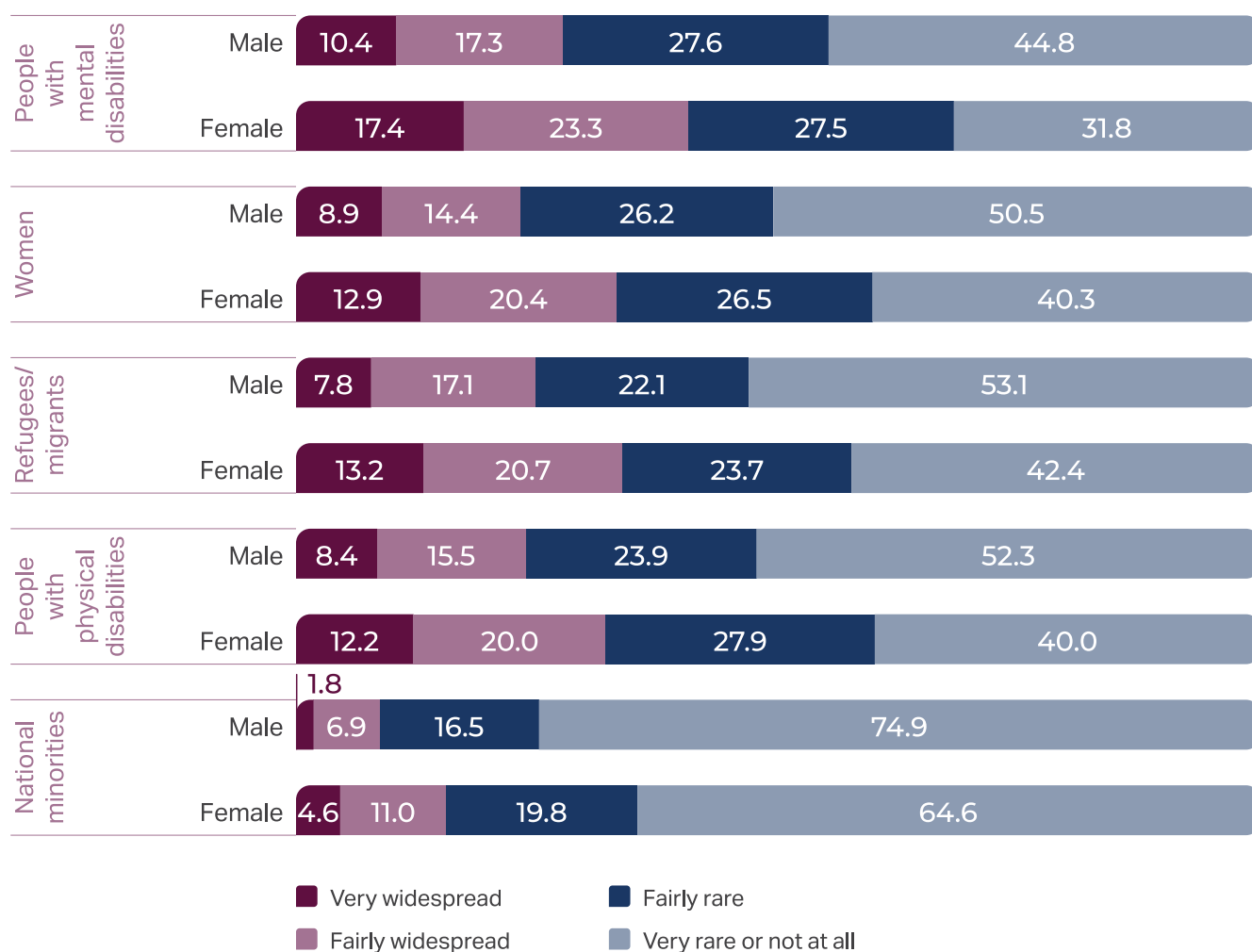
Figure 5. In your opinion, how widespread is discrimination in Armenia towards the following social groups? (%)



Gender-based differences are also visible in perceptions of how widespread discrimination is against different social groups. The differences are statistically significant for women, people with mental disabilities, people with physical disabilities, national minorities, and refugees/migrants. For perceptions of discrimination against women, the difference by gender is statistically significant⁴⁴. In these cases, female respondents tend to perceive discrimination as more widespread than male respondents. For example, discrimination against people with mental disabilities is perceived as fairly or very widespread by 40.7% of female respondents, compared with 27.7% of male respondents. A similar pattern is observed for people with physical disabilities, where 32.2% of women and 23.9% of men consider discrimination to be fairly or very widespread. For refugees/migrants, the respective figures are 33.9% among women and 24.9% among men. In the case of national minorities, perceived discrimination remains relatively low overall, but women are still more likely than men to assess it as widespread: 15.6% of women compared with 8.7% of men consider discrimination against national minorities to be fairly or very widespread (See Figure 6).

44. (chi-square = 7.538, $p < 0.001$). Significant gender differences are also observed for people with mental disabilities (chi-square = 12.578, $p < 0.001$), people with physical disabilities (chi-square = 8.487, $p < 0.001$), national minorities (chi-square = 7.832, $p < 0.001$), and refugees/migrants (chi-square = 7.596, $p < 0.001$).

Figure 6. Perceived prevalence of discrimination against the following social groups in Armenia, by gender (%)



3.1.3 Attitudes and social distancing towards certain groups

■ *We don't know why, but they definitely want to scold us in shops, saying, 'Why don't you change your language? You live in our country, so speak literary Armenian...' Or they label us as 'war refugees.' You feel hurt by the injustice, you get angry, especially if there are only servicemen in your family, and no one has run away or had any intention of running away. They accuse us for no reason... You get upset and angry, and you want them to be informed... you explain, some understand, some don't."*

IDI Interviewee, Woman, 44, Refugee from Nagorno-Karabakh

Respondents were also asked to react to a series of statements designed to capture how people perceive certain social groups. The results indicate that discriminatory attitudes are prevalent among the general population in Armenia. For example, 39.6% of respondents in Armenia agreed with the statement, "When jobs are scarce, men should have more rights to work than women," and 65.3% agreed with the statement, "Workplaces are justified in avoiding hiring LGBTQ+ people because it would make customers or colleagues uncomfortable" (see Figure 7). Additionally, 57.8%

of Armenians agree that “it is primarily a woman’s duty to take care of children and the household,” further indicating the persistence of traditional gender role expectations.

These findings are also consistent with KI interviewees, who noted that discrimination against women and LGBTQ+ people in Armenia is often perceived as socially acceptable or even normalized behavior.

“How often do managers ask about the future-when are you getting married, are you planning a child, how long will you be on leave? There is something subtle here, as if this is already so common, this discrimination is so familiar to all of us, that it has a component of normalization, unlike the more sensitive, subtle, and latent manifestations of discrimination that people cannot freely talk about because they have cultural restrictions.”

Key Informant, education sector

“... We are not ashamed to discriminate, for example, against women, men, LGBT people, because in a way, society even takes pride in it-that we are traditional people, this is how it should be.”

Key Informant, education sector

Respondents’ answers to the other statements are also noteworthy. For example, 36.8% agreed with the statement, “I would feel uncomfortable to sit next to someone who is HIV-positive in a restaurant,” and 54.6% agreed with the statement, “If I were to rent out my apartment, I would prefer not to rent it out to Indians” (see Figure 7).

Similarly, attitudes toward migrants and refugees reflect notable levels of exclusion, with 45.7% of Armenians agreeing that migrants and refugees “steal jobs from locals.” Notably, perceptions on displaced persons are mixed: 68.5% agree that people displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh should receive priority in employment, and 58.4% of Armenians agree that they prefer to rely on social welfare and special treatment (see Figure 7).

Perceptions of national minorities remain ambivalent. While some groups are viewed as integrated, 47.8% of the population agree that members of national minorities prioritize their own community’s development over Armenia’s economy, and 65.3% agree that such groups tend to prioritize their own traditions over obtaining higher education (see Figure 7).

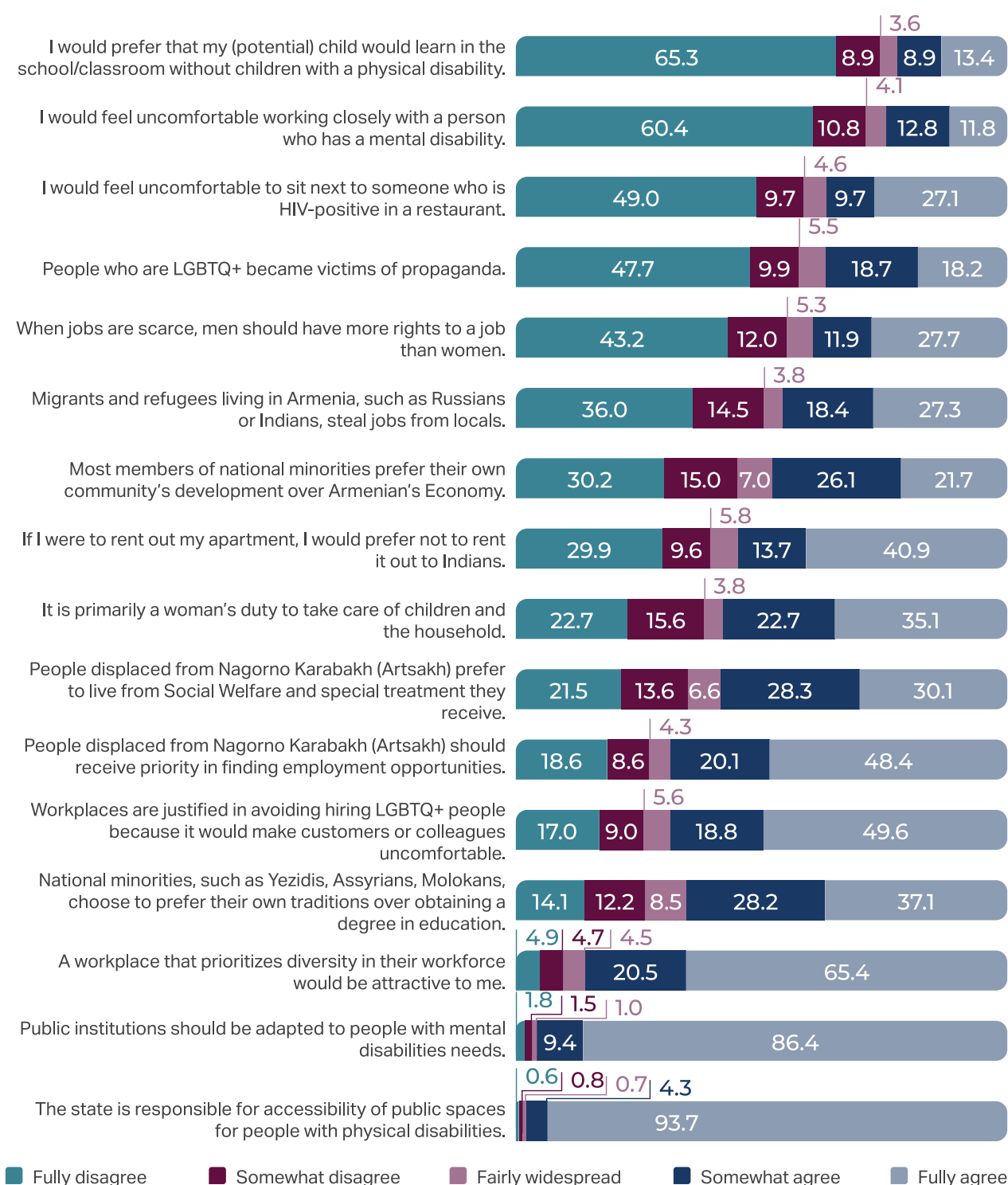
The qualitative interview data add to the interpretation of these findings, showing that discriminatory attitudes are strongly shaped by perceptions of “in-group” and “out-group” boundaries. In particular, ethnic groups that are more integrated into Armenian society and perceived as “like us” tend to be seen as less subject to discrimination, whereas discriminatory attitudes are more widespread toward groups perceived as “different” in terms of culture and appearance.

“... Yezidis have become very integrated into Armenian society while maintaining their identity, and we do not perceive them as a separate ethnic group, because they look just like us. Many Yezidis have surnames ending in -yan, their names are Armenian, they speak Armenian like us, they study Armenian at school. You identify with that person, so the likelihood of discrimination decreases. And Indians, who have a completely different culture, characteristics, and behavior, face a lot of discrimination.”

Key Informant, education sector

A relatively more tolerant attitude is observed toward people with physical or mental disabilities. While comparatively a smaller share of respondents (24.6%) agreed with the statement, “I would feel uncomfortable working closely with a person who has a mental disability”, 71.2% disagreed (see Figure 7). This relatively higher level of acceptance is also reflected in broader attitudes toward inclusion, as 93.7% of respondents fully agree that the state is responsible for ensuring accessibility of public spaces for people with physical disabilities, 86.4% fully agree that public institutions should be adapted to the needs of people with mental disabilities, and 85.9% indicate that workplaces prioritizing diversity would be attractive to them (see Figure 7).

Figure 7. Now I will read several statements, please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with them. (%)

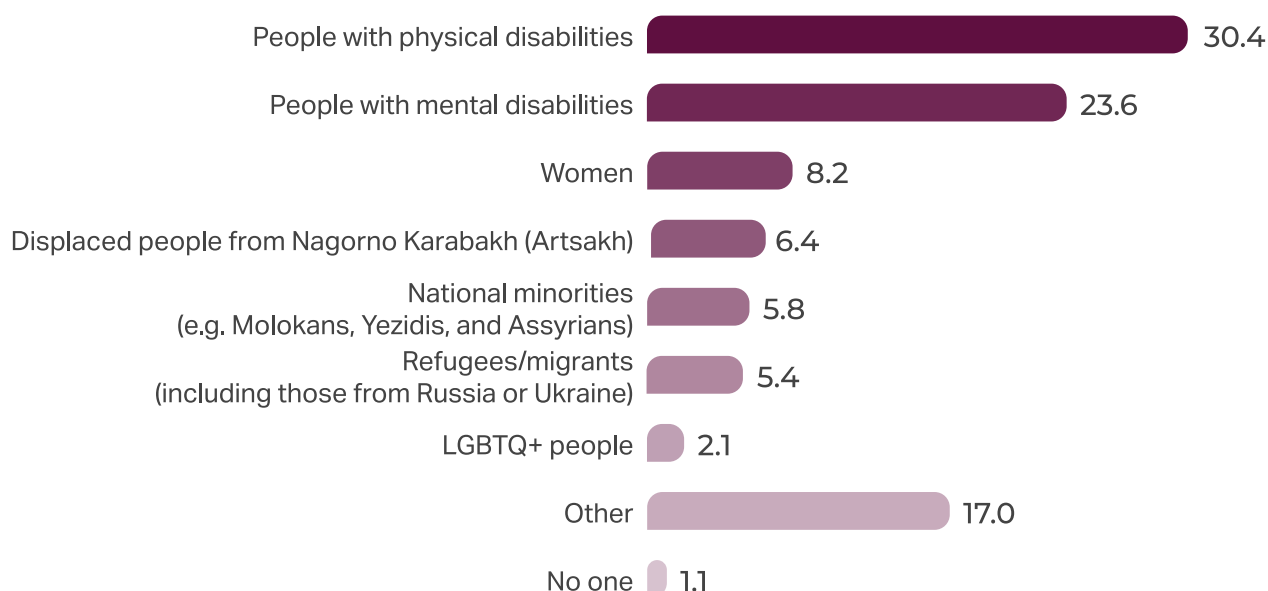


3.1.4 Groups in need of legal protection

The study also sought to identify which social groups Armenians consider to be most in need of legal protection. In response to the question, “The rights of which social groups do you think should be extra protected under this law?”, 30.4% of all responses identified people with physical disabilities, while 23.6% of all responses identified people with mental disabilities as groups whose rights should receive additional legal protection.

Women, Armenians displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh, national minorities, and refugees accounted for substantially smaller shares of all responses than persons with disabilities, with differences of approximately 20–25 percentage points (see Figure 8). Another noteworthy finding is that only 2.1% of responses identified LGBTQ+ people as a group in need of social protection.

Figure 8. Imagine that Armenia adopts a new law to combat discrimination. The rights of which social groups do you think should be extra protected under this law? (multiple choice) (%)



Note: In the “Other” category respondents mentioned a wide range of groups, often described in general or non-standardized terms (e.g., “ordinary people,” “weak people,” “children,” or “different groups”), which could not be consistently categorized into predefined analytical groups.

When asked which groups are most often discriminated against, respondents most frequently identified LGBTQ+ people, people with mental disabilities, Armenians displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh, women, and people with physical disabilities (see Figure 5). In a separate question on directly witnessed discrimination, the largest shares of responses referred to people living in poverty, followed by people with physical disabilities, migrants and refugees, and women (see Figure 10). In another question on groups requiring additional legal protection, the largest shares of responses referred to people with physical disabilities and people with mental disabilities, followed by women, Armenians displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh, national minorities, refugees/migrants, and LGBTQ+ people. As these questions use different formats and denominators, the results should be interpreted independently rather than compared directly.

One of the interviewed experts provided an insight into these differences of emphasis:



“In my opinion, disability is something socially accepted, a characteristic that society recognizes. In my opinion, if someone is from Artsakh and is disabled, it is less likely that they will be discriminated against, because there is a component of emotion, pity. But if someone is from Artsakh and is not disabled, there will be more discrimination against them, because there is no room for pity anymore.”

Key Informant, education sector

These findings indicate that public awareness of discrimination, direct exposure to discriminatory behavior and/or treatment, and support for rights protection are related but distinct dimensions. In particular, survey respondents’ support for extra legal protection appears to reflect not only perceived risk to discrimination, but also broader normative judgments about deservingness. Survey respondents may be more inclined to endorse special protection for groups they perceive as at risk through circumstances beyond their control, or for groups that evoke compassion and moral obligation. By contrast, groups that are widely recognized as targets of discrimination may still attract limited support for legal protection if they are viewed through stigmatizing moral frameworks or if protection is interpreted as granting special privileges rather than ensuring equal rights.

3.2. Witnessed discrimination

The second subchapter examines the extent to which people in Armenia have observed or heard about situations that they perceive as situations of discriminatory treatment, the groups that respondents most frequently observed as targets, the perceived reasons on which discrimination occurs, and the ways in which discriminatory behavior manifests in everyday life from the point of view of the respondents. As noted in the Introduction, findings reflect respondents’ subjective perceptions rather than legally assessed cases. A key thread running through the findings is the gap between general perceptions of discrimination and what people actually report observing, a gap that is likely to be shaped by limited recognition, social normalization, and uneven visibility of different groups at risk.

Summary takeaways

- 51.5% of survey respondents reported having seen or heard of someone being discriminated against. However, given that only around half of respondents described discrimination in relevant terms when asked to define it in their own words, the reported extent of witnessed discrimination may be an underestimate.
- Of all groups identified in reported cases of witnessed discrimination, people living in poverty accounted for the largest share (14.4%), followed by people with physical disabilities (13.4%) and people with mental disabilities (12.4%), indicating that these groups are the most visible in reported experiences of discrimination.
- LGBTQ+ people (68.0%), Armenians displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh (32.4%), and women (29.1%) were among the groups most frequently identified by respondents as facing discrimination in Armenian society. Separately, references to these groups accounted for a

relatively small share of all responses of witnessed discrimination cases. These findings suggest that the visibility of discrimination may vary across groups depending on factors such as social exposure, group visibility, and the extent to which certain discriminatory behaviors and forms of treatment are recognized and reported as discrimination.

- Among respondents who reported witnessing discrimination, social or economic status was cited as the primary reason for the most recently witnessed incident (17.7%), followed by mental or emotional disability (11.9%) and physical disability (9.5%). Other reasons, including refugee or migrant status, displacement, race, and ethnicity, were each mentioned by 7% or fewer of these respondents.
- Qualitative data reveal that discriminatory behavior or treatment is frequently not recognized as such, because it is embedded in cultural norms, transmitted across generations, and treated as ordinary or socially acceptable. The absence of a shared “cultural code” for identifying discrimination is a key barrier to recognition.
- Sensitivity to witnessed discrimination shows notable differences by age and income. Older respondents (60+) and those with the lowest incomes were most likely to report witnessing discriminatory treatment against people living in poverty, while younger and higher-income respondents were least likely, suggesting that proximity to vulnerability shapes recognition.
- Institutional recognition, in the sense of identifying and naming unequal treatment, remains limited. Many discriminatory practices are inconsistently named, assessed, or addressed by relevant actors; a theme examined further in Chapter 3.7.

3.2.1 Encountering discrimination

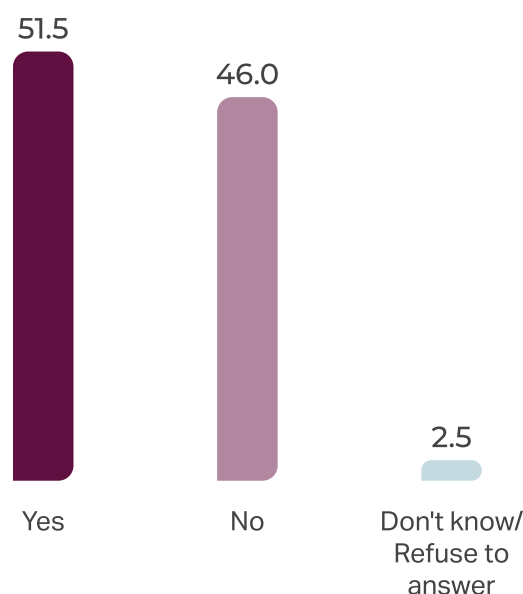


“We have a girl champion in sports, and we are proud, right? We celebrate her achievements. But in that same gym, where most of the athletes are boys, people still ask themselves: “How will it be for our daughter to train and practice with all those boys?” That, too, is a matter of mentality.”

IDI Interviewee, man, 36, no reported personal experience of discrimination

In response to the question “Have you ever seen or heard of anyone being discriminated against?” 51.5% answered yes (*see Figure 9*). As a reminder, in the earlier open-ended question on perceptions, only 50.5% of responses were coded as discrimination-relevant. The similarity between these two proportions may indicate that roughly half of the population is able to identify at least some manifestations of discrimination. However, this estimate should be interpreted cautiously. Since recognition depends on awareness and understanding of discrimination, the Figure may underestimate actual exposure. Importantly, because respondents were familiarized with the concept during the survey, the result should not be interpreted as a pure measure of spontaneous baseline awareness.

Figure 9. Have you ever seen or heard of anyone being discriminated against? (%)



The qualitative interviews revealed that difficulties in identifying discrimination stem from the fact that discriminatory behavior is often not perceived as such. In many cases, it is not typified as condemnable behavior within the “social stock of knowledge⁴⁵,” and citizens may lack the relevant “cultural code”⁴⁶ needed to recognize it as discrimination.

“People often engage in discrimination unconsciously because they do not even realize it is discrimination. Their grandparents, parents, and other family members behaved this way, and it is repeated through the culture.”

Key Informant, education sector

3.2.2 Groups at heightened risk of discrimination

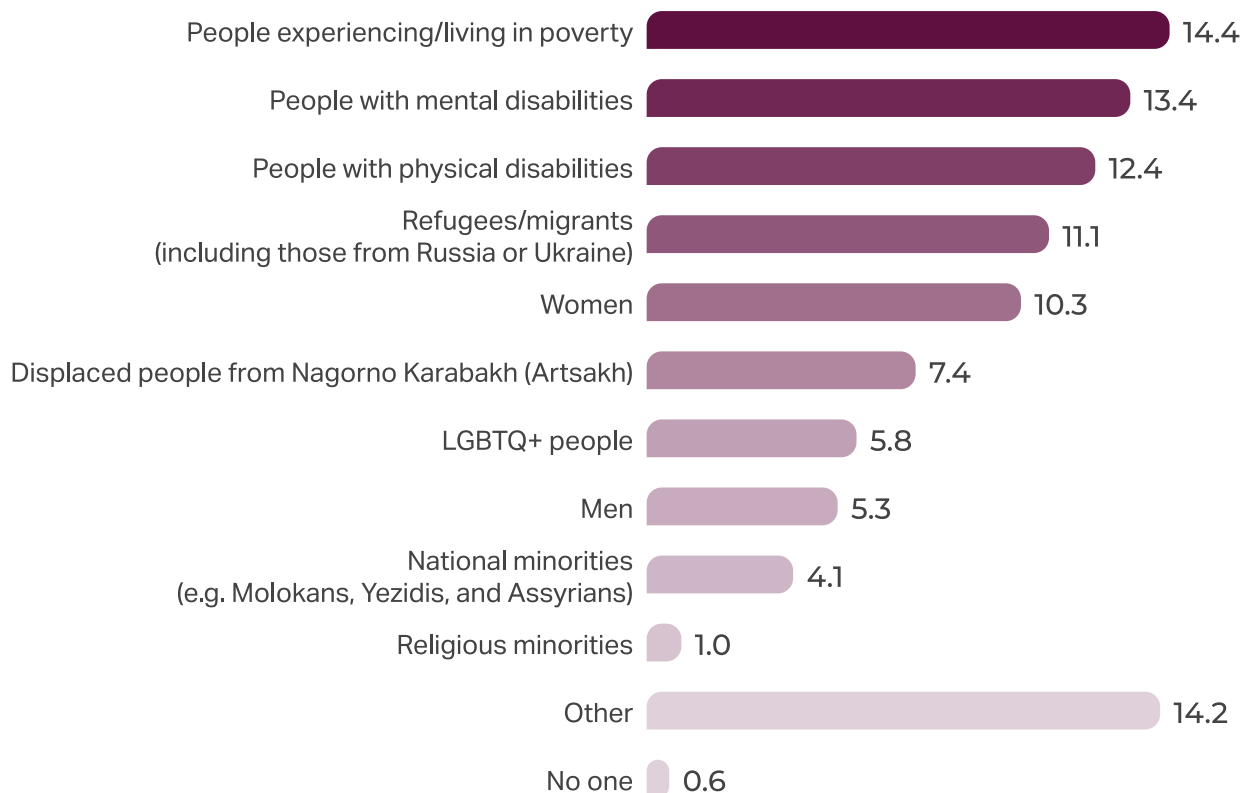
In contrast to the general perceptions presented in the previous subchapter, which tend to yield relatively high estimates of discrimination across multiple social groups, data on witnessed discriminatory behavior reveal a somewhat different distribution. Responses to the question, “Which groups have you seen being discriminated against?” indicate that generalized perceptions of discrimination do not always correspond to what respondents observe and interpret as discrimination in everyday life.

More specifically, among all groups identified in reported cases of witnessed discrimination, people living in poverty accounted for the largest share of responses (14.4%), followed by people with mental disabilities (13.4%), people with physical disabilities (12.4%), refugees/migrants (11.1%) and women (10.3%). This suggests that these groups feature most prominently in respondents’ accounts of observed discrimination (see Figure 10).

45. See For the concept of the cultural code, see Bourdieu, P., *Distinction* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1994).

46. See For the concept of the social stock of knowledge, see Berger, P. and Luckmann, T., [The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge](#).

Figure 10. Which groups have you seen being discriminated against? (multiple choice) (%)



Note: This question was asked to those who had ever seen or heard someone else being treated discriminatorily. The relatively high share of “Other” responses reflects the open-ended nature of the question. Respondents mentioned a wide range of groups, often described in general or non-standardized terms (e.g., “ordinary people,” “weak people,” “children,” or “different groups”), which could not be consistently categorized into predefined analytical groups.

Key informants broadly reinforced the prominence of disability-related risks to discrimination in Armenia, while also drawing attention to groups that may be less visible in survey-based public rankings. In particular, they referred to women, children, older persons, and socially disadvantaged people as recurring targets of discrimination in institutional and everyday settings.

When discussing the targets of discrimination, key actors also referred - though not in the same level of detail as for the groups discussed above - to a number of other groups: young people, national and religious minorities, Armenians displaced from NK, migrants and refugees, LGBTQ+ people, and men.

“It is more understandable and acceptable for people that a person is disabled and should not be discriminated against than it is for them to understand that someone is bisexual and should not be discriminated against.”

Key Informant, education section

“... I saw an interesting advertisement where harvesters were needed, and I said, ‘This is a great opportunity for me.’ I called, and they told me, ‘If you are from Artsakh, we will not accept you,’ and they did not explain why.”

Key Informant, civil society sector

Because discrimination against people living in poverty accounted for the highest share of responses among all groups, an additional analysis was conducted to identify which socio-demographic groups were more likely to report witnessing such discrimination. The indirect aim of this approach is to examine, through a specific example, how able and sensitive people are to notice and identify discrimination against a given at-risk group across different social characteristics.

As shown in Figure 11, statistically significant differences were observed by age. Respondents aged 18–29 were the least likely to report witnessing discrimination against people living in poverty (7.3%), and this difference was statistically significant compared with each of the older age groups. Reported witnessing was highest among respondents aged 60 and above (37.8%)⁴⁷.

Figure 11. Share of respondents who report that they have witnessed discriminatory treatment against people living in poverty, by socio-demographic characteristics (%)



Findings from the case studies, as well as a review of open-source reports of discriminatory incidents and public reactions to them, suggest that discriminatory content and narratives circulate widely through online and other information platforms, often reaching individuals who may have limited direct exposure to such incidents in their everyday lives. Taken together, these findings suggest that public perceptions of discrimination may be shaped not only by personal observations and experiences but also by information circulating online and through other information platforms. At the same time, the findings indicate that many manifestations of discrimination are not consistently recognized or interpreted as such, particularly in the context of everyday interactions and socially “acceptable” behavior.

At the same time, the identification of groups with heightened risk of discrimination does not necessarily translate into effective institutional recognition or response. Qualitative interviews suggest that many discriminatory practices remain weakly named, inconsistently assessed, or insufficiently addressed by relevant actors. Chapter 3.7 therefore examines how discrimination is perceived and handled by institutions operating in this field.

“And I can say that, in the case of people with disabilities in the family, discrimination is manifested against elderly people with disabilities, but very often families do not consider this to be discrimination. For example, an elderly person has certain health problems, and they do not follow up on them, do not take them for medical examinations, and they think that this is normal. Very often, if there is no obvious deterioration, they do not monitor the condition of their elderly family members.”

Key Informant, public sector

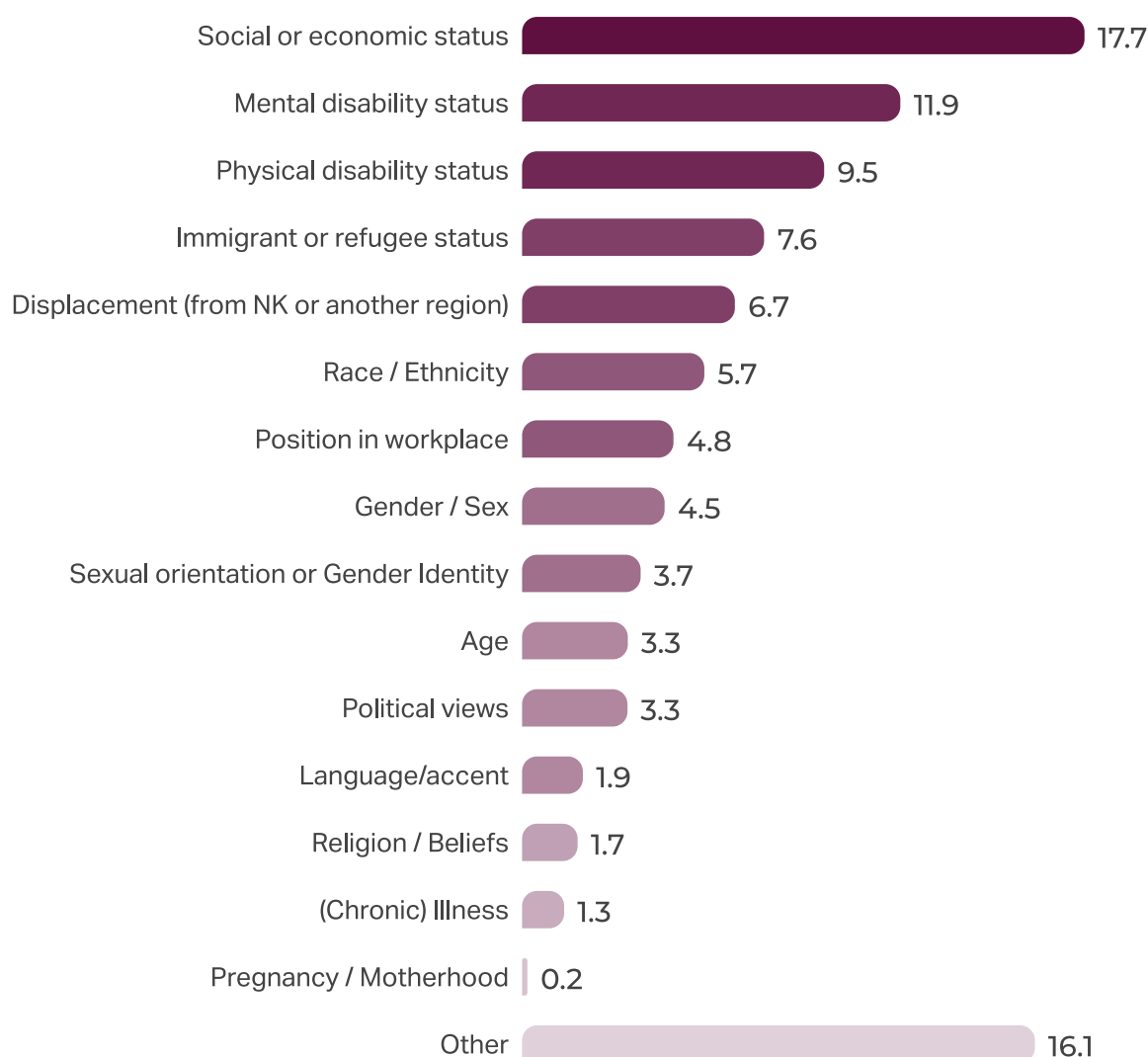
47. Survey-adjusted $\chi^2 = 9.76$, p-value < 0.001, post-hoc pairwise comparison: survey-weighted logistic regression with EMMS, $\Delta = 30.5$, ODDs = 0.2 percentage points, p < 0.001

3.2.3 Causes of witnessed discrimination

The next question on the causes of discrimination asked respondents about the main reason behind the most recent incident of discrimination they had seen or heard about. Among respondents who reported witnessing or hearing about discrimination, 17.7% of all responses identified social or economic status as the reason for discrimination, 11.9% identified mental or emotional disability, and 9.5% identified physical disability.

Other reasons—such as being a refugee or migrant, displacement, race, ethnicity, and others—were mentioned much less frequently, each accounting for 7% or less of responses (see Figure 12). These results show the distribution of reasons cited in the most recent discrimination incident that respondents witnessed or heard about. They do not measure the actual risk of discrimination faced by each group. A lower percentage may reflect the smaller size of a group in the population or the lower visibility of discrimination affecting that group, rather than a lower level of discrimination in reality.

Figure 12. What do you believe was the MAIN reason for the most recent incident of discrimination you have seen or heard? (%)



Note: The questions were asked only those who have ever seen or heard someone else being treated discriminatorily. “Other” responses capture a wide range of highly specific, situational, and individualized explanations (e.g., personal behavior, appearance, interpersonal conflicts, or workplace dynamics), which could not be meaningfully grouped into predefined categories.

3.3. Personal experiences of discrimination

The third subchapter examines personal experiences of discrimination in Armenia, drawing on both quantitative survey data and qualitative interviews with key informants. It explores who reports experiencing discrimination, on what basis, and through what forms. The subchapter further investigates the underlying causes of the reported discriminatory behavior, from entrenched stereotypes and cultural norms to low legal awareness and weak institutional responses. The findings are based on respondents' subjective experiences and therefore reflect respondents' own experiences of discrimination. A central analytical thread is the relationship between different ways of knowing about discrimination: what people perceive in general, what they witness as situations of discriminatory treatment, what they personally experience, and which groups respondents believe should receive the most additional legal protection. The subchapter closes with an intersectional analysis, examining how intersecting factors, such as gender combined with disability, age, poverty, or displacement, can intensify the risk of discriminatory treatment in ways that are often poorly recognized both socially and institutionally.

Summary Takeaways

- 16.5% of the population reported at least one personal experience of discrimination in the past five years. Within the socio-economic categories, the highest reported rates were found among respondents whose household income was not enough for food (28.3%) and among those whose income was enough for food but not for clothes (24.0%). Across age and settlement categories, discrimination was reported in all groups but was most common among respondents aged 45–59 and among urban residents.
- The most frequently cited reasons for personally experienced discrimination were socio-economic status (21.5%), position at work (17.0%), and age (10.4%). Other reasons, including gender, political views, displacement from Nagorno-Karabakh, physical disability, language, and ethnicity, were mentioned by 7% or fewer respondents, though a lower frequency does not imply lower within-group rates of discrimination.
- Among all reported discriminatory behaviors, 24.8% of responses referred to exclusion or neglect, 19.3% to discriminatory comments, and 18.8% to non-verbal expressions such as body language and facial expressions. Violence and threats accounted for only 4.0% of responses; however, key informants considered such incidents to be substantially underreported, particularly in relation to women and LGBTQ+ people, due to stigma, fear, and distrust in institutions.
- Qualitative data identify deeply rooted stereotypes, prevailing cultural norms, and low legal awareness as the primary drivers of behavior that may result in discrimination. Discriminatory behavior is frequently normalized, treated as tradition, culture, or simply ordinary conduct, making it difficult to name, challenge, or address.
- Fear of social alienation, dependence on employers or authority figures, and responsibility toward family members, especially children, act as significant barriers to speaking out about discrimination. The absence of comprehensive legislation and consistent enforcement mechanisms contributes to underreporting.
- The findings suggest that perceptions of the prevalence of discrimination and views on which groups should receive additional legal protection do not always coincide. While some groups

are widely recognized as being affected by discrimination, this recognition does not necessarily translate into greater public support for additional legal protection under a potential anti-discrimination law. LGBTQ+ people provide a notable example of this pattern: they were the group most frequently identified as being subjected to discrimination in the survey measuring perceptions of discrimination prevalence, while receiving the lowest level of support among the listed groups in the question on additional legal protection.

- Taken together, the findings on perceived vulnerability to discrimination, reported observations of discrimination, and support for additional legal protection reveal distinct patterns across the three dimensions. LGBTQ+ people emerged most prominently in respondents' perceptions of groups facing discrimination, people living in poverty featured most prominently in reports of groups respondents had witnessed being discriminated against, and people with physical disabilities featured most prominently in responses regarding groups whose rights should receive additional legal protection. Considered together, these findings suggest that perceptions of discrimination, observations of discriminatory experiences, and support for legal protection do not necessarily align and may reflect different considerations among respondents.
- Intersectional vulnerability⁴⁸ amplifies exposure to discriminatory treatment. Key informants consistently described how overlapping characteristics, such as being a woman with a disability, an older person with a disability, a displaced woman from Nagorno-Karabakh, or a Yezidi girl, create compounded forms of harm that are often less visible and less recognized, both socially and institutionally. Importantly, multiple characteristics do not always operate in a simple additive way: in some cases, one characteristic (such as disability) may partially alter how another (such as displacement) is perceived, sometimes softening hostility while still leaving the person exposed to discrimination for other reasons.

3.3.1 Personal experiences of discrimination



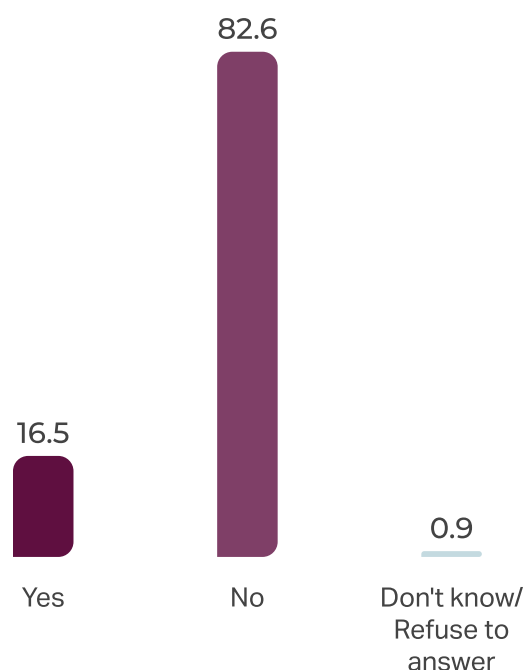
“Because I am a short person, I have been rejected when I applied for a job - not rejected exactly, but simply not answered. Job ads often say they are looking for a person with a good appearance. From that, you already understand discrimination exists. I cannot say for sure in my case, but I sent a CV and did not get a response. I did not complain, because I was not sure whether discrimination had actually taken place”.

IDI Interviewee, woman, college student, Assyrian background

Particularly important is the analysis of data on personal experiences of discrimination. 16.5% of the population reported at least one personal experience of discrimination in the past five years (see Figure 13). However, information from the expert interviews and one case study indicates that there is a risk of underestimating the share of people having experienced discrimination. This may also be linked to the finding that only around half of the population is able to correctly describe and identify discrimination, suggesting that some individuals may not recognize discriminatory experiences as such. Additionally, the sample is the general population and minority groups at risk of being discriminated against are likely underrepresented in the sample.

48. “Intersectional vulnerability” refers to the overlapping and interacting effects of multiple factors: such as gender, disability, displacement, and ethnicity, that together shape individuals’ experiences and may compound their exposure to discrimination.

Figure 13. In the past five years, have you personally felt discriminated against? (%)



Experiences of discrimination were more frequently reported among economically disadvantaged respondents. In particular, respondents whose income is not sufficient even for food (28.3%) and those whose income is sufficient only for food (24.0%) reported discrimination more often than those who can afford anything they need (8.4%)⁴⁹.

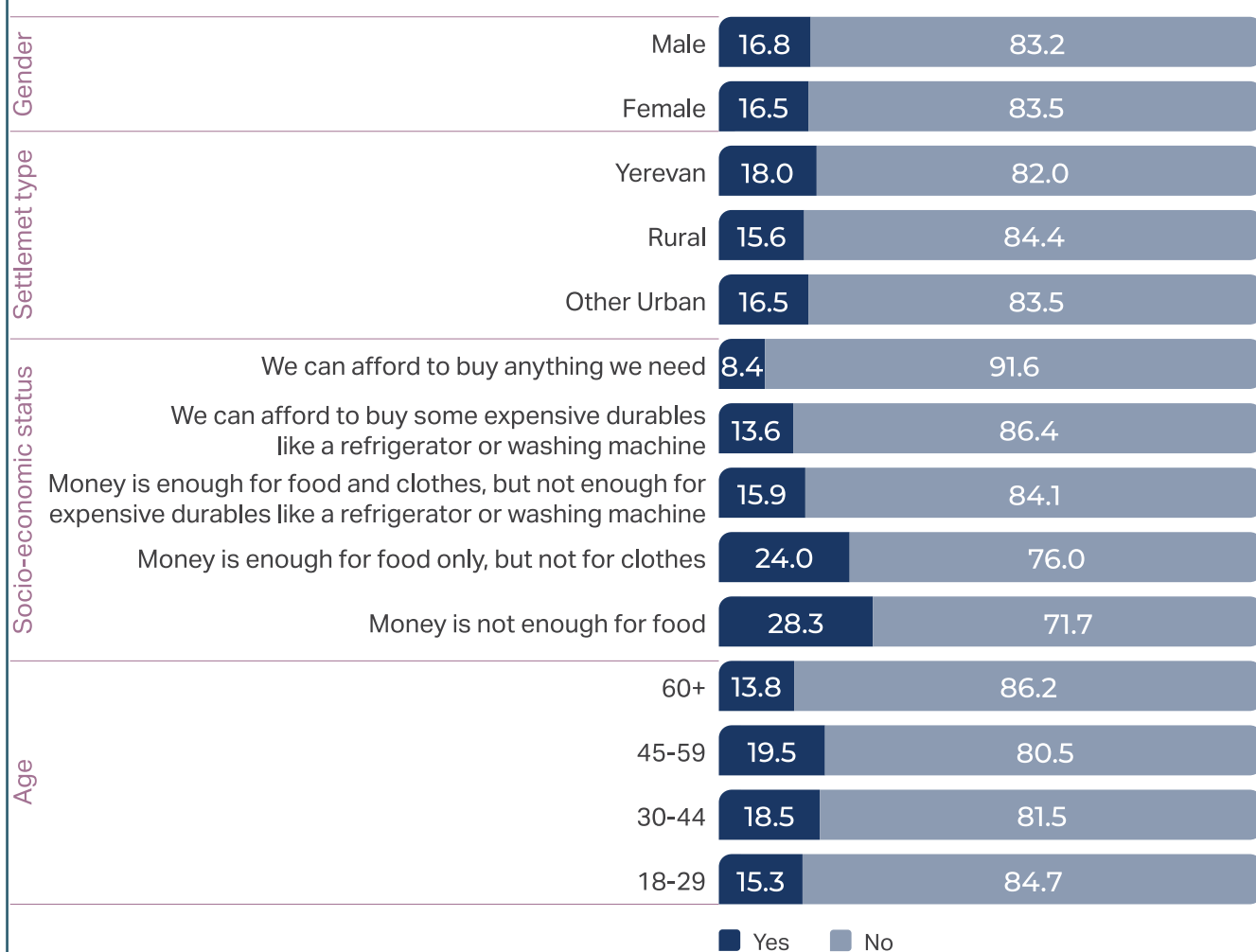
An examination of the socio-demographic data shows that the problem is widespread across all groups and social strata, although with varying intensity within socio-demographic groups. Since these differences are not statistically significant, they should be interpreted as descriptive patterns rather than evidence of systematic differences between groups. Respondents who reported experiencing discrimination in the past five years are somewhat more concentrated among middle-aged groups, particularly those aged 45–59 (19.5%) and 30–44 (18.5%). In terms of employment status, high rates are observed among the unemployed seeking work (22.3%) and people who are disabled and unable to work⁵⁰ (24.6%). While differences by gender (male: 16.8%, female: 16.5%) and settlement type (Yerevan: 18.0%, urban: 16.5%, rural: 15.6%) remain relatively modest (see Figure 14)⁵¹.

49. survey-weighted logistic regression with EMMs. P-value < 0.01

50. Note that “disabled and unable to work” is a self-reported employment status, which differs from the Washington Group Short Set disability classification discussed in Chapter 2 and in the Figure note below.

51. It is important to note that, due to the sensitivity of the topic, the survey did not include self-identification questions on characteristics such as sexual orientation or mental health status. Consequently, the analysis does not capture the experiences of LGBTQ+ individuals or persons with mental health conditions as distinct groups, and their exposure to discrimination may be underrepresented.

Figure 14. Personal experience of discrimination in the past five years, by socio-demographic group (yes/no). (%)



As these survey findings are strongly echoed in the qualitative material, it is also important to examine key informants' views on the targets of discrimination⁵². KIs repeatedly emphasized that people with disabilities face discrimination across multiple domains of public life, especially in education, care, employment, and access to services. However, it should be noted that the KIs cited in this section include representatives of non-governmental organizations and service providers who work directly with groups at risk. Accordingly, their views relate primarily to the groups within their professional focus and those receiving support from their organizations.



"In terms of discrimination, it is more visible in healthcare toward the elderly. When they see that they are elderly, they think, well, what kind of help is this, and they send them home."

Key Informant, civil society sector

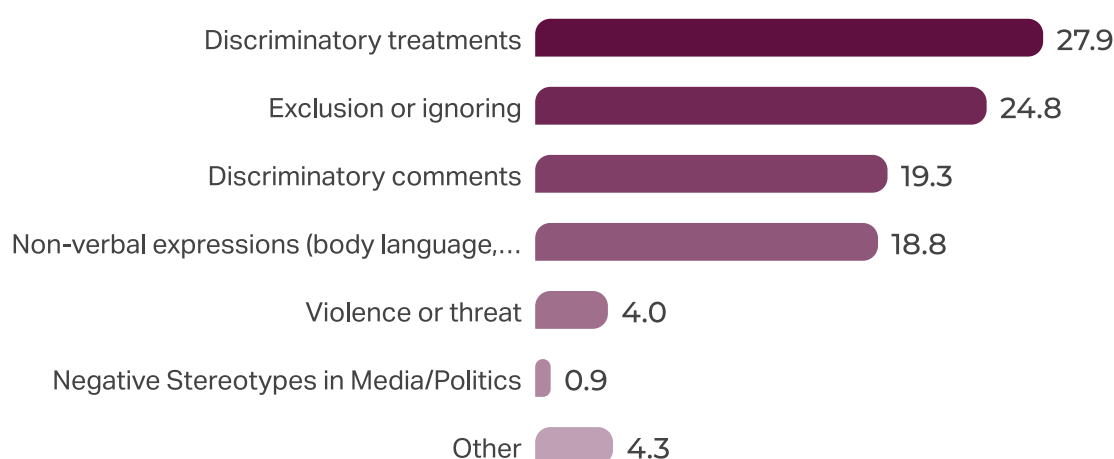


"The same is true for children, for women. For example, women in various settings, both in society and in the workplace, are discriminated against simply because they are women."

52. It should be noted that the KIs cited in this section include representatives of non-governmental organizations and service providers who work directly with groups at risk. Accordingly, their views relate primarily to the groups within their professional focus and those receiving support from their organizations.

Of the responses to the question, “Through which way(s) has this treatment manifested?” 27.9% of the selected options were general in nature, referring simply to “discriminatory treatments.” However, the next three most frequently cited responses referred to specific manifestations of discrimination: “exclusion or ignoring” (24.8%), “discriminatory comments” (19.3%), and “non-verbal expressions (body language, facial expressions)” (18.8%). Other manifestations were mentioned less frequently, including “violence and threat” (4.0%) and “negative stereotypes in media/politics” (0.9%) (see Figure 15).

Figure 15. Through which way(s) have this treatment manifested? (multiple choice) (%)



Note: This question was asked to those who reported experiencing discriminatory treatment in the past five years.

Accounts from KI interviewees confirmed the presence of the above-mentioned manifestations of discrimination in Armenian society, while also drawing attention to important nuances in how exclusion, neglect, and labeling operate. In particular, neglect or exclusion is visible not only in the lack of basic accessibility infrastructure in many public spaces (for example ramps, elevators, and parking spaces for persons with disabilities), but also in practices that restrict people’s ability to express themselves, question their reproductive rights, limit their employment opportunities, or deny them certain services⁵³.

“Let’s take the university theater: we had a beneficiary who really wanted to enroll in theater. He uses a wheelchair, and there are no facilities at all in the theater. Similarly, even if they carry him up to the first floor, it doesn’t matter - the rest of the floors are all stairs. Second, let me give another example, not [motor limitation], but deaf youth, where there is no translation, no translators, and it is very difficult for them to learn, because those conditions are not created for them. There is no translator who would make it more effective. And, of course, in the case of blind people, reading is difficult if the materials are photocopies and old versions.”

Key Informant, civil society sector

53. Examples of neglect and exclusion are also numerous among other groups at risk of discrimination, including women, refugees, people living in difficult socio-economic conditions, and LGBTQ+ persons. As these groups are discussed separately in the subchapter “Target Groups of Discrimination,” the specific manifestations of discrimination affecting them will be examined there. In this section, we focus primarily on the forms through which discrimination is manifested.

“...Not to mention people with mental disabilities, who are very discriminated against in the healthcare system, especially in the reproductive health system.”

Key Informant, legal sector

As shown in Figure 15, the third most common form of discriminatory behavior is discriminatory comments. Key informants note that these include labels and stigmatizing terms, as well as accusatory and reprimanding expressions directed at particular groups and their members (e.g., “urod,” “stupid woman,” “gomik,” “stupid old (wo)man,” “Turk,” “milk-eating puppy,” “ch’n’t’rlo,” “lakot of a privileged,” “dmpn,” “skeleton,” etc.)⁵⁴. In discussing this phenomenon, key informants particularly emphasized its widespread presence on social media and in state institutions.

“You must have heard, again, that officials or people holding various public positions and engaged in political activity constantly use discriminatory, stigmatizing formulations in their speeches, when they want to discredit someone’s work, belittle someone’s work, etc. “Crazy”, “mentally ill”, “psychotic”, “mentally retarded”, right? They are already discriminating against these people through these different terms.”

Key Informant, civil society sector

In discussing non-verbal discrimination, KI interviewees referred to attitudes expressed without words or labels, such as contemptuous behavior, looking at someone from a position of superiority, displaying disgust, or even showing pity (see Figure 15). In some cases, these forms of discriminatory behavior may also overlap with practices of neglect and exclusion.

“Starting with where they sit: for example, those children (socially disadvantaged children in educational institutions), yes, they may be seated at the very end, ending with the opportunity to participate in certain events, the attitude of teachers, and the same bullying, which is somewhat more tolerated-and this happens precisely toward children from families with a more socially disadvantaged way of life.”

Key Informant, legal sector

As shown in Figure 15, violence and threats were mentioned in 4.0% of all selected responses as manifestations of discrimination in Armenia. Although violence and threats were mentioned relatively infrequently in the survey, key informants strongly suggested that such manifestations are underreported. According to their accounts, violence rooted in discrimination is especially salient in relation to women and LGBTQ+ people, while fear, stigma, distrust in institutions, and dependence on family or community often discourage reporting⁵⁵.

54. For some of the labels listed in parentheses, it is difficult to provide precise English equivalents. Therefore, brief explanations of the more difficult-to-translate terms, including their meanings and typical targets, are as follows. “Urod” is used toward people with physical disabilities, roughly conveying an insulting meaning such as “idiot/stupid/freak.” “Gomik” (roughly equivalent to “homo”) is a derogatory term used for members of the LGBT community; a pejorative form related to “homosexual.” “Milk-eating puppy” is used toward minor children to emphasize perceived immaturity; it can also be rendered as “a child still drinking breast milk.” “Ch’n’t’rlo” is used for people of low social status or those perceived as behaving frivolously, mainly women, likely to be a modified form of the Armenian word “շւթռել”, meaning to sit or lie down in an indecent manner. “Puppy of a privileged [person]” is used for children of arrogant or ostentatiously wealthy people. In Armenian, the word “lakot” refers to the young of animals; depending on context, it may also be used in everyday speech to convey either affection or insult toward a person’s child. “Dmpn” is used as an insult toward overweight men or women.

55. According to the results of a 2021 survey conducted by the National Statistical Committee among approximately 2,900 women, 14.8% of women aged 15–59 have experienced physical violence, 6.65% sexual violence, and 31.8% psychological violence. See [Domestic Violence Against Women Survey: Analytical Report](#) (2021), p. 50.

Another report on the state of LGBTQ+ rights in Armenia states that the total number of recorded violations against LGBTQ+ people is 65, of which 38 are cases of domestic violence, including 5 cases of physical violence, 2 cases of sexual violence, and 3 cases of psychological abuse. See [Annual Report: The Human Rights Situation of LGBTQ+ Persons in Armenia in 2024](#), Pink Human Rights NGO.

 ***“... If we take the manifestation of violence again, in the case of both domestic violence and sexual and any other type of violence, there is mainly a discriminatory approach, and the woman is always to blame.”***

Key Informant, public sector

Based on key informants' accounts, it can be assumed that the actual number of cases involving violence and threats is higher, but many incidents remain unreported due to stigmatization, fear, alienation from the community, and, potentially, distrust in the relevant authorities.

 ***“For example, there are those who are discriminated against, but they are somewhat afraid [to speak up] because they don't know what will happen next. Maybe the discrimination will increase, or, for example, they will face certain problems.”***

Key Informant, public sector

3.3.2 Causes of discrimination

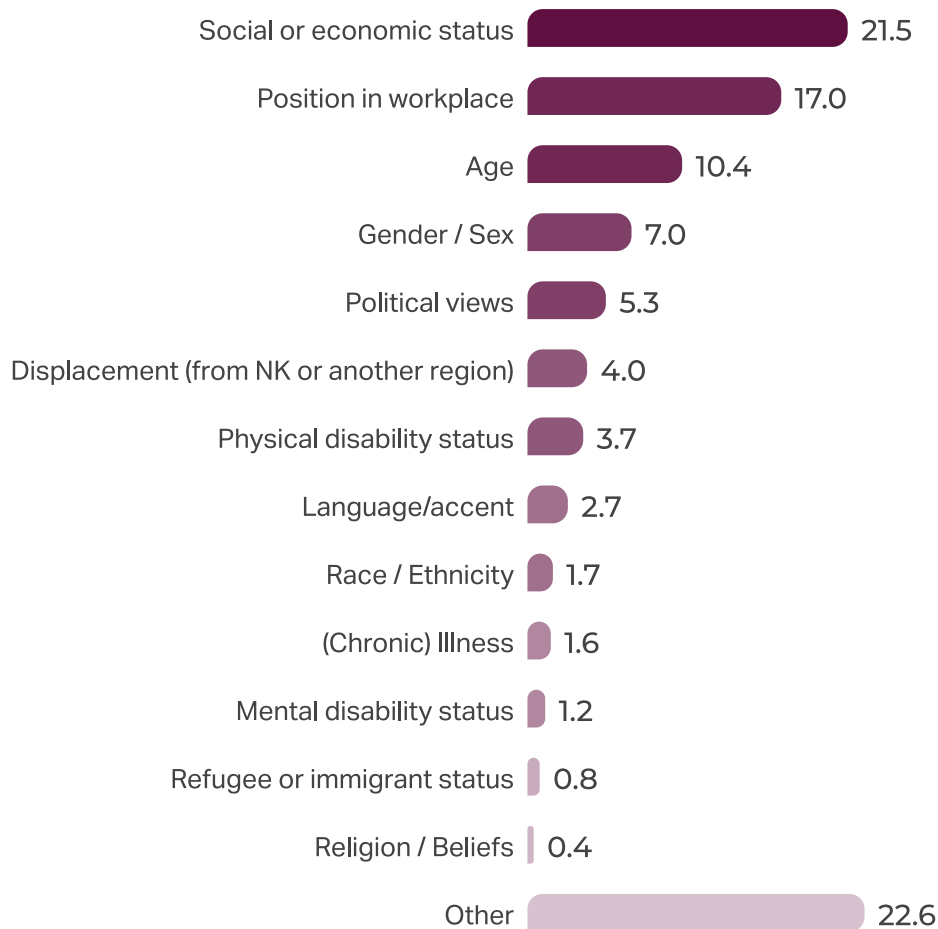
First Level

The first-level causes of discrimination are presented on the basis of data obtained from responses to two questions in the quantitative survey. The first of these concerns the main reason for the discriminatory treatment experienced by respondents. The answers of those who reported having experienced discrimination at least once (16.5% of the population) show that the reasons for targeting are quite diverse.

The three most frequently mentioned reasons reported by the respondents were socio-economic status (21.5%), position in the workplace (17.0%), and age (10.4%). Other reasons cited included gender, political views, sub-ethnicity (in the case of persons displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh, physical disability, language characteristics, as well as racial and ethnic affiliation. These additional reasons were mentioned less frequently-each by 7% or fewer respondents (*see Figure 16*).

It should be noted that the frequency with which a given ground is cited as the main reason for discrimination reflects both the prevalence of discrimination on that ground and the size of the group concerned in the population. A ground cited by a relatively small share of respondents may nonetheless represent a high rate of discrimination within the group in question. For example, a ground cited by 7% of respondents who experienced discrimination may in fact constitute a high within-group rate if only a small share of the population belongs to that group. The Figure below should therefore be read as indicators of the overall distribution of reasons for discrimination rather than as a ranking of which groups face the most discrimination.

Figure 16. What do you believe was the MAIN reason for the discrimination you experienced? (%)



Note: This question was asked to those who had personal experience of discrimination during the last five years. Some responses did not cluster into clearly defined categories and were therefore coded as "Other". These responses reflect heterogeneous, experience-based explanations of discrimination, often linked to individual-level or situational factors rather than clearly defined group-based characteristics.

Second Level

The analysis of the meta-level causes of discrimination was based exclusively on the qualitative interviews. Accordingly, informants most often identified deeply rooted stereotypes, prevailing cultural norms and traditions, and low sensitivity to discrimination as the underlying drivers of discriminatory behavior. These factors contribute to a situation in which manifestations of discrimination are often treated as something "ordinary"- or, at best, as mere insult - rather than being recognized as discrimination.

Stereotypes are frequently not perceived as problematic because they are reproduced across multiple levels: within the family, the community, and at the institutional level, including in educational and law enforcement structures. They may be justified by reference to traditions, "culture," security concerns, or generalizations formed through personal experience. As a result, discriminatory behavior is not only normalized, but often actively justified, making it more difficult to recognize and overcome.

Some stereotypes justify the expected or restricted roles of women and men in both the labor market and the family, including in relation to specific tasks and decision-making. Women are

primarily associated with caregiving and reproductive roles, while men are expected to perform authoritative and provider-like functions.

 ***“For example, in terms of women, there is the idea that women should be more submissive, more modest, more tolerant... and that, for a woman, her family should be a priority, that she should devote more of her time to her family and to her children. And in that regard, there are problems with career advancement.”***

Key Informant, legal sector

 ***“... The job of a teacher is not a man’s job; you cannot maintain a household with it.”***

Key Informant, education sector

Similar perceptions also exist in relation to persons with disabilities, sexual minorities, national minorities, and migrants, who may be framed as “other,” “deviant,” or “incomplete.”

 ***“... People with mental health issues and disabilities were kept away from society, hidden from society, so that the rest of society would appear beautiful, intelligent, and educated.”***

Key Informant, public sector

 ***“... There were rumors that if they were from Artsakh, they were not Armenians...”***

Key Informant, education sector

A low level of legal awareness was also identified as a key reason for the weak sensitivity to discrimination. By this, KI interviewees referred not only to ordinary citizens, but also to employees of relevant institutions and mid-level state officials. According to their observations, although the issue may be known at the level of legal texts among high-ranking officials or specialists connected to international structures, the substance, manifestations, and legal consequences of discrimination are often not sufficiently understood at other levels of the system. As a result, many discriminatory practices are either not identified as such or are not regarded as a serious social problem.

KI interviewees noted that, although there is often a willingness to help in society, this does not necessarily translate into concrete responses which often remain situational rather than systemic. Some KI interviewees also pointed to generational differences in awareness: younger people are seen as relatively more informed and more able to assess situations through the lens of discrimination, whereas among older generations the recognition of discrimination - especially in legal terms-appears more limited.

 ***“... I can say that the level of sensitivity is very low, and it is also connected with legal awareness... For example, they see a person with a disability who needs help at that moment, and society may indeed be trying to help, but the format, the method, and so on do not correspond to what is actually needed to avoid discrimination.”***

Key Informant, legal sector

 *“It seems to me that legal ignorance and lack of awareness have led to the fact that the public has very little understanding of it. Some sectoral groups know about it-for example, all those involved in international organizations know it at the level of legal acts. Very high-ranking state officials also know it, but people in the middle ranks of the state do not know it, public servants do not know it, the community police officer does not know it, but the head of the police academy definitely knows it. In my opinion, very often in Armenia they look at it very superficially; they do not take this issue seriously, and many are not sure that it is a real problem.”*

Key Informant, education sector

KI interviewees also expressed the view that discrimination is sustained in part by the absence of clear legislation and effective sanctions.

 *“Discrimination against clients is not perceived very much, because it is considered normal. Maybe there is discrimination, but it is seen as my choice, and I can also behave in a discriminatory way. It probably comes from our lack of legislation and sanctions that this perception exists.”*

Key Informant, legal sector

According to KI interviewees, many people in Armenia remain unaware that support centers exist. Meanwhile, some informants stressed that awareness alone is not sufficient to prevent or address discrimination. Even when individuals know, in principle, that such services are available, they may not translate this awareness into action or recognize its relevance to their own situation. In some cases, hierarchical dependency, for example, dependence on an employer or other authority figure, can also become a barrier to overcome discrimination. Yet even then, awareness may remain ineffective if it is neutralized by the influence of dominant culture and the media, which may implicitly or explicitly reinforce discriminatory behavior.

KI interviewees reported that one of the most serious barriers to speaking out about discrimination is the fear of social alienation, which is especially pronounced among those who lack the relevant education, resources, or opportunity to move to another job or social setting. This silence is also shaped by people's responsibilities toward family members - especially children and other dependents.

Another important point according to KI interviewees was that, at the systemic level, the issue of discrimination in Armenia still has limited visibility and lacks a sufficiently strong research base. The absence of a comprehensive, evidence-based picture makes it difficult to assess the true scale of discrimination. Concurrently, although institutional mechanisms formally exist, public awareness of these mechanisms remains limited, and their practical visibility and use appear to be low.

3.3.3 Intersectional vulnerability

Qualitative evidence adds an important further layer to the risks of exposure to discrimination, arguing that discrimination is often intersectional rather than singular. KI interviewees repeatedly emphasized that discrimination intensifies when several marginalized characteristics overlap. In their accounts, gender - particularly being a woman - emerged as a recurrent axis of compounded characteristic of heightened risk to discrimination, especially when combined with disability, age, poverty, displacement, or minority status. Informants also stressed that such intersectional patterns are often insufficiently recognized in everyday life, even where the harm is severe.

These accounts suggest that, in some contexts, discrimination cannot be adequately understood through only one characteristic at a time. Rather, the interaction between gender, disability, age, poverty, ethnicity, or displacement may create specific forms of vulnerability that are both deeper and less visible than those captured by single-category analysis.

For example, one KI interviewee highlighted the especially acute discrimination faced by women and children with disabilities, particularly in healthcare and education:

“Among these types of discrimination, I would single out, for example, women with disabilities and children with disabilities... As I mentioned, although we have declared inclusion as a general principle, we still have problems related to guaranteeing children’s education in general education institutions...”

Key Informant, legal sector

Another KI interviewee pointed to the specific case of women with disabilities in reproductive healthcare, where gender and disability intersect in ways that create particularly invasive and paternalistic forms of discrimination:

“...For example, there is a very strong discriminatory attitude towards women with disabilities in healthcare institutions. Even to the point where they believe that a woman with a disability should not have children, or they are more inclined toward sterilization practices.”

Key Informant, legal sector

Intersectional vulnerability was also evident in KI interviewees’ accounts of age and disability. In some families, older persons with disabilities were described as facing neglect that is normalized rather than recognized as discriminatory treatment:

“And I can say that, in the case of people with disabilities in the family, discrimination is manifested against elderly people with disabilities, but very often families do not consider this to be discrimination. For example, an elderly person has certain health problems, and they do not follow up on them, do not take them for medical examinations, and they think that this is normal...”

Key Informant, public sector

KI interviewees also identified important forms of intersectional vulnerability involving gender, ethnicity, and minority status. In particular, the experiences of Yezidi girls were discussed as cases in which minority belonging and gender intersect with social norms around education and early marriage.

The qualitative data also indicate that intersectionality does not always operate in a simple additive way. KI interviewees described differing experiences among persons with disabilities displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh. Some suggested that being both displaced and having a disability creates double vulnerability, while others argued that disability may sometimes soften negative attitudes toward displacement, because it elicits pity and therefore partially shields the person from hostility directed at other Artsakh Armenians. In this sense, multiple vulnerability does not always mechanically produce “more discrimination”; rather, it may alter the way discrimination is expressed and experienced.

These findings suggest that the groups seen as most in need of protection cannot be fully understood through a flat ranking alone. Quantitative results identify which groups are most salient in public opinion, while qualitative evidence reveals how vulnerability is layered, context-dependent, and often shaped by the interaction of multiple inequalities. This is particularly important from a rights-based perspective, since individuals located at the intersection of several characteristics associated with heightened risk of discrimination may face forms of discrimination that are more intense, less visible, and less likely to be recognized either socially or institutionally.

3.4 Main settings where discrimination occurs

The fourth subchapter examines the settings in which discrimination occurs in Armenia, combining quantitative survey data with qualitative findings from IDI and KI interviewees. It analyzes where Armenians perceive discrimination to be widespread, in what settings they report having personally experienced it, and where they report having most recently witnessed it. These three complementary but distinct angles that together provide a layered picture of the settings where discrimination is perceived as widespread. The subchapter distinguishes between more visible settings, where discrimination is frequently reported and socially recognizable, and less visible ones, where discrimination is perceived as embedded in institutional procedures, community norms, or private family life, making it harder to identify and name. Across all settings, the analysis highlights both the characteristic forms discrimination takes and the groups most frequently affected.

Summary takeaways

- Survey respondents and KI interviewees described experiences with discrimination across a broad range of settings spanning personal, community, public, and institutional spheres. The study identified 15 main settings frequently mentioned by respondents in which discrimination occurs.
- Among all responses, the workplace accounted for 16.5% and educational institutions for 11.6% of settings identified by respondents as places where discrimination is perceived to be widespread. Qualitative findings reinforce this, describing these as settings where discrimination shapes access to employment, advancement, educational inclusion, and social recognition.
- When survey respondents who reported having experienced discrimination speak from personal experience, the workplace becomes even more dominant, with 38.9% of all responses identifying it as a setting where discrimination occurred. This is more than double its share in general perception responses and far ahead of any other setting. Respondents who experienced discrimination described experiences they interpreted as discrimination in hiring, remuneration, work assignments, promotion prospects, and gender-based harassment as particularly prevalent in this setting.
- Compared to general perceptions, healthcare institutions rise notably in personal experience responses of settings where discrimination is prevalent. KI interviewees linked this to direct encounters with discriminatory service provision, including inaccessible infrastructure, breaches of confidentiality, age-based neglect of older persons, and reported severe discriminatory treatment perceived as systematic against women with disabilities in reproductive healthcare.
- Reports of recently witnessed discrimination are concentrated in public spaces, workplaces, and educational institutions, which together account for roughly 70% of all responses.

- State and governmental institutions, including state bodies, local self-government, law enforcement, and courts, appeared less frequently in reports of witnessed discrimination. This does not necessarily reflect lower prevalence, but rather the more formalized procedures may make exclusionary effects less visible.
- Community and family settings emerged from KI interviewees as important but underreported settings of discrimination.
- The online setting, particularly social media, is identified in qualitative accounts as a significant setting for content perceived as hate speech, mockery, and stigmatizing representations of groups at heightened risks, though it is less prominent in survey responses.

3.4.1 Visible settings where discrimination occurs

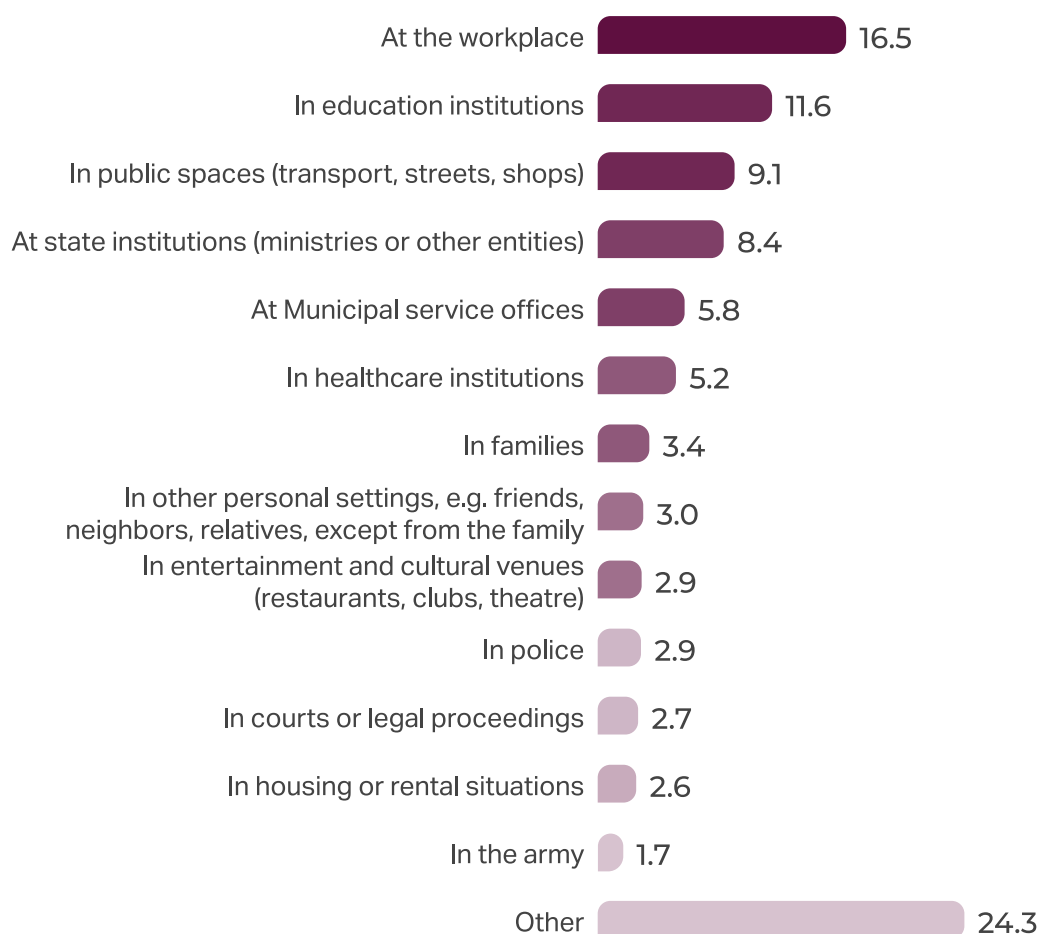
To identify in which settings Armenians think discrimination most commonly occurs, the survey asked respondents three complementary questions. The first was: “Please tell me in which environments discrimination is widespread in Armenia?”

As shown in Figure 17, respondents identified a broad and diverse range of settings where discrimination occurs, spanning personal, public, and institutional spheres of interaction. At the same time, it is notable that the two most frequently mentioned settings are those in which work and education-related relations take place, spaces that also shape access to opportunities for developing skills, acquiring knowledge, and expressing oneself.

Qualitative findings strongly support the prominence of these two settings. Interviewees repeatedly described the workplace and educational institutions as key sites where discrimination affects access to employment, advancement, educational inclusion, and social recognition.

Public spaces rank third among the most frequently mentioned settings. As indicated by respondents’ answers and by other key actors, these are primarily associated with the ease and conditions of citizens’ everyday interactions and movement. Government institutions were also mentioned relatively often: state and municipal self-government bodies (14.2% combined), which are expected to provide various services to citizens and interact with them in the course of administrative processes (*see Figure 17*). Qualitative data further suggest that discrimination in public spaces tends to be more visible and interaction-based, while discrimination in state and municipal institutions more often takes procedural or institutionalized forms, including barriers in access to services, inaccessible conditions, and unequal treatment by officials.

Figure 17. Please tell us in what contexts and areas of life you think discrimination is widespread in Armenia. (multiple choice) (%)



Note: The relatively high share of “Other” responses reflects the lack of specificity in many answers. A substantial proportion of respondents referred to broad or non-specific categories (e.g., “everywhere,” “all environments,” or “nowhere”), as well as general geographic locations (e.g., villages, regions, Yerevan), rather than clearly defined social or institutional contexts. As a result, these responses could not be consistently grouped into predefined analytical categories.

The second question sought to clarify the settings in which residents of Armenia have personally experienced or believe they have experienced discrimination. Responses based on personal experience present a somewhat different picture, as shown in Figure 18. The results reveal not only a shift in the ranking of certain settings, but also a change in the relative weight of some of them. Notably, these two questions should be interpreted as analytically complementary rather than directly comparable: the first reflects respondents’ general perceptions of where discrimination is widespread in Armenia, while the second reflects settings in which respondents report having personally experienced discrimination. Moreover, the two questions are based on different respondent samples, which further limits direct comparison between them.

For example, the workplace remains the most frequently mentioned setting where discrimination occurs, but its share more than doubles when respondents speak from personal experience (38.9%, compared with 16.5% in the previous figure). Moreover, the workplace is mentioned far more often than any other setting. Qualitative findings help explain this prominence. In interview accounts, the workplace is the setting in which discrimination appears most intensely and across the broadest range of target groups. KI interviewees referred to discriminatory treatment in hiring, salary determination, work assignments, opportunities for promotion, and gender-based harassment. In

relation to women, KI interviewees particularly emphasized pay inequality and sexualized treatment in the workplace. As one interviewee noted:

“As a gender specialist, I can say that sometimes unconscious discrimination is manifested against women, at least in the labor market, in the area of remuneration. Because if you look at it, it may seem like, -for example in a sewing factory, everyone is almost equal. But when you compare that to, say, a workplace where there are many men, the salary is much higher there, while here it is lower.”

Key Informant, public sector

“There are things that are sexualized toward women; the same sexual harassment in the workplace also stems from the fact that women are viewed as sexual objects.”

Key Informant, legal sector

Another notable setting where people perceive discrimination as most widespread is in educational institutions (11.6%), ranking second among all settings. Nevertheless, this setting accounted for only 5.7% of responses among reported experiences of discrimination who had experienced discrimination (*see Figure 18*). One possible explanation is that the survey asked about experiences of discrimination during the last five years, meaning that many respondents, particularly older adults, may not have had direct contact with educational institutions during the reference period and therefore had fewer opportunities to experience discrimination in this setting. At the same time qualitative findings suggest that some forms of discrimination in education may be embedded in everyday routines, institutional practices, or teacher behavior and may therefore be less readily recognized or named as discrimination in survey responses. KI interviewees referred to bullying on the basis of social and financial status, differential treatment by teachers, and exclusionary treatment of children with disabilities. One interviewee noted that discriminatory approaches in educational institutions may be “more common” and “may not be as noticeable” as in other settings:

“Bullying occurs in educational institutions on various grounds. ... For example, in educational institutions, especially on the basis of social and financial status, bullying is more common, and discriminatory approaches in general-including by school staff and teachers-are more common, which may not be as noticeable in other environments.”

Key Informant, legal sector

Other accounts similarly indicate that discriminatory treatment can become normalized in school practice, specifically based on intelligence level or school-prestition:

“The teacher treats a child who is studying well and a child who is studying poorly a little differently. That difference exists; that is discrimination.”

Key Informant, public sector

By contrast, the rise of healthcare institutions in personal experience responses is consistent with qualitative findings showing that discrimination in this setting often takes the form of direct encounters in service provision. Interviewees referred to inaccessible infrastructure, lack of information, breaches of confidentiality, and discriminatory or neglectful treatment toward persons with disabilities, people living with HIV, older persons, and women with disabilities. A KI interviewee described the problem as follows:

“The inaccessibility [physical structure] of these polyclinics for people with disabilities [is a problem]. The inaccessibility of the opportunity to receive information [is also] ... There are already issues related to ensuring medical confidentiality, etc., which are really problematic in the field of protecting the rights of persons with disabilities.”

Key Informant, legal sector

Another interviewee highlighted age-based neglect in healthcare:

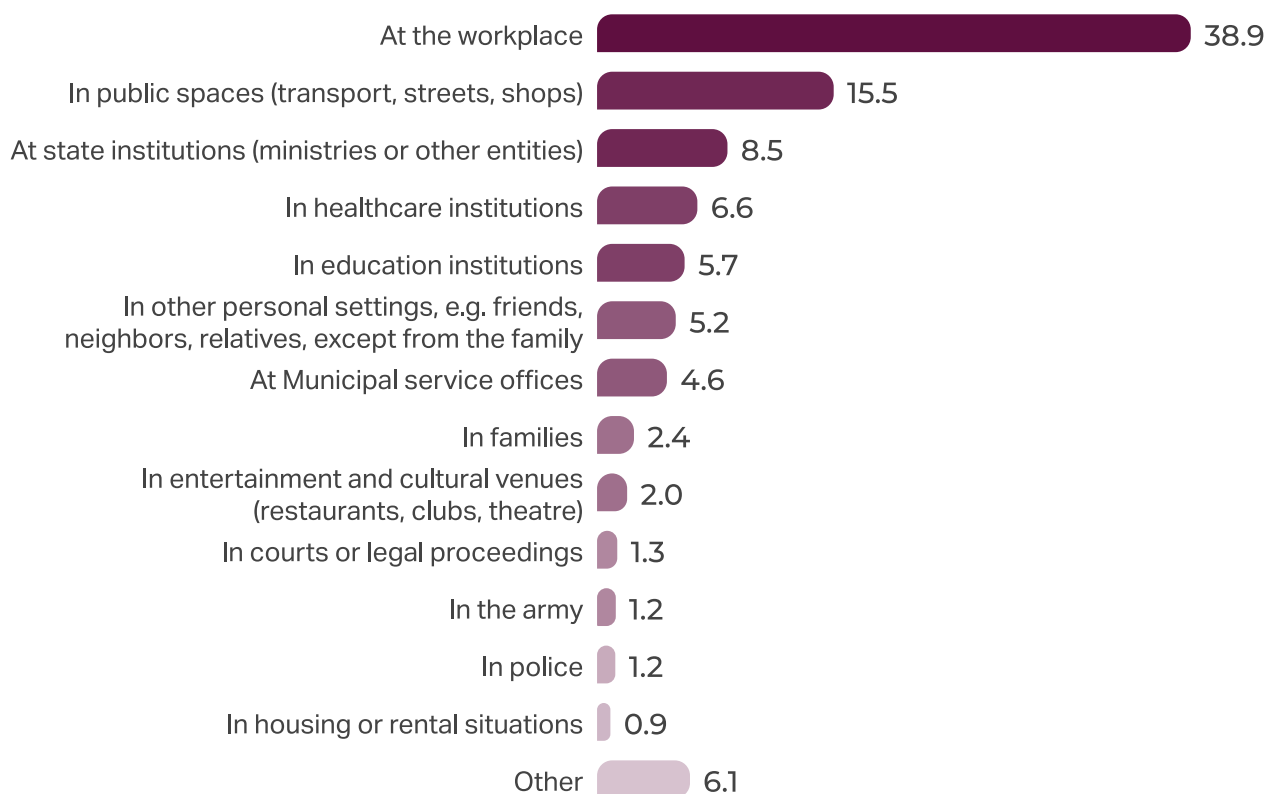
“In terms of discrimination, the elderly are more often affected in healthcare: when they see an elderly person, they think, ‘Well, what kind of help is this?’ and they send them home.”

Key Informant, civil society sector

Discrimination against women with disabilities is described as especially deep and systemic, particularly in the area of reproductive health. Interviewee testimonies pointed to serious violations of rights, including questioning women’s right to motherhood and biased attitudes toward sterilization, especially in the case of women with mental disabilities.

It should be noted that these responses are based on personal experience. As such, information about discriminatory settings derived from other sources was likely less reflected in these answers. Qualitative findings suggest that personal experience-based responses are also shaped by the extent to which different forms of discrimination are recognized and named as such, which varies across settings.

Figure 18. Where have you personally experienced or suspected that you have experienced discrimination? (multiple choice) (%)



Note. This question is asked to the respondents who felt that they had experienced discrimination in the past five years.

The survey also sought to identify the settings in which respondents, in their own view, had most recently witnessed discrimination in Armenia. Figure 19, which summarizes these responses, presents yet another reordering of discriminatory settings. It shows that residents of Armenia most often reported having recently witnessed discrimination in public spaces, the workplace, and educational institutions. Together, mentions of these three settings account for roughly 70% of all responses. These results should be interpreted as reflecting not only the prevalence of discrimination, but also its visibility and recognizability in different settings.

Qualitative findings help interpret this result. Public spaces, workplaces, and educational institutions are settings marked by frequent social interaction and relative visibility. As a result, discriminatory practices in these settings are more likely to be observed and identified by third parties. In qualitative accounts, discrimination in public spaces is described both at the structural level and at the behavioral level. At the structural level, interviewees referred to physical and communicative inaccessibility, especially for persons with disabilities. At the behavioral level, they described sexual harassment of women, disrespectful treatment toward homeless people, and demeaning treatment of older persons and persons with disabilities, particularly emphasizing gender-based harassment and exclusionary attitudes toward groups at risk. One interviewee explains why certain forms of discrimination, particularly when occurring in public and semi-public interactions, may remain insufficiently recognized, even when they are widespread:

“... Maybe they do not know what gender-based violence or sexual harassment is, and what forms it takes. They may know the definition by heart, but not how it appears in everyday life or in work relations-that, for example, even the way someone approaches you can feel very unpleasant, or they make sexual insinuations or jokes that you do not like; those are also examples of sexual harassment.”

Key Informant, education sector

Similar patterns are observed in service and retail settings, where discrimination is often expressed through direct interpersonal interactions. While these settings are less prominent in survey responses, qualitative data provide clear examples of exclusionary and discriminatory behavior based on origin or identity.

In public transport, qualitative accounts similarly point to both structural and behavioral forms of discrimination, particularly affecting persons with disabilities (especially outside of Yerevan), older persons, and women.

“There is public transport in Yerevan where citizens with disabilities and mobility limitations have the opportunity to use that transport. That is, the relevant vehicles have a platform through which the person can board with a wheelchair. There are no such buses in the regions yet. I do not know-maybe there will be in the future-but at least for now, there are none...”

Key Informant, public sector

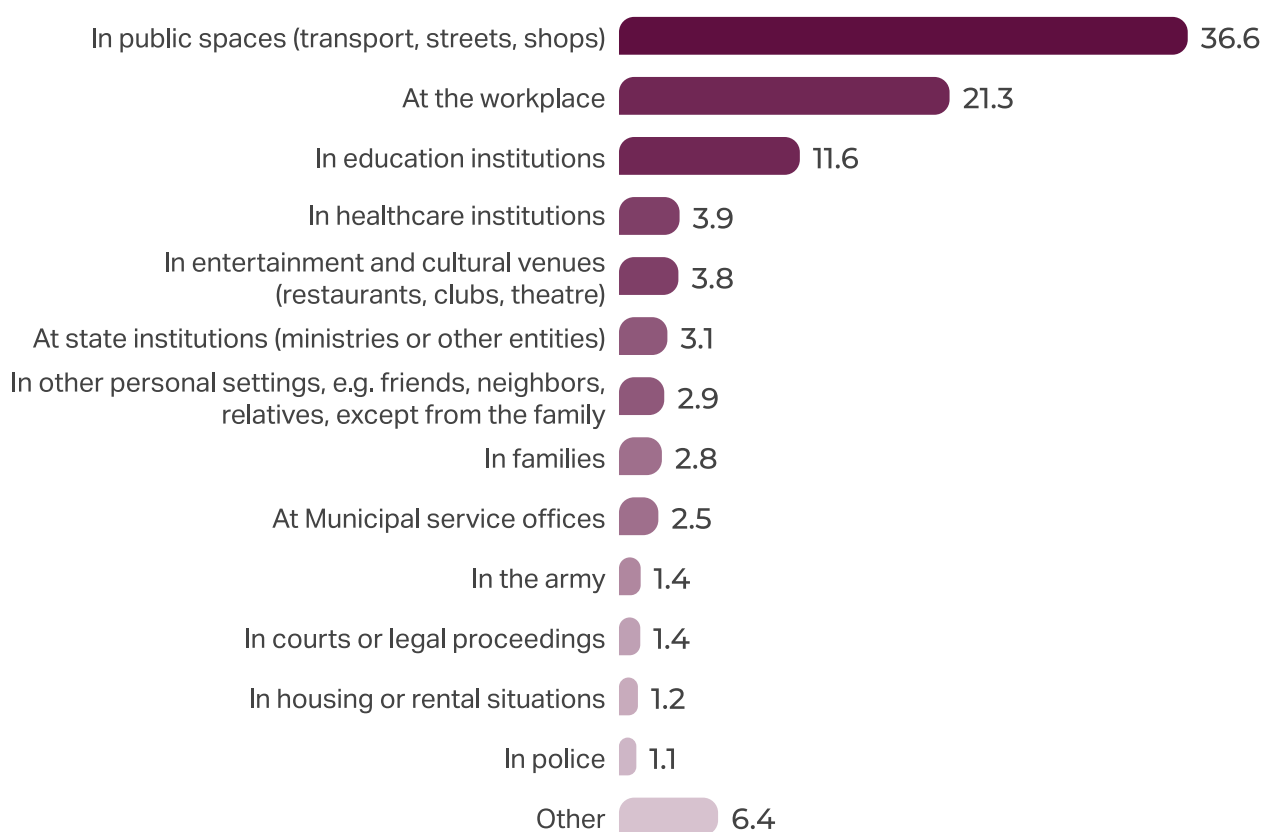
3.4.2 Less visible settings where discrimination occurs

The survey question asked respondents to identify the setting in which they had most recently witnessed discrimination. As shown in Figure 19, government institutions, including state bodies, local self-government, the police, courts, and the army, appear much less frequently in these responses than in the preceding questions. This pattern should however be interpreted with caution. Lower reporting of these settings does not necessarily indicate a lower prevalence of discrimination, but may instead reflect differences in visibility, frequency of interaction, and social recognition. In particular, people may have fewer direct encounters with such institutions, and their experiences are also shaped by their place of residence, social position, and everyday interaction patterns.

In parallel, discrimination in these settings often takes more formalized or procedural forms, which may be less immediately visible to external observers or less readily identified as discrimination.

It is important to note that this “real-time” picture still reflects only those manifestations of discrimination that are recognizable within existing public perceptions, i.e., those forms of discrimination that have the necessary social coding to be seen and identified (*see Figure 19*). As a result, discrimination that occurs in more closed, private, or institutional settings, or that is embedded in formal procedures, may be underrepresented in responses about witnessed discrimination. In this sense, findings on witnessed discrimination should be understood as complementing rather than contradicting results on perceived and experienced discrimination. They provide insights into which forms of discrimination are most visible in everyday life, while personal experience and qualitative accounts highlight settings where discrimination may be less visible but nonetheless significant.

Figure 19. Where have you witnessed the recent incident of discrimination in Armenia?
(multiple choice) (%)



Note. This question is asked to the respondents who felt that they had witnessed discrimination in the past five years.

Qualitative data indicate that discrimination in these institutional settings may be less frequently recognized not because it is less prevalent, but because it is embedded in structural barriers, gaps in service provision, and everyday institutional practices. For example, in state institutions, discrimination is often described in relation to limited, accessibility and indirect forms of exclusion that are not always explicitly identified as discriminatory.

 ***“... If we talk about persons with disabilities, there is even a legal requirement that state institutions must be accessible - that is, those ramps must be in place so that people can enter. But in terms of people with vision problems and people with hearing problems, our state institutions are not really adapted at all, and people with disabilities often cannot even physically enter that space. Also, those services are not available to people who cannot hear or see. They have to mediate their communication with state bodies through someone else, which is problematic.”***

Key Informant, legal sector

Beyond the settings most frequently captured in survey responses, qualitative findings provide important insights into settings where discrimination is less visible but often deeply embedded, particularly in community and family contexts (see Annex 2).

In community settings, discrimination is often shaped by local social norms and may involve restrictions on participation, expression, and access to opportunities, particularly affecting women, persons with disabilities, and national minorities.

KI interviewees also referred to discrimination against national minorities in community settings, which manifests in two main forms: on the one hand, limited access to services and to the exercise of basic rights at the community level; on the other, community-level norms and practices that create barriers to children's right to education.

 ***“In the [name of community] community, a number of children from a Yezidi family were excluded from compulsory education, and this was explained on the basis of their national minority background. In addition, it was said that they were given certain labels at school, or, for example, that the child had no clothes or was not dressed well. When we studied the case more deeply, in reality, it was not so much the school environment itself, or the labels, but something more internal within the family... that the child was already older, could help me [parents], could work, should not go to school, should help me [parents], for example, in the fields. And that family was going to the mountains⁵⁶.”***

Key Informant, public sector

Within the family, discrimination is manifested on the basis of age, gender, health status, sexual orientation, and other characteristics. Interviewees highlighted the neglect of the needs of older persons and people with disabilities, the restriction of women's work, self-expression, and decision-making, as well as the withdrawal of girls from education due to tradition or so-called “security” concerns. Discrimination within the family is also often accompanied by financial control, psychological pressure, and violence, which in many cases are not recognized as violations of rights.

56. “Going to the mountains” refers to the practice of seasonal livestock grazing (transhumance), meaning that the family is engaged in animal husbandry.

“For example, someone says, ‘Well, I want to do something, but they won’t let me.’ That is discriminatory-again, it is discriminatory treatment, they won’t let me. Or they say, they give an example: my brother and I-my brother could do anything, but if I wanted something, I do not know what, they would not let me. That is also discriminatory [treatment].”

Key Informant, public sector

The online setting, particularly social media, also emerges in qualitative accounts as an important setting of discrimination (see Annex 2). In this context, discrimination is primarily expressed through hate speech, mockery, and stigmatizing representations of groups at heightened risk.

Additional settings identified in qualitative data include banks, political institutions, local self-government bodies, law enforcement agencies, and courts (see Annex 2). While these appear less prominently in survey responses, qualitative findings highlight important forms of discrimination within these settings.

In banks, discrimination is primarily related to accessibility barriers for persons with disabilities.

“People with disabilities do not have the opportunity to obtain, for example, bank cards and carry out transactions in the bank without, for example, the possibility of involving a third party.”

Key Informant, legal sector

In political and public administration contexts, KI interviewees referred to gender-based barriers to career advancement and the persistence of stereotypical role expectations.

“... Only women were appointed as ministers of education and culture, because these are considered women’s spheres, again. But the Minister of Finance can never be a woman, because, well, that’s the idea - women are not good at math. It seems to me that all of that continues; it’s just that now they say it is shameful, there are some views that it is already shameful to openly display discrimination at the public level. So, the state has tried to find a way, to create some kind of formal appearance, but underneath it is the same thing again.”

Key Informant, education sector

In law enforcement and courts, KI interviewees pointed to more institutionalized forms of discrimination, including victim-blaming and unequal treatment in decision-making processes. In these settings, key informants identified five main forms of discrimination: labeling, selective treatment in the provision of services and attention, limitations on individuals’ ability to voice concerns, and rude or dismissive treatment. In such settings, discrimination may appear both in everyday interpersonal interactions and in institutional practices, thereby deepening the isolation and marginalization of groups at heightened risk.

“I can recall, for example, the police’s discriminatory attitude toward women in cases of domestic violence - it is a classic example of discrimination... The police officer himself calms the woman down and says, ‘Well, you’re a woman, it’s okay, they can just hit you or use some physical force.’”

Key Informant, public sector

KI and IDI interviews made it possible to examine discrimination across different settings in a more comprehensive and substantive way. They provide particularly valuable insights into identifying both the targets of discrimination and the specific manifestations of discrimination that are characteristic of particular settings.

Taking into account the combined data presented in Annex 2, it can be noted that KI and IDI interviewees most frequently mentioned the workplace, healthcare institutions, educational institutions, the family, state institutions, and law enforcement bodies, as settings where discrimination commonly occurs.

Annex 2 also shows that the workplace is the most commonly mentioned setting across groups targeted by discrimination. This is followed by educational institutions, public spaces, healthcare institutions, and the family. In terms of the diversity of discriminatory manifestations, however, the family appears as the leading setting, followed by the workplace and educational institutions.

3.5. Practices of responding to experienced discrimination

The fifth subchapter focuses on practices of responding to discrimination. It analyzes Armenians' tendencies to speak out about discrimination, as well as the cultural, social, psychological, legal, educational, institutional, and other factors that contribute to their reluctance to report or articulate experiences of discrimination.

When interpreting these results, it is important to bear in mind that the survey findings are based on respondents' subjective experiences and therefore reflect respondents' own experiences of situations they perceived as discriminatory.

Summary takeaways

- Reporting discrimination remains exceptional: the vast majority of those who have personally experienced discrimination (92.3%) did not report the most recent incident anywhere, and only 1.7% contacted the relevant authorities.
- A strategy of silence and self-management predominates. Where an individual has personally experienced discrimination against themselves, a substantial share tends to treat the issue as a private matter, preferring to deal with it on their own (43.1%) or not to contact anyone at all (10.4%).
- When people report speaking about experienced discrimination, they most commonly refer to informal channels. Roughly one fifth of all responses indicated that individuals would discuss such experiences with family members, friends, or relatives, rather than reporting them to formal institutions.
- The reasons for not turning to the relevant authorities are multiple and interconnected. They include distrust of institutions, the belief that reporting will not lead to change, the desire to avoid bureaucratic complications, and the fear that the situation may worsen or that there may be retaliation.

- A major obstacle is the lack of legal awareness and limited knowledge of complaint procedures. A significant part of the public does not know how or where to seek redress in cases of discrimination, and discrimination is often not understood as a legal issue.
- Trust in the relevant authorities may be described as moderate and shaped by mixed experiences. Although more than half of respondents' express trust in the police and the courts, negative experiences with complaint outcomes may weaken this trust. At the same time, distrust toward police and the courts remain high (43.3% and 44.5% correspondingly).
- Survey respondents linked their distrust to the perceived lack of clear legal definitions, which reduces the practical credibility of protection mechanisms.
- The qualitative data also highlight the importance of social and cultural barriers. Remaining silent about experienced discrimination is often driven by fears of shame, condemnation, alienation, and exclusion from one's family or community.
- As a result, the culture of responding to experienced discrimination is not systematic: willingness to help rarely translates into actions framed in terms of rights of legal protection and speaking out is often framed as an expression of personal dissatisfaction rather than as a process of seeking legal protection.
- These factors may contribute to the normalization of discriminatory practices and to the continued reproduction of the stereotypes and social norms that sustain them. In this context, awareness of discrimination and recourse to legal protection mechanisms may be perceived by part of the public as ineffective-or unnecessary, while 78.6% of people are not aware of how to file a complaint when they encounter or witness discrimination.

3.5.1 Practices of confronting discrimination and willingness to speak out

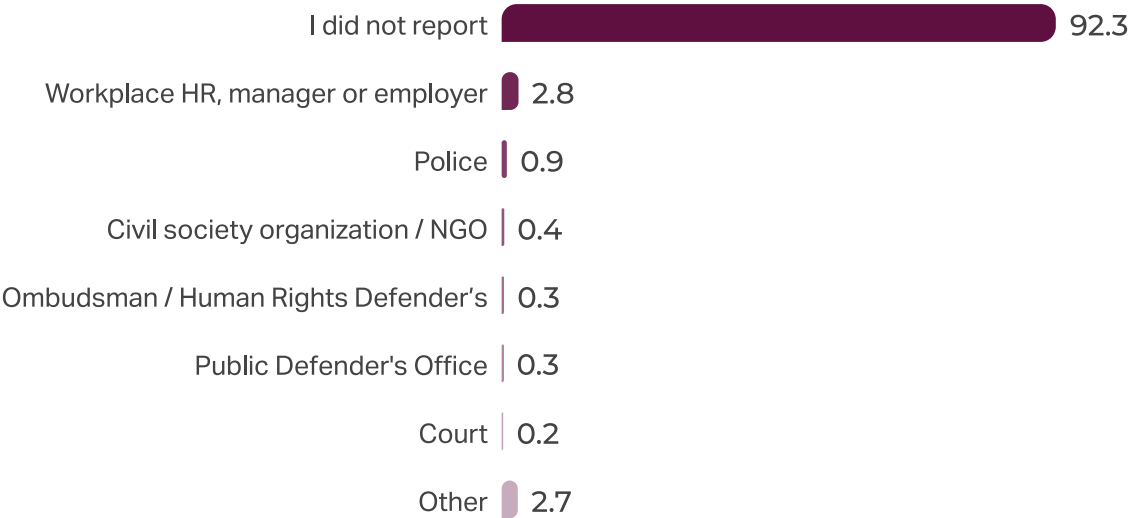


"I saw a letter in the email of one of my official acquaintances, sent by the acting mayor, instructing that all former and non-members be dismissed. That's how I understood what had happened to me was not an ordinary dismissal. I have friends who are lawyers, I know how the appeal procedure works. I thought about filing a complaint. I even discussed a protest with my relatives. But in the end, I did not do it, because at the local level these appeals do not work. I prefer to raise the issue through international sports events, that, in my opinion, is where attention can be drawn."

IDI Interviewee, man, 60+, former public-sector employee

As shown in Figure 20, an overwhelming majority of those who report that they have experienced discrimination, 92.3%, did not report it in the most recent incident.

Figure 20. Where did you report the most recent incident of discrimination that you personally experienced or witnessed? (%)



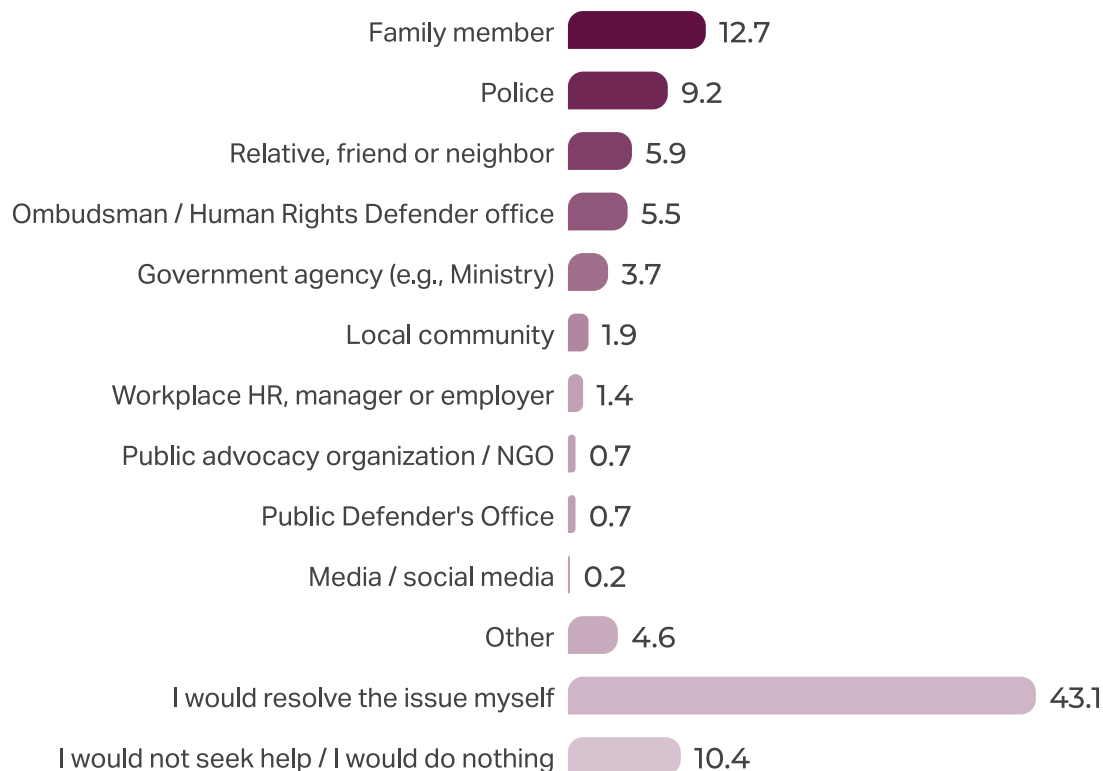
Note: This question was asked only to respondents who reported either personally experiencing discrimination in the past five years or witnessing/hearing about discrimination.

The data presented in Figure 21 show that 43.1% of survey respondents would try to resolve the issue on their own if they personally faced discrimination, while 10.4% said they would not seek help from anyone. These figures suggest that, when confronted with discrimination, people in Armenia tend to view it as a private and individual matter, preferring to handle it themselves rather than seek support or rely on legal protection.

As for turning to formal institutions, willingness appears relatively limited. In total, only 21.0% of respondents indicated that they would first turn to a relevant authority such as the police, the Human Rights Defender (Ombudsman), state institutions, local self-government bodies, or the Public Defender's Office, if they were to face discrimination (*see Figure 21*). In practice, the proportion is even smaller: only 1.7% of the people who reported that they had either had personally experienced discrimination or had witnessed discrimination had contacted a relevant authority (police, Ombudsman, Public Defender's Office, or court) (*see Figure 20*).

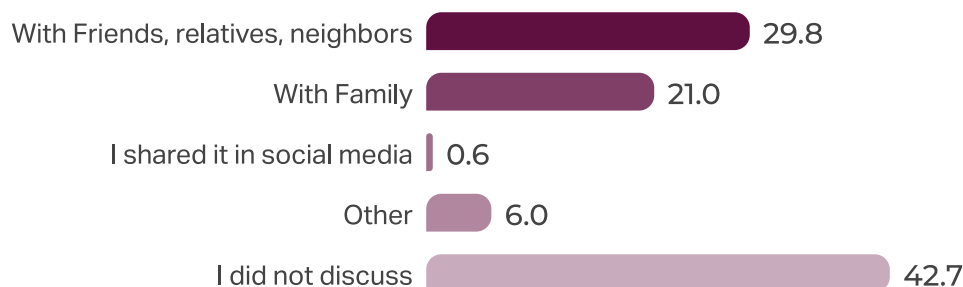
It is also noteworthy that, when asked what they would do if they personally experienced discrimination, about one fifth of respondents (21.9%) indicated they would be willing to speak about it, but not to formal institutions. Instead, they would turn to informal circles: 12.7% said they would contact family members, 5.9% indicated they would speak to relatives, friends, or neighbors, and 1.4% said they would turn to a relevant person at work (*see Figure 21*).

Figure 21. If you personally faced discrimination, to whom would you first turn for help? (%)



A similar pattern appears when looking at reported personal experiences with discrimination or experiences with witnessed discrimination. About half of the people who reported that they had either had personally experienced discrimination or had witnessed discrimination (50.8%) reported that they discussed the most recent case of discrimination in informal settings. Most often, they discussed it with relatives, friends, or neighbors (29.8%) and family members (21.0%) (*see Figure 22*).

Figure 22. With whom did you discuss the most recent case of discrimination that you personally experienced or witnessed? (%)



Note: This question was asked only to respondents who reported either personally experiencing discrimination in the past five years or witnessing/hearing about discrimination.

Taken together, the data from Figures 20, 21, and 22 show that for people who reported having experienced or witnessed situations of discrimination, a strategy of silence predominates: the vast majority of those who encountered discrimination did not raise the most recent incident in any formal way. Even in a hypothetical situation of discrimination, there is a strong tendency to rely on self-resolution, while willingness to contact relevant authorities remains limited-and in practice, such reports are almost absent. That said, when people do speak about discrimination, they have personally experienced or witnessed, they are more likely to do so in informal settings rather than through formal channels.

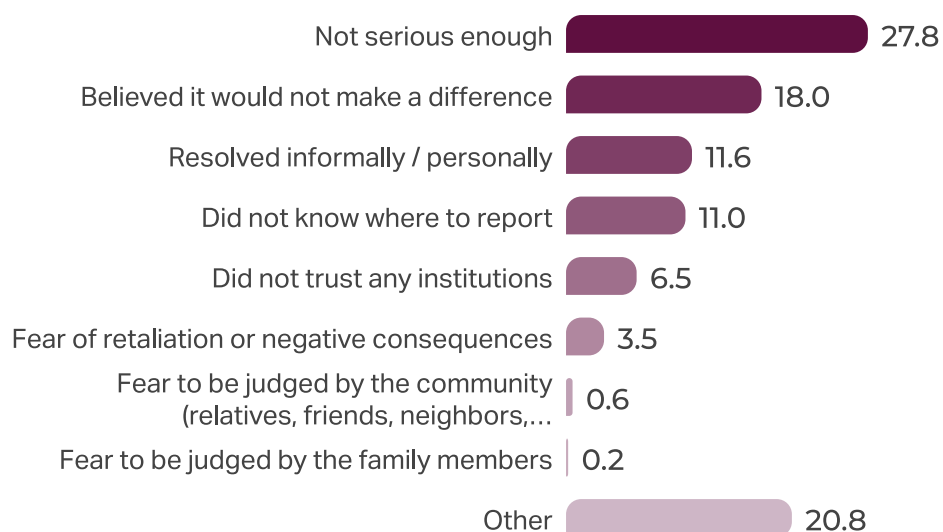
3.5.2 Reasons for “remaining silent” about discrimination

“You know, that’s not such a serious issue, anyway, for me to report it or contact the Human Rights Defender. There was no threat to my person; the person simply expressed his opinion, even if in an offensive way. But if it is serious - of course, if my children are in danger, if my family is in danger - then of course I will contact [the police].”

IDI Interviewee, Woman, 44, Refugee from Nagorno-Karabakh

It is also important to understand why the majority of the public avoids reporting incidents of discrimination to the relevant authorities. When asked, “What were the reasons for not reporting the incident?” 27.8% of responses indicated that “It wasn’t that serious” (see Figure 23). A similar line of reasoning also appears in the qualitative material. For example, one IDI interviewee was insulted in a shopping area on the basis of sub-ethnicity but chose not to respond because he did not consider it a “serious incident.” Conversely, he noted that he would regard the situation as serious if his children or family were in danger.

Figure 23. What made you not report the incident? (multiple choice) (%)



Note: This question was asked to those who experienced or witnessed discrimination, but didn’t report it. The high proportion of “Other” responses is driven by the concentration of answers around general behavioral norms, such as non-interference in others’ affairs, perceived lack of necessity to report, personal reluctance, or indifference, rather than clearly differentiated reasons. These responses are highly repetitive in meaning but varied in wording, limiting their classification into discrete analytical categories.

Looking further at the data presented in Figure 23, we can see that in 18.0% of the selected responses, the reason for not reporting discrimination was the belief that reporting it would not change anything. This also points to limited trust in the relevant institutions. The same Figure shows that in 6.5% of the selected responses, survey respondents explicitly cited lack of trust in the relevant institutions as the reason for not reporting. The qualitative interviews further suggest that some members of the public fear that the relevant bodies may not only fail to respond appropriately but may even shift responsibility or blame onto the person who experienced discrimination. According to KI interviewees, the risk of such treatment may exist regardless of whether the person is aware of their rights.

 ***“It seems to me that in 90 percent of cases they do not raise the alarm, and this is due to distrust of the system. Because you may be legally ignorant, you may not know how the law works, but if you trust the system, you still go and say: I do not know why this is happening or how to fight it, but I have this problem - and the system should help you, filling the gap in your legal ignorance. But the main reason is distrust of the system, the fear that if you raise it, it will become worse.”***

Key Informant, education sector

According to KI interviewees, another reason for not contacting the relevant authorities is the desire to avoid bureaucratic complications. This reasoning appears to be quite widespread in Armenian society and applies not only to discrimination cases, but also to other situations involving state institutions.

 ***“Very often in our society, people still avoid certain bureaucratic things: if I call and say that something is happening in the family, they will call the police, or call me here and there, and somehow the whole process will drag on. [It feels better] for me just to live in peace.”***

Key Informant, public sector

Figure 24 helps illustrate the possible reasons for distrust in the relevant authorities by showing the actual outcomes of reported cases. Among those who had reported discrimination, 31.0% said that “the issue was fully resolved,” 19.6% said that “it was accepted, but not resolved,” 18.2% said that “it was closed without any reason being specified,” 17.3% reported that “no response was received,” and 4.5% said that “the situation worsened after reporting.”

Since the share of cases reported as fully resolved was only 31.0%, negative experiences may still have a disproportionate impact on public trust. The wider circulation of such experiences may further reduce confidence in the relevant institutions and, as a result, discourage people from turning to them in the future.

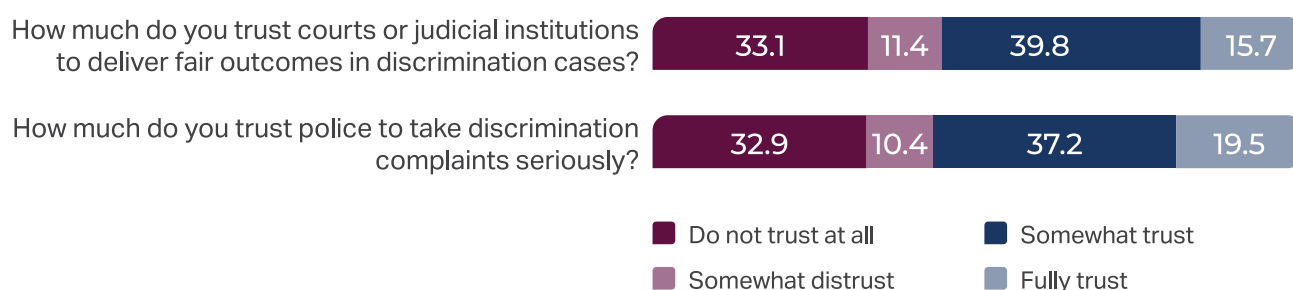
Figure 24. What was the outcome of reporting discrimination? (%)



Note: This question was answered only by respondents who had personally experienced or witnessed discrimination and who had reported the incident somewhere.

Another important factor to consider in relation to the issue of trust in relevant institutions is public attitudes toward the police and the courts, as presented in Figure 25. Overall, 56.7% of Armenians report trusting the police to take complaints about discrimination seriously, while 43.3% express a lack of trust. A similar pattern is observed with regard to the judiciary: 55.5% of respondents indicate trust in the ability of courts to make fair decisions in discrimination-related cases, compared to 44.5% who do not.”

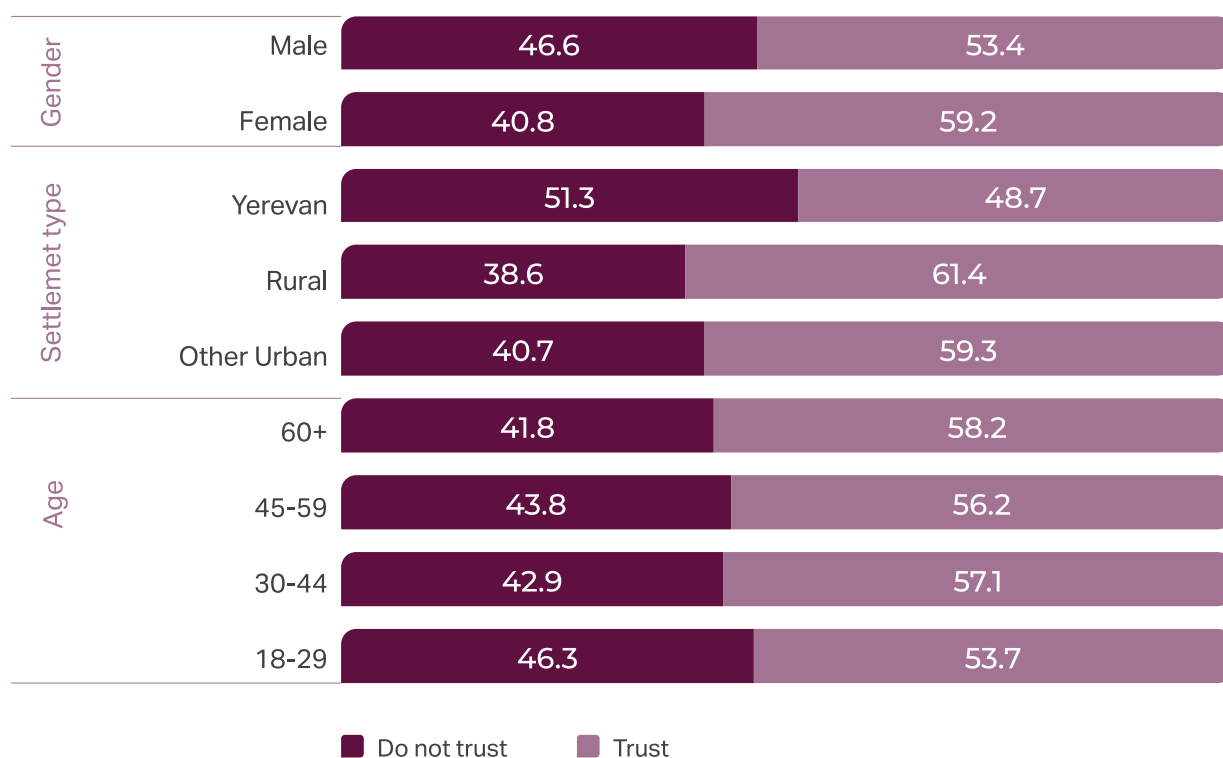
Figure 25. Trust in the police and in courts/judicial bodies. (%)



It is also useful to examine how these responses vary across socio-demographic groups. The data show that the police are trusted more by rural residents (61.4%) than by urban residents (48.7% in Yerevan and 59.3% in other cities)⁵⁷, more by women (59.2%) than by men (53.4%), and more by respondents aged 60+ (68.2%) than by younger age groups (see Figure 26). However, these differences by gender and age are not statistically significant and should therefore be interpreted only as tendencies in the data.

57. Survey-adjusted rank test = 2, p-value = 0.002, Survey-weighted logistic regression with estimated marginal means (EMMs), Bonferroni-adjusted p < 0.001.

Figure 26. Trust in the police, by socio-demographic characteristics. (%)



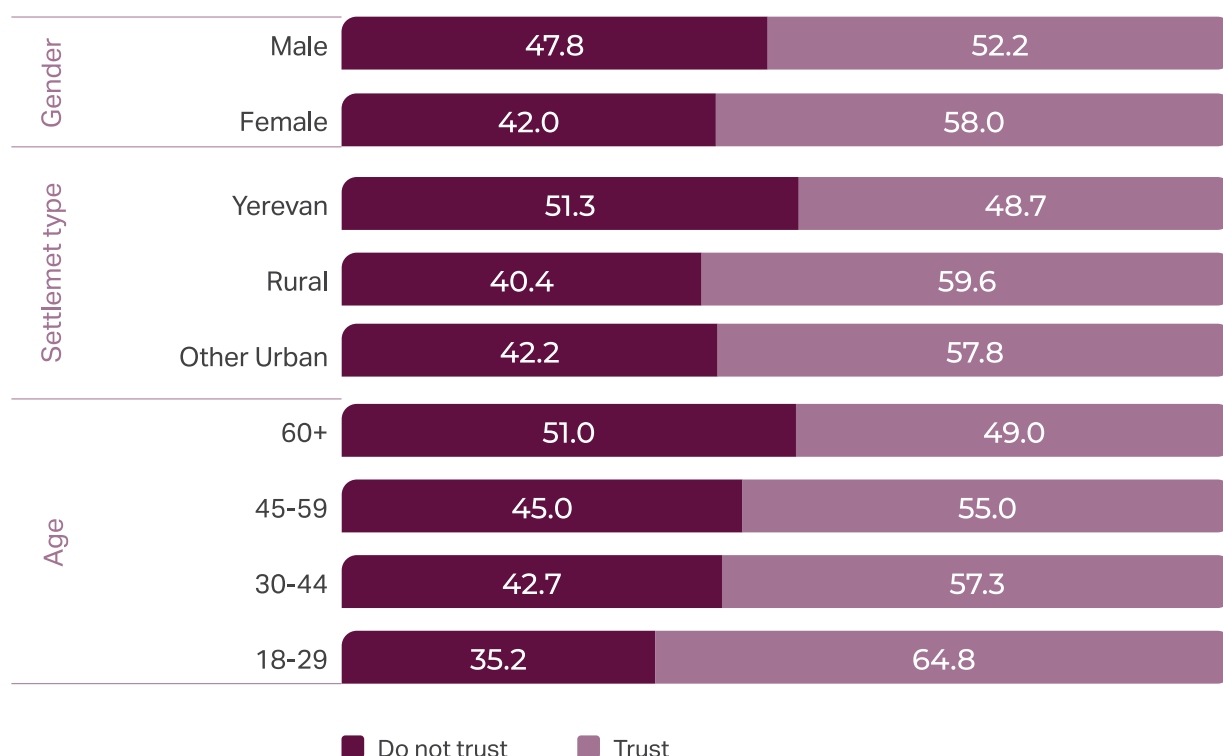
Note: Response categories have been combined: "fully trust" and "somewhat trust" are presented together, as are "do not trust at all" and "somewhat distrust."

In the case of the judiciary, the overall pattern is quite similar across types of residence and by gender. In response to the question, "How much do you trust courts or judicial bodies to make fair decisions on discrimination issues?" more positive responses were given by rural residents (59.6%) and by women (58.0%)⁵⁸. The age pattern, however, differs somewhat from the pattern observed in relation to the police: but trust in the police, respondents aged 18-29 expressed the highest level of trust in courts and judicial bodies (64.8%)⁵⁹ (see Figure 27).

58. Survey-adjusted rank test = 2, p-value = 0.002

59. Survey-adjusted rank test = 3, p-value = 0.002

Figure 27. Trust in courts and judicial bodies, by socio-demographic characteristics. (%)



Note: Response categories have been combined: "fully trust" and "somewhat trust" are presented together, as are "do not trust at all" and "somewhat distrust."

The survey results also show that 11.6% of all selected responses among those who reported having experienced discrimination indicated that the relevant authorities were not contacted because the problem had been "resolved informally, privately" (see Figure 23). Although the quantitative survey did not specify the exact mechanisms or actors involved in such informal resolution, it may be assumed that this behavior is shaped both by limited trust in formal institutions and by cultural norms that discourage publicizing family or community issues. The qualitative data provide some support for this interpretation.

The KI interviewees suggested that the reluctance to speak out about discrimination is shaped not only by distrust in institutions, but also by broader social perceptions and social fears. Challenging the stereotypes of one's family or community may carry the risk of not being understood, not being taken seriously, or even becoming the target of social disapproval.

■ **"Shame - what if the neighbors hear? You cannot bring family matters out into the open. Even in work groups, you know, when someone, for example, raises their voice, people will say, 'Why are you saying this so loudly [about our group]? Why should others know that [there is a problem] in our group?'"**

Key Informant, civil society sector

■ **"Being misunderstood or not being understood is not perceived as a serious issue in society, [so that] those around them do not understand that what we are dealing with is discrimination, which is a real problem. Instead, they think of it as something normal, that it is normal, that we should not dwell on it and should just move on."**

Key Informant, public sector

Qualitative data show another important factor, which is the uncertainty of the expected public response. In some cases, speaking out - especially on social media - may attract support, particularly in relation to discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. Conversely, it may also trigger renewed targeting, hate speech, and the risk of further marginalization.

According to the qualitative data, the fear of alienation remains central: people fear the uncertainty that may follow if they are cut off from their community. For those with limited access to social, economic, and educational resources, the community may be the only support structure available to them. In such cases, the prospect of exclusion or condemnation may seem more unbearable than enduring the injustice itself.

As reflected in Figure 23, among the reasons cited for not contacting the relevant authorities, fear of retaliation represented 3.5% of all responses.



“Very often in cases of domestic violence, there is that fear- ‘what if her husband comes after me now?’”

Key Informant, public sector

Based on their experience of working with people who have faced discrimination, KI interviewees also described additional justifications for remaining silent - especially those linked to social taboos, including the idea that certain issues should remain within the family. In practice, these same justifications may also be used to rationalize not intervening when discrimination occurs. One such justification is the belief that one should not interfere in the affairs of “others” or of “other families.”

KI interviewees also identified a number of reasons for not turning to the relevant authorities that may be considered more rational in nature - that is, reasons that go beyond habit, stereotype, or social taboo. For example, some people do not file complaints because they lack the financial means to cover legal expenses. Others refrain because they are not confident that filing a complaint will lead to any legal consequences, or because, under the current legislative framework, doing so appears unlikely to bring any meaningful remedy, including financial compensation.

As noted throughout this section, the lack of legislative regulation is a major obstacle, not only for identifying cases of discrimination, but also for securing legal redress. This problem affects not only those who have experienced discrimination and those advocating on their behalf. Representatives of the relevant institutions, such as police officers, investigators, and judges also face this limitation.



“There are also cases where [discrimination cases] are raised and remain unresolved. What is the reason for this? There are many reasons. The first, as I mentioned, is the lack of opportunity. For example, the fact that I [as a person with a visual or hearing disability] cannot use banking services now. This is due to the discriminatory nature of the existing legislative regulation, and the possibility of resolving it on the spot is simply absent.”

Key Informant, legal sector

Most KI interviewees, however, considered the principal reason for not raising complaints about discrimination to be the public’s limited knowledge of where to submit a complaint and how to do so. Figures 28 and 29 partly support this observation. Answers to the question, “What kind of structures, agencies, or offices are you aware of that protect individuals from discrimination?” indicate that human rights-oriented non-governmental structures (such as the Human Rights Defender and human rights NGOs) were mentioned most frequently, accounting for 58.5% of all

responses, while the police and other state institutions accounted for a considerably smaller share of responses (21.6%) (see Figure 28).

In response to the question, “Do you know how to file a complaint if you encounter or witness discrimination?” only about one fifth of the population answered positively (see Figure 29).

This suggests that a majority of the public has at least a general sense of which kinds of structures may be approached for the protection of rights. The frequent mention of the Human Rights Defender and NGOs may also indicate that these bodies are perceived as a more accessible or reliable option. Unlike formal state channels, approaching them may not require knowledge of complex procedures, since people can often turn to them directly-in person or orally-and the technical aspects of filing a complaint are often handled by those organizations themselves (see Figure 28).

Figure 28. What institutions, agencies, or offices are you aware of that protect individuals against discrimination? (multiple choice) (%)

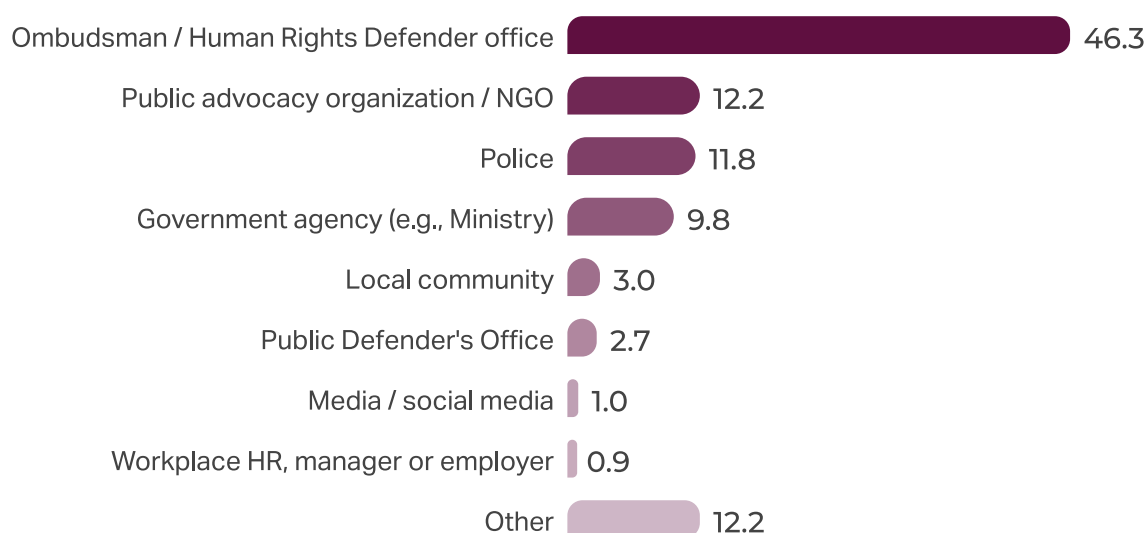
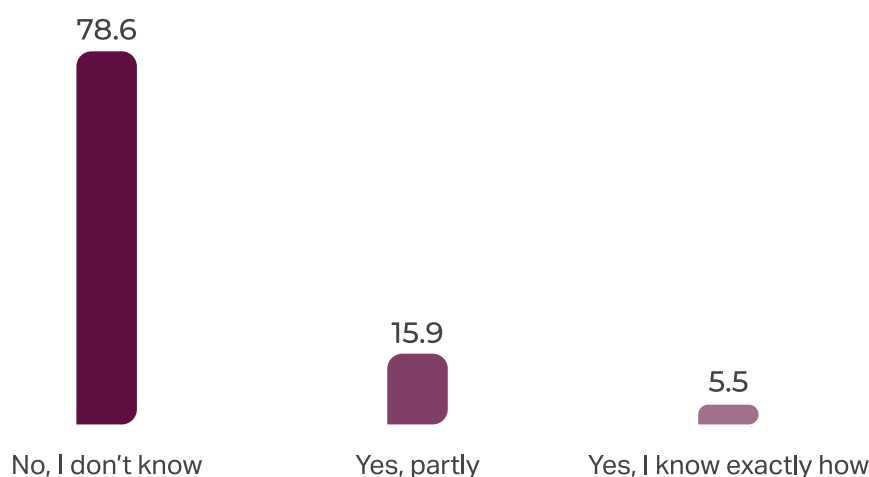


Figure 29. Please tell me: are you aware of how to file a complaint if you encounter or witness discrimination?



KI interviewees also mentioned a number of additional reasons for not turning to the relevant authorities in cases of discrimination, including:

1. failure to connect discriminatory treatment with a rights violation or with the law, whether by those directly affected or by witnesses;
2. fear of failure, including the feeling that applying and getting nowhere may reinforce a sense of helplessness;
3. in the case of witnesses, uncertainty about whether the person subjected to discrimination will themselves be willing to speak out;
4. discouragement from close relatives or acquaintances, who advise against applying to formal bodies;
5. and the broader social exhaustion caused by recent large-scale crises (COVID-19, the Nagorno-Karabakh war, and related upheavals), which has reduced public sensitivity to discrimination.

The fact that awareness and behavior are not always directly proportional is also confirmed by the quantitative data. Among those who clearly stated that they are familiar with complaint procedures in cases of discrimination, only 32.2% reported that they would contact formal institutions-such as the Police, the Human Rights Defender, or another state body-if they themselves encountered discrimination. A larger share indicated that they would prefer to solve the problem on their own (39.0%), while others said they would turn to a family member (7.6%), a neighbor, friend, or relative (3.5%), or an employer (2.1%). In addition, 2.0% said they would raise the issue through a media platform, while 3.9% stated that they would not seek help from anyone and would do nothing (see Figure 30).

Figure 30. Reactions of those informed about the appeal procedure when faced with discrimination (%)



3.6 Summary analysis of data on three target groups of discrimination

This sub-chapter focuses on three groups: people with disabilities, women, and national minorities. These groups were selected because they represent key areas of focus for the Human Rights Defender and were identified by the Reference Group as warranting dedicated analysis within the scope of the research. The findings for each group are therefore presented separately. This sub-chapter adopts a mixed-methods synthesis approach for each of the three groups, drawing on the survey, KII and IDI evidence. Socio-demographic analyses are presented where the sample allows⁶⁰. Secondary sources are used only to contextualize findings and are referenced in footnotes. Two caveats should be kept in mind when reading the findings that follow. First, as a population survey, the study is likely to under-represent the members of minority groups at heightened risk, which means that survey respondents' reports of experienced/witnessed discrimination against these groups is likely to be underestimated in the survey data. Second, as shown in Chapter 3.5, the willingness of respondents to recognize and report incidents as "discrimination" is itself shaped by awareness, social acceptance, and trust in institutions; the gap between perceived, witnessed and experienced discrimination should therefore be read as complementary rather than contradictory.

Summary takeaways

People with disabilities

- In the sample, 11.9% of respondents meet the Washington Group Short Set criterion for disability (see Chapter 2 for the definition). Personal experience of discrimination in the past five years was reported more often by this group than by the sample overall.
- Persons with physical, mental disabilities are the most visible targets of perceived discrimination in Armenian public opinion: in response to the question on which groups most need extra protection under a future anti-discrimination law (Figure 8), Responses identifying persons with physical disabilities accounted for 30.4% of all mentions, while responses identifying persons with mental disabilities accounted for 23.6%. Together, these categories represented the largest share of all responses referring to groups in need of social protection.
- In witnessed discrimination (Figure 10), persons with mental disabilities (13.4%) and persons with physical disabilities (12.4%) are the second and third most mentioned groups.
- At the declarative level, respondents express broadly inclusive attitudes: 95.8% agree the state is obliged to ensure accessibility of public spaces for people with physical disabilities, and 74.2% disagree that their child should not study in a class with children with physical disabilities (Figures 31, 34). However, 24.6% agree they would feel uncomfortable working closely with a person with a mental disability, this is the only statement among the four where a substantial minority expresses direct discomfort.
- KI interviewees in the civil society, legal, public and education sectors consistently identified physical and communication inaccessibility, restrictions on legal capacity, labelling on social

60. Note on disability status in this chapter: Disability status in this study was measured using the Washington Group Short Set of Questions (WGSS). Respondents were classified as having a disability if they reported experiencing "a lot of difficulty" or being "unable to do at all" in at least one of the six functional domains (seeing, hearing, walking or climbing steps, remembering or concentrating, self-care, or communication), resulting in 11.9% of respondents being classified as persons with disabilities. As this definition differs from the criteria used in official Armenian statistics, the disability-disaggregated findings presented in this section are not weighted and should not be interpreted as representative of the nationally recognized population of persons with disabilities. Rather, they reflect differences between respondents classified as having and not having disabilities within the survey sample.

media, and paternalistic treatment in healthcare, particularly of women with disabilities and children with mental disabilities, as the most salient forms of discriminatory treatment encountered in their professional work.

Women

- Personal experience of discrimination in the past five years was reported by 16.5% of women. This is striking given the substantive KI accounts of workplace, family and institutional discrimination against women, and points to a gap between lived experience and what respondents recognize and report as discrimination.
- Public perception ranks women as the fifth most-discriminated-against group (29.1% agreed it is widespread, Figure 11), and witnessed discrimination against women is cited in 10.3% of responses (Figure 9). Women accounted for only 8.2% of all responses identifying groups deserving additional protection under a future anti-discrimination law, and for 13.3% of responses provided by women respondents. (Figure 16).
- Traditional gender-role attitudes are shared broadly across gender lines: 57.9% of women and 57.8% of men agree that child-care and household work is primarily a woman's duty (Figure 36). Attitudes on access to employment are more gender-differentiated: 34.2% of women and 46.7% of men agree men should have more rights to a job when jobs are scarce (Figure 37).
- When asked where they would turn first if they personally experienced discrimination, 45.1% of men (vs. 34.1% of women) would try to resolve the issue themselves, while 11.9% of women (vs. 2.2% of men) would turn to a family member. This gendered response pattern is itself a finding about how discrimination-response strategies are shaped by gender norms.
- KI interviewees in the legal, education and public sectors identified family-based restrictions, workplace reported wage disparities and perceived barriers to advancement, accounts of unequal treatment in recruitment and post-maternity-leave return, sexual harassment in the service sector, and KI interviewees reported instances they perceived as victim-blaming responses from police and courts in domestic-violence cases as the most salient forms of discrimination against women encountered in their professional work.
- The case-study evidence, including an IDI interviewee who is a lawyer by profession and fully aware of her rights but chose not to speak out, suggests that awareness of complaint procedures does not translate into reporting. This is corroborated by the finding that even among survey respondents who said they know exactly how to file a complaint, only 32.2% said they would turn to a formal institution if they personally faced discrimination.

National minorities

- National minorities in Armenia have the lowest visibility in public perceptions: only 12.6% of respondents said discrimination against them is widespread (Figure 12), with 4.1% of all responses reporting witnessing discrimination against them (Figure 10), and 5.8% of all responses identifying them as a group needing extra legal protection (Figure 8).
- Twenty-nine respondents in the quantitative sample (1.3% of the weighted sample) self-identified as belonging to a national minority. Within-group quantitative inference is limited by this small sample; the observations below from this subsample should be read as illustrative rather than generalizable.

- Of those respondents who said race or ethnicity was the main reason for the most recent discriminatory incident they witnessed or heard about, 5.7% selected this ground (Figure 11); for *experienced* discrimination, the Figure falls to 1.7% (Figure 15)⁶¹.
- KI interviewees working with minority communities distinguished between two patterns: (a) relatively integrated minorities such as Assyrians, Greeks and Russians, where individual discrimination may not be identified as such because the group is perceived as part of the majority; and (b) more closed community structures such as Yezidi and Molokan communities, where internal problems, including early marriage and restrictions on girls' continuation into upper-secondary and higher education, practices that may raise rights concerns but are often less visible to the broader public.
- KI interviewees identified linguistic invisibility and limited opportunities for socio-economic advancement as shared concerns across minority groups, alongside internal-community tensions around the preservation of language, traditions and culture.

3.6.1 Persons with disabilities as targets of discrimination⁶²

The analysis of the mixed-method research results suggests that, among the groups considered potential targets of discrimination, persons with disabilities (physical, or mental) are perceived as the most at risk. This perception is also reflected in views on legal protection: as shown in Figure 16, responses identifying persons with physical disabilities accounted for 30.4% of all selected responses, while responses identifying persons with mental disabilities accounted for 23.6%. Together, these two groups represented 54.0% of all responses concerning groups most in need of legislative protection.

These groups are also highly visible in public perceptions of discrimination. In response to the question, "Which groups have you seen being discriminated against?", references to people with mental disabilities (13.4% of all responses) and people with physical disabilities (12.4% of all responses) were the second and third most frequently mentioned, respectively (*see Figure 9*).

Similarly, based on the distribution of responses to the question, "What do you believe was the MAIN reason for the most recent incident of discrimination you have seen or heard?", mental disability (11.9%) and physical disability (9.5%) were the second and third most frequently cited reasons, respectively (*see Figure 11*). These groups also featured prominently in broader perceptions of discrimination prevalence. Thus, in response to the question, "In your opinion, how widespread is discrimination in Armenia towards the following social groups?", 35.1% of respondents considered discrimination against people with mental disabilities to be either very widespread or fairly widespread, while 28.5% expressed the same view regarding people with physical disabilities. (*see Figure 5*).

Personal experience data further support these patterns. In the sample, 11.9% of respondents meet the Washington Group Short Set criterion for disability. Among this group, personal experience of discrimination in the past five years was reported at a higher rate than among the sample overall, suggesting that the elevated public recognition of disability-related discrimination reflects, at least in part, a real difference in exposure to discriminatory treatment rather than perception alone.

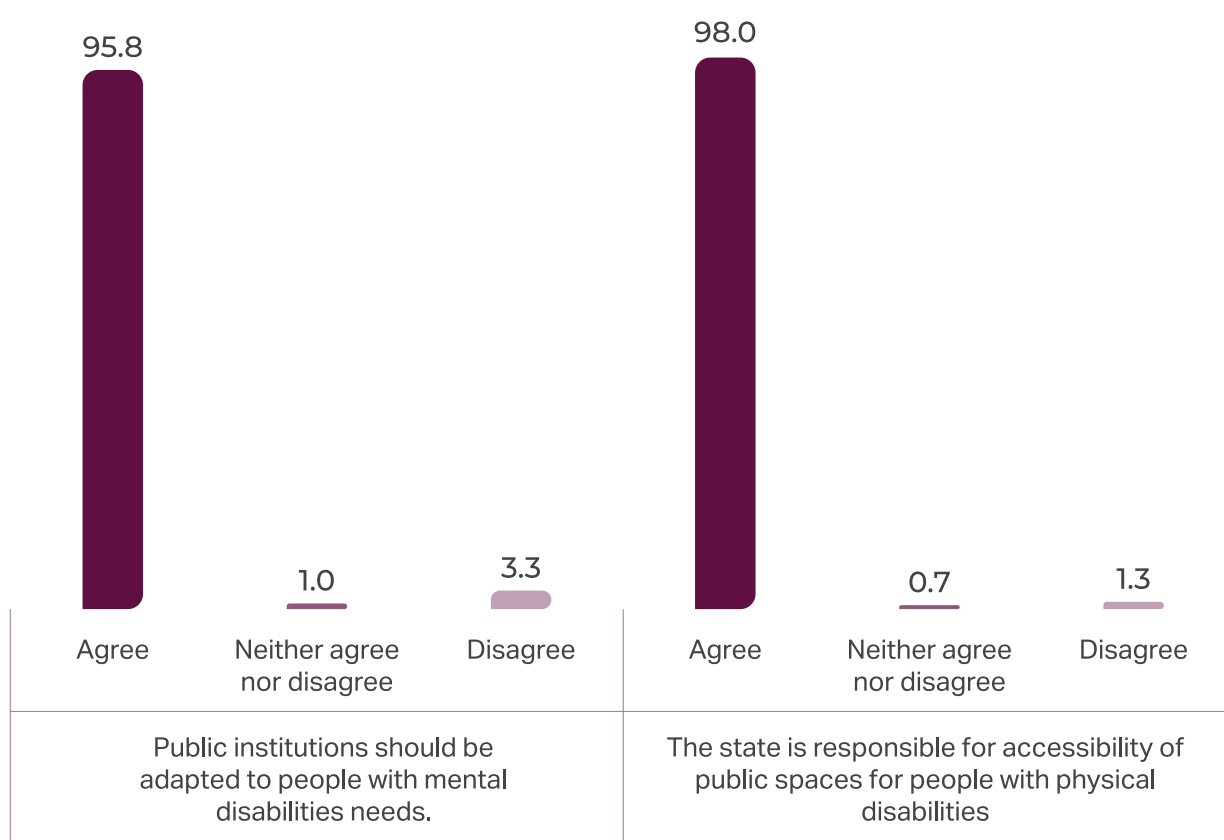
61. These figures should be interpreted with caution, as only 1.3% of the survey sample identified as members of national minorities. At the same time, responses on witnessed or heard-about discrimination may refer to incidents involving others and are not limited to respondents' own ethnic background.

62. All disaggregated analyses by disability status are based on unweighted data. The disability variable used in this study was constructed using a methodology that differs from that applied in the national population statistics on which the survey weights were calibrated. Consequently, the survey weights cannot be validly applied to analyses where variables are disaggregated by disability status.

Qualitative findings reinforce these patterns. Across settings, mobility-related barriers faced by persons with disabilities are particularly pronounced. According to the KI interviewees, despite some progress in improving accessibility in public spaces and public transport, these issues remain unresolved or only partially addressed in regional settlements⁶³. Considerable barriers persist within healthcare, educational, government, and other public buildings.

The importance of ensuring accessible conditions for the mobility of persons with disabilities is also reflected in public opinion. An overwhelming majority of Armenians agreed with two key statements on this issue: 95.8% agreed that “The state is obliged to ensure accessibility of public spaces for people with physical disabilities,” and 98.0% agreed that “Public structures must be adapted to the needs of people with mental disabilities” (see Figure 31).

Figure 31. Now I will read several statements, please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with them. (%)



Note: Response categories have been combined: “fully agree” and “somewhat agree” are presented together, as are “fully disagree” and “somewhat disagree.”

63. Studies further show that, in rural areas and across Armenia’s regions, the difficulties faced by persons with disabilities are compounded by the lack of accessible infrastructure. These challenges are particularly evident in public transport and other public spaces. For example, public transport does not provide LED screens displaying stop names for passengers with hearing impairments, nor does it offer adequate audio-visual announcements for passengers with visual impairments to identify upcoming stops and their locations. In addition, public spaces generally lack video communication tools that would enable deaf or non-speaking persons to access information more independently. These issues are discussed in greater detail in [Manifestations of Discrimination Against People with Disabilities](#).

Perceptions of the seriousness of discrimination also vary by disability status. Respondents with disabilities are somewhat more likely than respondents without disabilities to view discrimination as a serious problem: 78.5% of persons with disabilities consider discrimination a serious problem, compared with 74.2% of persons without disabilities⁶⁴. This finding is consistent with the broader pattern that groups potentially more exposed to discrimination are more likely to perceive it as a significant societal problem.

As shown in Figure 32, respondents without disabilities express greater confidence than respondents with disabilities that the police will take discrimination complaints seriously. Specifically, 57.1% of respondents without disabilities report trusting the police in this regard, compared with 53.7% of respondents with disabilities. Conversely, distrust is somewhat more common among respondents with disabilities (46.3%) than among those without disabilities (42.9%). The difference is statistically significant, suggesting that perceptions of police responsiveness to discrimination complaints differ according to disability status⁶⁵.

Figure 32. Trust in the police, by disability status. (%)

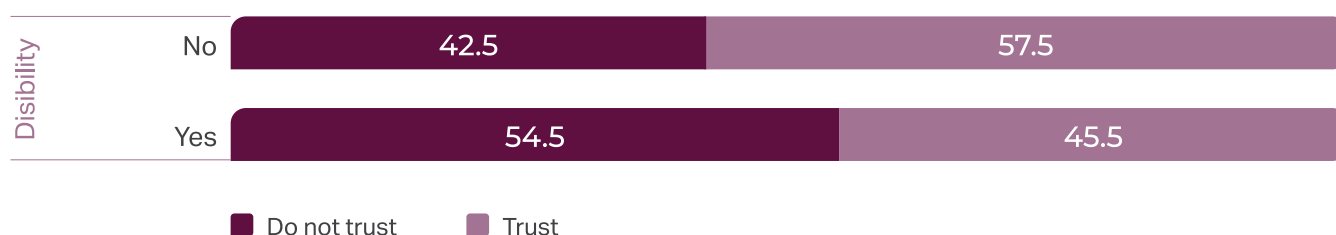


Note: Response categories have been combined: “fully trust” and “somewhat trust” are presented together, as are “do not trust at all” and “somewhat distrust.”

Figure 33 indicates an even more pronounced gap in perceptions of courts and judicial bodies. While a majority of respondents without disabilities (57.5%) trust courts to make fair decisions on discrimination-related issues, fewer than half of respondents with disabilities (45.5%) share this view. Correspondingly, respondents with disabilities are considerably more likely to express a lack of trust in courts and judicial bodies (54.5%) than respondents without disabilities (42.5%). This statistically significant difference points to substantial variation in confidence in the fairness of judicial decision-making on discrimination issues across disability groups⁶⁶.

64. $\chi^2 = 6.53$, p-value < 0.001
65. $\chi^2 (3, N = 1,997) = 11.749$, p = .008
66. $\chi^2 (3, N = 1,815) = 14.534$, p = .002

Figure 33. Trust in courts and judicial bodies, by disability status. (%)



Note: Response categories have been combined: “fully trust” and “somewhat trust” are presented together, as are “do not trust at all” and “somewhat distrust.”

KI interviewees also noted that mobility-related restrictions create barriers to accessing essential services and, in practice, limit the realization of fundamental rights, including the rights to education, healthcare, information, justice⁶⁷.

“In the case of persons with disabilities, we very often see that the environment is not adapted, and this leads to a situation where they cannot fully exercise their basic rights, including their right to education and their fundamental right to health.”

Key Informant, public sector

KI interviewees pointed to additional accessibility barriers, particularly for persons with visual and hearing impairments. These include the inaccessibility of public spaces and serious limitations in access to educational, banking, and healthcare services.

“Let me give another example that does not concern motor impairments. Deaf young people often have no access to translation or interpretation services, which makes learning extremely difficult because the necessary conditions are simply not in place. There is no interpreter to make the process effective. And in the case of blind people, even something as basic as reading a book becomes a problem, especially when materials are available only as photocopies or in outdated formats.”

Key Informant, civil society sector

“For example, in banking services, persons with disabilities often do not have the opportunity to obtain bank cards or carry out transactions independently, without involving a third person. A person with visual impairments, for instance, must go through a notary in order to authorize someone else to sign on their behalf. This points to a clear problem in ensuring the accessibility of specific banking services for persons with disabilities.”

Key Informant, legal sector

67. Studies have also shown that courts in Armenia do not provide sufficient conditions for universal design, assistive devices, or reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities. Although the Code of Judicial Procedure establishes certain relevant provisions, their insufficiency, contested nature, and the difficulties surrounding their practical implementation continue to hinder access to justice for persons with disabilities. These limitations result in violations of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, particularly its principles and guarantees related to non-discrimination, accessibility, inclusion, and respect for dignity. Moreover, the situation also undermines the rights to access to court and adversarial proceedings, both of which are integral components of the right to a fair trial under the European Convention on Human Rights and the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia. As a result, persons with disabilities may be deprived of the opportunity to participate in proceedings on an equal footing with other parties. The right to respect for private life, the inviolability of dignity, and the rights to physical and mental integrity may also be compromised, potentially causing profound psychological suffering that, in some cases, may exceed the minimum threshold of ill-treatment. See [Access to Justice for Persons with Disabilities in Armenia](#).

Restrictions on the rights to healthcare, education, and employment are not only linked to mobility barriers or limited access to information. In many cases, discrimination stems directly from a person's functional limitations or simply from having a disability.

 *“For example, a child with a disability may be enrolled in a public educational institution where the overall atmosphere is warm and caring, yet the child is not actually provided with the educational material they need. The focus may be only on keeping the child calm, ensuring that they behave appropriately, and that they do not disrupt the class. It may seem that the staff member is doing everything possible to make the child feel comfortable in that environment, but that is not the core mission. The real task is to ensure proper inclusion, so that the child is genuinely integrated into the educational process and is able to learn the full curriculum⁶⁸.”*

Key Informant, legal sector

According to the data collected in this study, as well as reports from various sources⁶⁹, persons with disabilities face discrimination⁷⁰ within the family, in healthcare institutions, and in the labor market. As the data collected in this study show, discrimination is often rooted in distrust toward persons with disabilities and in the systematic underestimation of their capacities.

 *“There are also restrictive provisions in the legislation concerning eligibility for different positions in cases of certain health conditions. There is a separate category of legal incapacity, and the very existence of such provisions is discriminatory. Once a person is recognized as legally incapacitated, this creates additional discrimination and restriction. There have also been legislative norms stating that if you are recognized as incapacitated, you cannot hold certain positions; similarly, if you have a condition such as schizophrenia, you may be barred from a range of roles.”*

Key Informant, civil society sector

Other studies show that one of the most frequently mentioned manifestations of discrimination against persons with disabilities is labeling, particularly on social media and in public spaces⁷¹. A particularly troubling aspect is that this at-risk group may also become the target of ridicule and insults by public officials and other responsible actors. In many cases, this may happen unintentionally, even when persons with disabilities are not the direct targets. However, the casual use of labels such as “crazy,” “insane,” or “mentally ill” in everyday speech reinforces harmful stereotypes and reproduces discriminatory attitudes.

68. The Human Rights Defender's regular monitoring, along with written and oral applications and complaints, including hotline calls, points to a number of systemic problems in ensuring the right to education for persons with disabilities. These include barriers related to accessibility and the provision of reasonable accommodation, shortcomings in the quality and effectiveness of education, and the continued practice of organizing the education of children with disabilities in separate settings. It has been noted, for example, that when organizing the educational process, teachers do not always rely on individual learning plans developed for each learner on the basis of educational levels and subject curricula. Instead, they often attempt to deliver the material to all children in the same way, and in some cases focus primarily on keeping children calm rather than ensuring meaningful educational inclusion. See [On the Activities of the Human Rights Defender, the State of Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms: Annual Report 2024](#).

69. See, for example, [Manifestations of Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities](#); and [Annual Report on the Activities of the Human Rights Defender, the State of Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms, 2024](#).

70. According to other surveys, one of the most pressing concerns for persons with disabilities is access to financial resources. See [Manifestations of Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities](#).

71. Surveys conducted among persons with disabilities also show that 32% fear being pointed at, insulted, or ridiculed in public because of their disability, while 34% feel worried or tense in relation to their employer, fearing that they may be mocked or humiliated. See [Manifestations of Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities](#).

“I would probably say first and foremost that persons with mental health problems are very often treated badly. People do not understand them, or even when they do recognize that someone has a mental health condition, they may film them, circulate the footage, and mock them. For me, this is one of the most serious problems, and we try, as much as possible, to clean the internet of such content. We contact content creators and ask them to remove the clips, and so on.”

Key Informant, civil society sector

“For example, if a person has a mental health problem, people say, ‘he is sick,’ or ‘he is disabled,’ or ‘he is deaf,’ in that kind of language. Such expressions often come up in discussions around specific cases, but in my view, this is discriminatory vocabulary. The moment we describe a person in that way, we already begin to look at them through a discriminatory lens: as if they are not a full member of society, as if they should not be taken seriously, to put it plainly.”

Key Informant, public sector

Judging from the responses of those who have personally encountered or witnessed various manifestations of discrimination and whether they chose to speak out about the incident (see Figure 20) it can be assumed that incidents involving people with disabilities are also rarely reported or brought to the attention of the relevant authorities. This may indicate that such incidents are either not recognized as serious manifestations of discrimination or are simply not identified as discrimination at all. Such incidents are often not recognized as genuine manifestations of discrimination, or sometimes not identified as discrimination at all.

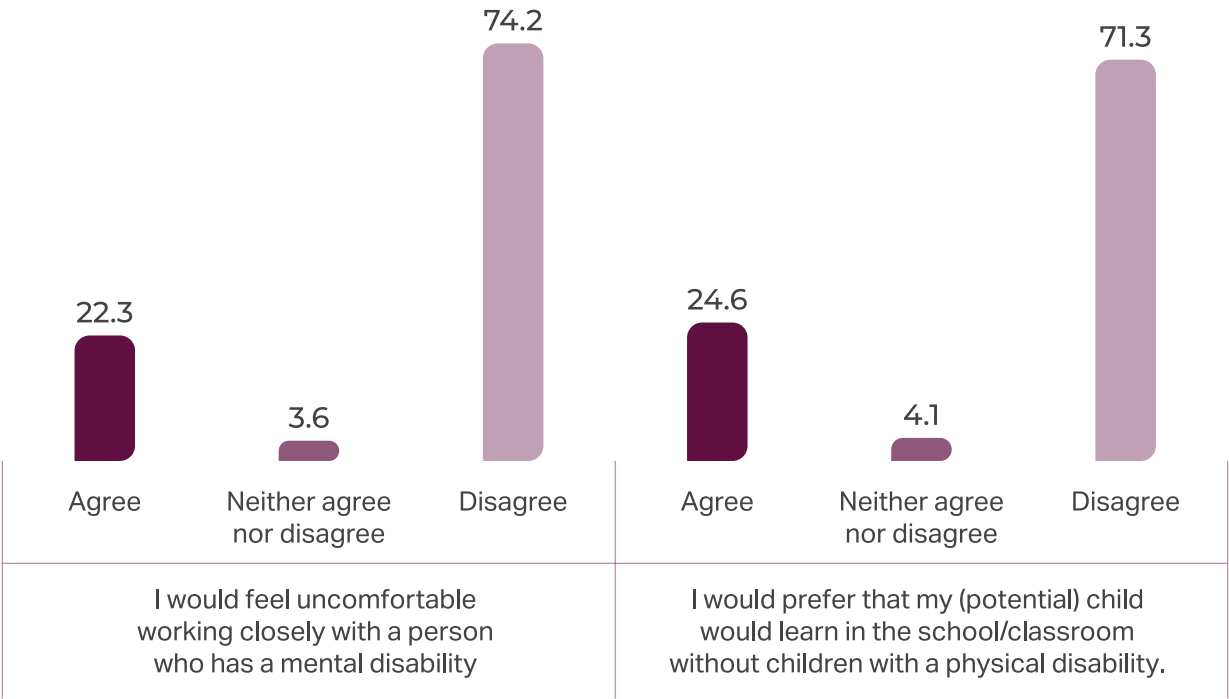
With regard to contacting the relevant authorities, both quantitative and qualitative data indicate that the public’s overall tendency to apply to competent institutions is low. As discussed in Subchapter 3.5, the reasons are multiple and interconnected: they include distrust in institutions, limited legal awareness, the desire to avoid bureaucratic obstacles and possible negative consequences, and the tendency not to perceive discrimination as a violation of rights. Persons with disabilities are especially at risk in this context, as these factors are further compounded by accessibility barriers, limited access to information, and physical and communication constraints. In addition, they are often more dependent on family members or caregivers, may experience greater social isolation, and may fear additional stigma, all of which further reduce the likelihood of seeking legal protection. As a result, discrimination against persons with disabilities is not only rarely reported, but also more likely to remain invisible and unaddressed⁷².

Responses to two attitudinal statements provide additional insight into public attitudes toward people with disabilities. The first concerned whether respondents would feel uncomfortable working with a person with mental disabilities. The second concerned whether respondents would prefer that their child not study in the same class as children with physical disabilities. In the first case, 71.3% of the public disagreed with the statement, indicating that the majority said they would not feel uncomfortable working with a person with mental disabilities. In the second case, 74.2% of respondents opposed the statement, suggesting that most would accept their children studying alongside children with physical disabilities (see Figure 34).

72. The above conclusion is also supported by the secondary data reviewed within the framework of this study. See [Manifestations of Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities](#).

Taken together, these declarative responses suggest that, at the level of stated attitudes, there is no sharp contrast between perceptions of these two groups. This may, however, partly reflect a tendency to provide socially desirable answers in response to direct attitudinal statements.

Figure 34. Now I will read several statements; please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with them. (%)



Note: Response categories have been combined: “fully agree” and “somewhat agree” are presented together, as are “fully disagree” and “somewhat disagree.”

The qualitative data point to a more complex, and in some cases contradictory, picture. They reveal a more cautious, at times evasive, and sometimes openly stigmatizing attitude toward persons with mental disabilities.

KI interviewees also referred to what may, conventionally speaking, be described as a “less sympathetic” attitude toward children with mental disabilities. According to them, this attitude is more characteristic among parents than children. They further noted that this differentiated public attitude is partly rooted in the long-standing social isolation of persons with mental health conditions.

“Children themselves generally do not display such attitudes. There have been cases that were difficult for them to accept, not only when children with motor impairments began attending school with them, but also children with mild mental disorders. However, the greater intolerance was probably on the part of the parents.”
Key Informant, public sector

 *“There are families who, for example, have a child with health-related conditions and realize immediately at the hospital that they are not ready for that child - whether the child has Down’s syndrome or another condition. They feel unprepared to care for the child and refuse the child already at the hospital. In such cases, we organize the child’s transfer to an orphanage...”*

Key Informant, public sector

 *“For a very, very long time, our society simply did not see persons with mental health conditions. They were either kept hidden at home or placed in psychiatric institutions in places such as Vardenis and Sevan.”*

Key Informant, civil society sector

3.6.2 Women as targets of discrimination

The study shows that discrimination against women in Armenia - both overt and subtle – is manifested across all spheres of life, from family relations to high-level politics.

Based on the KI interviews, it can be concluded that the most widespread and diverse manifestations of discrimination against women are found in the family setting. These include restrictions on women’s participation in decision-making, limitations on their ability to fully engage in education and childcare on equal terms, the disproportionate burden of domestic labor, and exposure to physical, psychological, and sexual violence rooted in the perception of women as the “weaker sex” and as objects of sexualization. Moreover, some of these manifestations are reported to be more pronounced in rural communities and among ethnic minority families⁷³ than in urban settings.

 *“Women are discriminated against in their families. For example, we have communities where women do not work or do not use certain services. For men, it is very often considered normal that a woman should not express her opinion.”*

Key Informant, public sector

 *“The status of women is very low there [Yezidi community]. In practice, the girl’s path is determined by the father’s decision. Girls are often not allowed to continue education after the 9th grade. When, for example, a girl is kidnapped, this may be treated as normal, with the expectation that she will later start a family. It is also considered acceptable when there is a significant age gap - the girl is a minor, while the man is older - and they begin a family. Under our legislation, this is considered a crime, but within that community it may still be socially accepted.”*

Key Informant, public sector

According to KI interviewees, discrimination against women in the workplace is manifested through various forms of restriction, as well as sexual harassment rooted in gendered and sexualized perceptions. These restrictions are reflected in the evaluation of women’s work, their opportunities

73. See [Annual Report on the Activities of the Human Rights Defender, the State of Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms, 2024](#).

for promotion, and their access to career advancement. Men holding the same positions or performing the same work are often paid more than women.

“The gender-based difference in the salaries of mid-level employees in Armenia is such that, if a man and a woman hold the same position, the man often receives a higher salary.”

Key Informant, education sector

In the area of career advancement, the so-called “glass ceiling” operates in many cases. Women often face significant barriers to promotion into managerial or senior positions, particularly in fields such as finance, security, defense, and law enforcement. In some of these sectors, the appointment of women to ministerial posts may appear largely symbolic, as most other senior positions continue to be occupied by men. As a result, women’s opportunities for advancement remain constrained, especially within the lower and mid-level ranks. By contrast, women in the private sector are often perceived as having comparatively greater opportunities for professional advancement. One KI interviewee illustrated the symbolic or token nature of some high-profile appointments:

“People around me often say that state work and state institutions are, in many cases, more discriminatory environments. For example, in terms of career advancement, women are less likely to advance within state institutions than in private ones. This is why we see high levels of female participation and leadership in the private sector. In state institutions, women may be placed in visible positions so that it appears that women are leaders, but in the bodies below them there are often no women at all.”

Key Informant, education sector

Women also face clear discrimination in recruitment processes and when returning to work after maternity leave. According to a KI interviewee, it is common, particularly in budget-funded institutions, for employers to ask women applying for jobs about their marital status or whether they are planning to have children. There are also reports that women returning after extended maternity leave are often perceived by employers as having lost their skills or professional relevance, which places them at heightened risk of discriminatory treatment.

“How often do managers ask a prospective employee: Are you married? When are you planning to have a child? How long will you be on maternity leave? There is something very delicate here. This form of discrimination has become so familiar to all of us that it has, in a sense, become normalized-unlike other, more subtle and latent manifestations of discrimination that people often cannot speak about openly because of cultural constraints.”

Key Informant, education sector

The KI interviewees also reported sexual harassment of women in the workplace, particularly in the service sector. According to these accounts, women are subjected to inappropriate touching, comments, and sexual advances by both managers and customers⁷⁴. In such situations, women are perceived not as professionals, but as objects of sexualization, diminishing their professional roles and undermining recognition of their competence. As the informants noted:

74. Ibid.



“Although a regulation prohibiting sexual harassment in the workplace was recently adopted, there are still serious problems in practice. The very people who have experienced such discrimination often avoid speaking about it. It remains taboo.”

Key Informant, legal sector

The accounts provided by the KI interviewees indicate that discriminatory treatment of women is also present in their interactions with law enforcement and judicial institutions. In some cases, police officers normalize violence by urging women to “tolerate” the use of physical force. In domestic violence proceedings, judges may at times examine the causes of violence through a biased lens, causing the inquiry to shift toward assigning blame to the woman rather than addressing the act of violence itself. Such approaches not only disregard the reality of abuse but also erode victims’ trust in the system and limit their ability to obtain justice.



“I can recall an example of police discrimination, which is a classic example in cases of domestic violence. The police officer tries to calm the woman down and says: ‘All right, you are a woman, it is normal, they may hit you or use some physical force.’”

Key Informant, public sector

It is noteworthy that, despite reports from various Key Informants indicating the widespread nature of discrimination against women, the results of the quantitative survey present a less alarming picture. Thus, in response to the question, “In your opinion, how widespread is discrimination in Armenia towards the following social groups?”, only 29.1% of the respondents stated that discrimination against women is widespread to some extent (*see Figure 11*). Additionally, a striking finding is that the share of women reporting experiences of discrimination (16.5%) is almost identical to men (16.8%), suggesting a gap between lived experiences and what women identify as discrimination in survey responses. Based on these responses, women were ranked as the fifth most at-risk group among those perceived as subject to discrimination, following the LGBTQ+ community, persons with physical and mental disabilities, displaced persons from Nagorno-Karabakh, and migrants (*see Figure 11*).

The responses to another, more specific question - “Which groups have you seen being discriminated against?” - show a similar pattern. Among the target groups mentioned, women again appear in the last position within the top five, with 10.3% of responses identifying them as a group subjected to witnessed discrimination (*see Figure 9*).

The answers to the question, “What do you believe was the MAIN reason for the most recent incident of discrimination you have seen or heard?”, are also revealing. Only 4.5% of those who had witnessed or heard about their most recent discriminatory incident identified the person’s sex or gender as the main reason for that incident (*see Figure 11*).

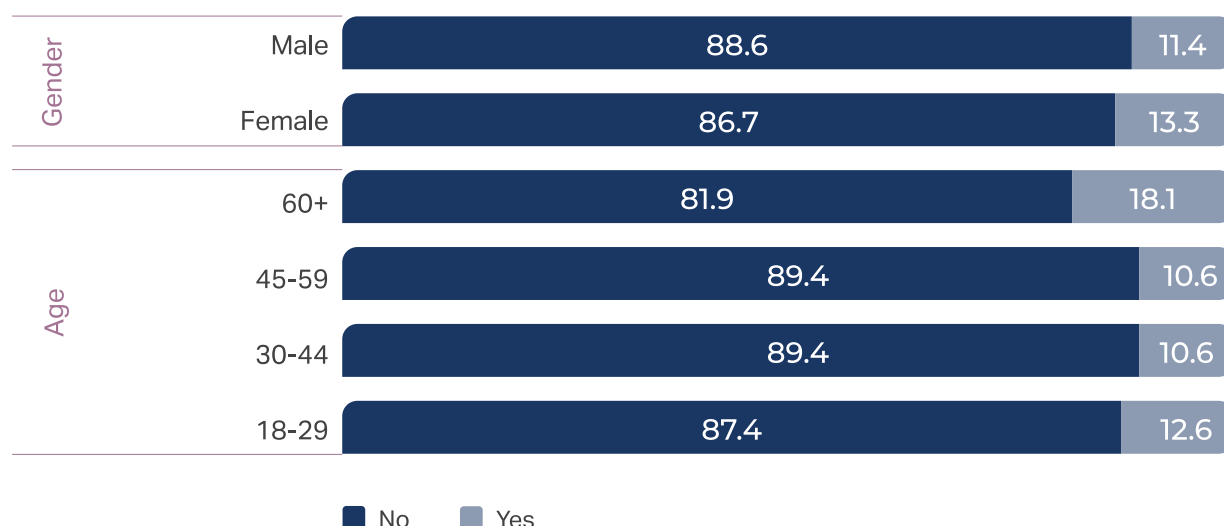
Based on these findings, it may be assumed that the majority of cases of discrimination against women in Armenian society have low public visibility. The fact that such cases often remain “behind closed doors” means that they are frequently neither recognized nor interpreted as discrimination.

This assumption appears to be reinforced by the responses to another question. When asked, “Imagine that Armenia adopts a new law to combat discrimination. The rights of which social groups do you think should be extra protected under this law?”, references to women accounted for only 8.2% of all responses (*see Figure 16*) and 13.3% of responses provided by women respondents (*see Figure 35*).

An analysis of responses to this question by socio-demographic characteristics reveals somewhat contradictory results. Notably, the option of “women as a group in need of protection” was selected

by only 13.3% of women. The data also show that the share of men choosing this option (11.4%) is nearly the same as the Figure among women (*see Figure 35*). Those selecting women as the group most in need of protection from discrimination remain relatively infrequent across age categories. In particular, respondents aged 18–29 selected this option in 18.1% of cases, significantly more often than respondents aged 30–44 and 45–59, by approximately 8 percentage points⁷⁵ (*see Figure 35*).

Figure 35. Respondents who selected “women” in response to the question: “Imagine that Armenia adopts a new law to combat discrimination. The rights of which social groups do you think should be extra protected under this law?” - by socio-demographic characteristics. (%)



The low sensitivity to discrimination against women is also clearly reflected in responses to a number of attitudinal statements. For example, more than half of women (57.9%) agreed with the statement: “It is primarily a woman’s duty to take care of children and the household.” In this case, the share of men who gave the same response (57.8%) is almost identical, indicating a strikingly similar level of agreement across genders⁷⁶.

The responses of those living in rural areas and in regional urban settlements also do not differ substantially from one another, whereas among residents of Yerevan, agreement with the statement is 6-7 percentage points lower. As shown in Figure 36, respondents aged 18-29 were the least likely to agree with the statement (50.3%) compared to other age groups⁷⁷.

In parallel, a clear socio-economic gradient is visible. The proportion of those agreeing with the statement is lower among respondents with a high socio-economic status (50.6%) than among those with a low socio-economic status (67.5%)⁷⁸. Overall, the data suggest a general trend whereby agreement with the statement increases as socio-economic status decreases (*see Figure 36*).

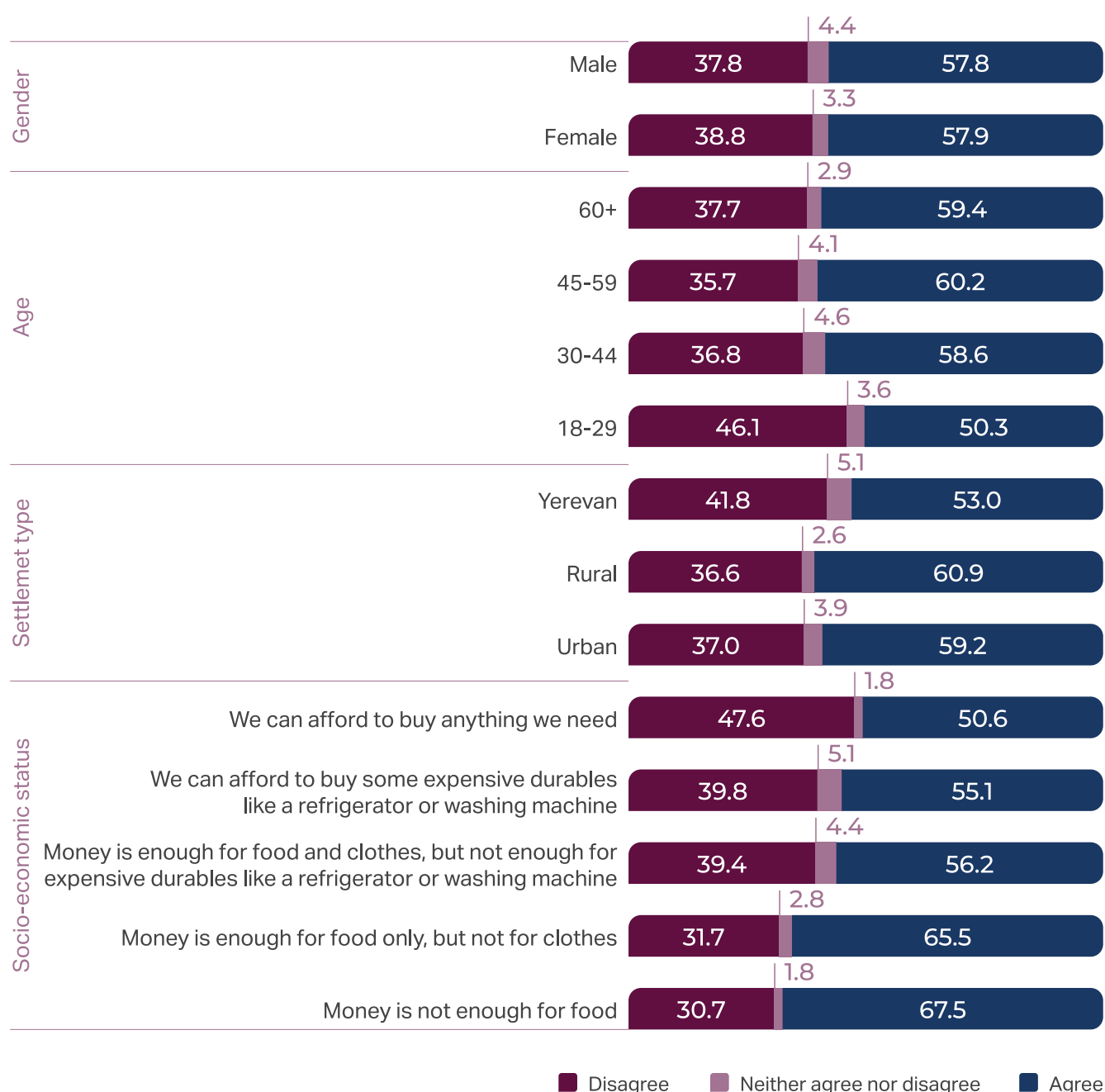
75. survey-weighted logistic regression with estimated marginal means (EMMs); Bonferroni-adjusted p-value <0.01

76. Since this difference is not statistically significant, the results should not be interpreted as evidence of a gender-based difference, but rather as an indication that this attitude is similarly widespread among both women and men

77. Since these differences are not statistically significant, the results should not be interpreted as evidence of differences by place of residence or age. Rather, they suggest that agreement with the statement is similarly widespread across settlement types and age groups, despite some variation in the observed percentages.

78. Survey-weighted rank tests pairwise comparisons; Bonferroni-adjusted p-value < 0.01.

Figure 36. Agreement with the statement “It is primarily a woman’s duty to take care of children and the household.” by socio-demographic characteristics. (%)



Note: Response categories have been combined: “fully agree” and “somewhat agree” are presented together, as are “fully disagree” and “somewhat disagree.”

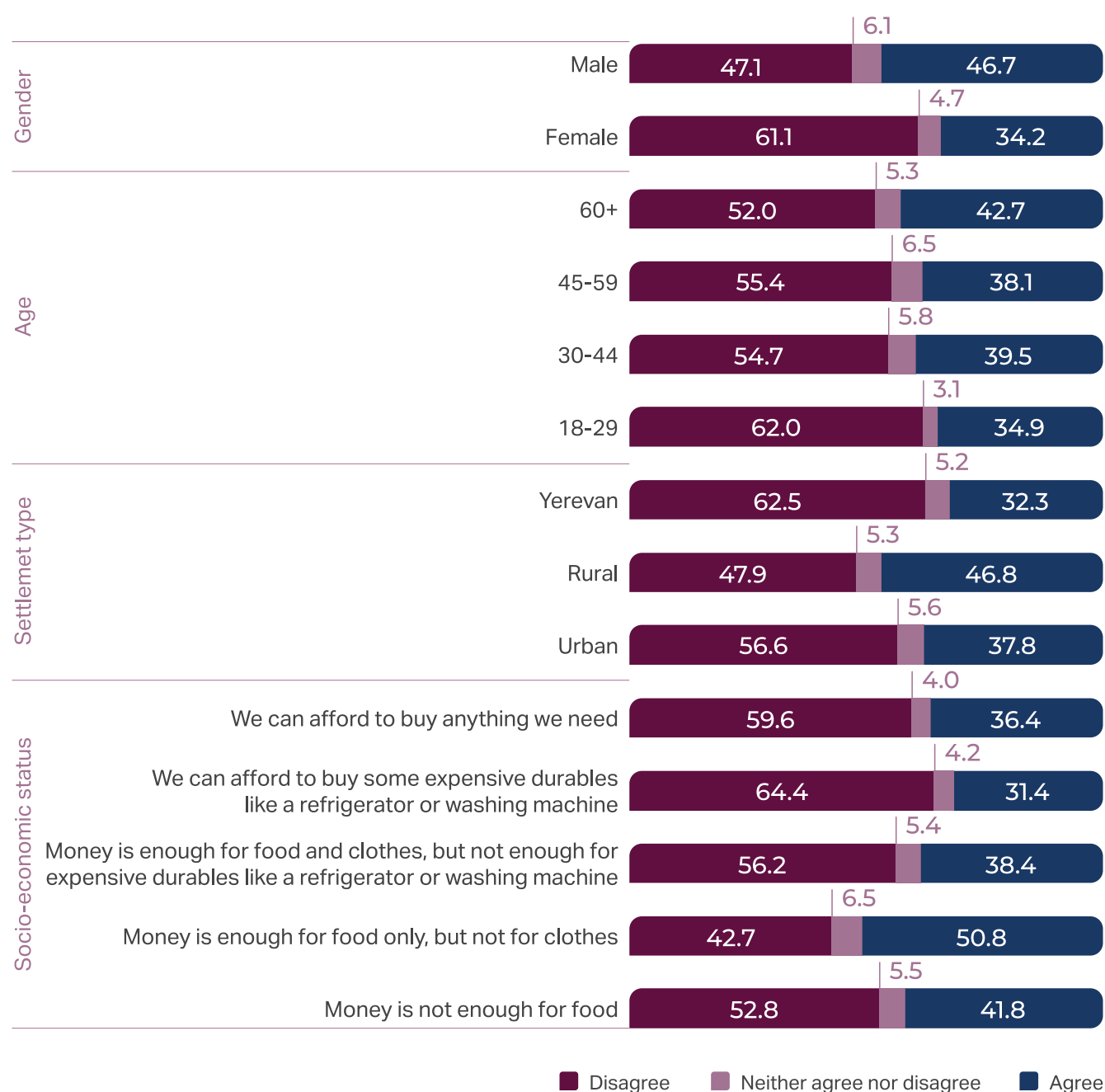
Responses to another statement concerning employment rights also shed light on the level of sensitivity to gender discrimination across different socio-demographic groups. 34.2% of women and 46.7% of men agreed with the statement: “When jobs are scarce, men should have more rights to a job than women⁷⁹.” Agreement with the statement varies by settlement type. The proportion of respondents who agree is relatively similar among residents of Yerevan (32.3%) and other urban settlements (37.8%), while it is considerably higher among rural residents (46.8%) (*see Figure 37*).

79. Pearson’s χ^2 : Rao & Scott adjustment, $P_{\text{value}} < 0.01$. Survey-weighted logistic regression pairwise comparisons with estimated marginal means (EMMs); Bonferroni-adjusted p -values < 0.01 .

This suggests that the attitude is more pronounced in rural settlements than both in Yerevan and in other urban areas (see Figure 37)⁸⁰.

By age, agreement with this statement is lowest among respondents aged 18-29 (34.9%) and highest among those aged 60 and above (42.7%). A modest variation is also observed by socio-economic status: respondents with a lower socio-economic status were more likely to agree with the statement, while the level of agreement among those with a higher socio-economic status was comparatively lower (see Figure 37). However, these differences should be interpreted as tendencies in the data rather than statistically significant differences between groups.

Figure 37. Agreement with the statement “When jobs are scarce, men should have more rights to a job than women.” by socio-demographic characteristics. (%)



Note: Response categories have been combined: “fully agree” and “somewhat agree” are presented together, as are “fully disagree” and “somewhat disagree.”

80. Survey-weighted logistic regression pairwise comparisons with estimated marginal means (EMMs); Bonferroni-adjusted p-values <0.01

However, a review of Figures 35, 36, and 37 shows that the Armenian public's sensitivity to discrimination against women is generally lower than its sensitivity to discrimination against other groups at risk, whether measured through personal experience or through awareness of discriminatory incidents.

As noted above, this points to the low visibility and limited recognizability of discrimination against women. According to experts, the main reason for this lies in deeply rooted gender stereotypes embedded in society⁸¹.

“Discrimination against women is more specific, and people often find it strange when we point out that something is happening in a certain way because the person is a woman. But this stems from deeper and more entrenched stereotypes. For example, we observe clearly discriminatory attitudes and stereotypes in the workplace. In the family, those same discriminatory approaches and stereotypes can escalate into violence and other more severe manifestations. In public life, especially in politics, women are subjected to discrimination, and their attitudes toward them are very different from those directed at men.”

Key Informant, legal sector

Since key informants in the field regard stereotypes as one of the main drivers of discrimination, they identify awareness-raising and educational initiatives - targeted both at the general population and at groups affected by discrimination - as the primary means of overcoming them. In their view, greater awareness can also strengthen women's willingness and confidence to speak out about discriminatory experiences.

“Sometimes, when there is extensive awareness-raising work, women become more courageous... So, when people say that the number of domestic violence cases has increased, the violence was always there-it is simply that women are now more informed and therefore turn to the relevant structures.”

Key Informant, public sector

Not all KI interviewees from this study that work with human rights defenders on gender issues believed that awareness alone is sufficient to overcome discrimination. According to their observations, a key difficulty lies in translating knowledge into actual behavior.

“I mean, many people distribute informational materials and so on. People may read them, but what they hear may go in one ear and out the other. Or they may think, yes, that is discriminatory, but they do not apply that understanding to their own actions and words. This is very important: to recognize that I may not be discriminatory in one area, but in another I may discriminate without even realizing it.”

Key Informant, civil society sector

In this context, the example of an IDI interviewee is particularly noteworthy: a woman displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh, trained as a lawyer and well informed about forms of discrimination

81. Stereotypes are identified as the root cause of gender discrimination far more frequently than any other factor, both in the reports of the Human Rights Defender and in studies focused on gender issues. See, for example, [On the Activities of the Human Rights Defender, the State of Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms: Annual Report 2024](#); [Elimination of Discrimination Against Women 2020](#); and [The Problem of Men and Gender Equality in Armenia: Report on the Results of a Sociological Survey \(2016\)](#).

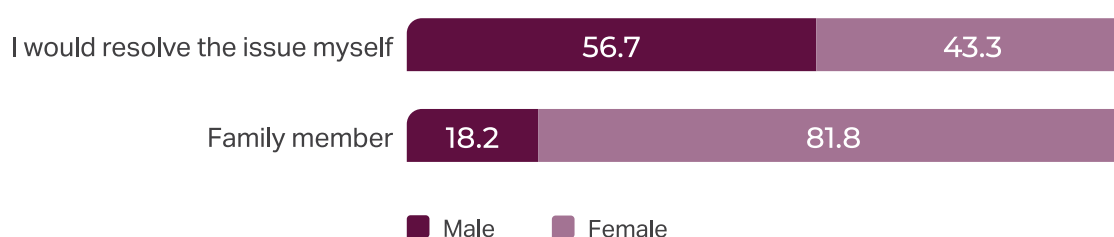
and available legal protection mechanisms, who nevertheless chose not to speak out when faced with discriminatory treatment, considering the incident “not serious enough.” In her own words:

“You know what, it’s not that serious, so I’m not going to report it or contact the Human Rights Defender. I’m not in any danger; the person just expressed their opinion, though in an offensive way. But if it’s serious, of course, if my children are in danger, if my family is in danger, then of course I will contact them.”

IDI Interviewee, woman, 44, displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh, lawyer by profession

This reaction is not unique to this individual case. Survey data reveal a clear gender difference in how women and men say they would respond if they personally faced discrimination. Men are more likely to state that, in such a situation, they would try to resolve the problem on their own (56.7%, compared to 43.3% of women)⁸². By contrast, women are comparatively more likely to seek support from family members (81.8%, compared to 18.2% of men)⁸³. These gendered response patterns suggest that the barriers to formal reporting are shaped not only by awareness, but also by gender norms that influence who women feel they can-or should-turn to.

Figure 38. Help-seeking destination after personally experiencing discrimination by gender (%)



The KI interviewees also highlighted the lack of professional education and employment as a reason why women do not speak out about discrimination. In many cases, this limits both their ability and willingness to file complaints, by reinforcing their financial and social dependence.

Another important factor contributing to silence in cases of discrimination is pressure from relatives and close social circles. In particular, in cases of domestic violence, parents and other relatives may pressure married women to tolerate abuse and remain in the marriage⁸⁴.

“We even had a case where the woman’s relatives were pressuring her, saying, ‘No, do not get divorced.’ They agreed to take her to a mental health center for treatment. They actually took her there, and even obtained a diagnosis, but when the woman later went to another doctor, she was told that she did not need any kind of inpatient treatment.”

Key Informant, public sector

82. Survey-adjusted $\chi^2 = 12.1$, p-value <0.001, survey-weighted logistic regression with estimated marginal means, OR = 2.3, Bonferroni-adjusted p-value <0.001

83. Survey-adjusted $\chi^2 = 12.1$, p-value <0.001, survey-weighted logistic regression with estimated marginal means, OR = 0.23, Bonferroni-adjusted p-value <0.001

84. The American psychoanalyst Wilhelm Reich interprets such behavior through the lens of authoritarian family relations, particularly the Figure of the authoritarian father who is primarily concerned with preserving his authority. In such a context, the health, dignity, and rights of a married daughter may be treated as secondary or even irrelevant. See Reich, W., *Sexual Revolution* (Moscow: Profit Style, Serebryanye Niti, 2016).

3.6.3 National minorities as targets of discrimination



“To be honest, I do not communicate much with people of my own ethnicity, so I talk more with Armenians. In a way, I already know what they are like, but with people from my own circle, I still do not know what to expect anyway.”

IDI Interviewee, woman, college student, Assyrian ethnic background

The analysis of the survey results shows that national minorities in Armenia have relatively low visibility in public perceptions compared to other groups. As shown in Figure 56, only 12.6% of the respondents stated that discrimination against national minorities is very or fairly widespread, while 87.4% assessed it as relatively rare or not widespread. A similar pattern appears in Figure 9 in response to the question, “Which groups have you seen being discriminated against?”, where national minorities were mentioned in only 4.1% of responses, again placing them in a relatively low position.

At the same time, in terms of perceived vulnerability, discrimination against national minorities appears more salient. According to responses to the question, “Imagine that Armenia adopts a new law to combat discrimination. The rights of which social groups do you think should be extra protected under this law?”, national minorities were included among the five groups considered most in need of protection. However, given that this option accounted for only 5.8% of all responses (*see Figure 16*), this may again point to the limited visibility of the group in broader public perceptions. This assumption is reinforced by responses to other questions.

It should also be noted that socio-demographic differences in responses concerning national minorities are not clearly visible in the data. This may partly be related to the relatively small number of respondents who selected this option, which limits the extent to which patterns across different groups can be meaningfully interpreted. In response to the question, “What do you believe was the MAIN reason for the most recent incident of discrimination you have seen or heard?”, race or ethnicity was mentioned by 5.7% of respondents (*see Figure 11*), while in response to the question, “What do you believe was the MAIN reason for the discrimination you experienced?”, it was mentioned by only 1.7% (*see Figure 15*), however, this Figure captures respondents’ own reported experiences and should therefore be interpreted as referring to respondents’ own reported experiences rather than public visibility.

Another possible factor, though not necessarily the most important, is the relative absence or weaker expression of more overtly aggressive forms of discrimination against these groups. As becomes clear from the reports of the Human Rights Defender of the Republic of Armenia⁸⁵, as well as from other sources⁸⁶, the main issues affecting national minorities in Armenia are often related to the preservation and reproduction of their language, traditions, and culture—areas that require positive state support and intervention.

KI interviewees explained that in the case of some groups, such as the Yezidis and Molokans, one possible explanation may be their relatively closed community structure, which makes their internal problems and possible experiences of discrimination less visible to the broader public. In the case of other groups, such as Assyrians and Greeks, the opposite pattern may be observed: a relatively high level of social integration with Armenians, as a result of which they are often perceived as

85. See [On the Activities of the Human Rights Defender, the State of Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms: Annual Report 2024](#)

86. For further discussion, see Minasyan, A. and Toneyan, M., [Rights of National Minorities in Armenia: Main Problems and Solutions](#) (2025); [The Picture of Discrimination in Armenia: National Minorities: Identity and Traditions: National Minorities Living in the Republic of Armenia Face Problems; Fifth Opinion on Armenia \(ACFC\)](#); and [National Minorities of the Republic of Armenia in the Current Conditions of the Formation of Civil Society II](#).

part of the majority, and individual manifestations of discrimination may therefore go unnoticed or may not be recognized as such.

One IDI interviewee, a college student of Assyrian ethnic background illustrated the complexity of this integration dynamic. She reported that she communicates more with Armenians than with members of her own ethnic community, and that she finds interactions with Armenians more predictable (see quote at the beginning of the chapter). Her account suggests that the absence of overtly aggressive forms of discrimination against an integrated minority such as the Assyrian community does not necessarily mean the absence of discrimination in everyday life; rather, it may mean that discrimination takes forms, in this case, social unpredictability and limited community embedding, that the survey instrument alone is unlikely to capture.

Reports from KI and IDI interviewees indicated that some national minorities (for example, Yezidis, Assyrians, and Greeks) are quite closely integrated with the Armenian population, while Armenians maintain generally constructive relations with others (for example, Russians and Molokans). This is also reflected in the accounts of representatives of national minorities themselves⁸⁷.

 ***“In the Republic of Armenia, the Yezidis have significant opportunities to preserve their national culture. We consider Armenia our cultural center, because here we have a national newspaper, a radio program, a dance ensemble named after Aziz Tamoyan, and many events dedicated to national minorities are organized where Yezidi culture is presented.”***

Key Informant, civil society sector

 ***“At the same time, Molokans are very similar to Armenians in their everyday behavior and culture—perhaps Armenians are very similar to them as well.”***

Key Informant, education sector

There is also a view that these patterns of integration may contain certain risks for the preservation of national identity and culture. In particular, concerns have been raised regarding the need to preserve the languages of national minorities and to train teachers specializing in minority languages. The Human Rights Defender of the Republic of Armenia has addressed this issue on several occasions and has proposed a number of solutions⁸⁸. The Ministry of Education, Science, Culture, and Sport of the Republic of Armenia has likewise undertaken certain measures aimed at responding to the educational needs of national minorities⁸⁹.

Another concern relates to the more limited opportunities for social and professional advancement available to representatives of national minorities compared to Armenians. As one KI noted, Assyrians, having their own historical experience of genocide, have in some cases sought safety through deeper identification with the Armenian majority. Concurrently, it is more difficult for representatives of some other minority groups to achieve similar opportunities for advancement, which may further encourage distancing from their communities and stronger identification with Armenians⁹⁰.

87. See, for example, [Identity and Traditions: National Minorities in Armenia Face Problems; Yezidis Consider Armenia Their Cultural Center](#); and [Armenian and Yezidi Traditions Are Similar: Is Forced Early Marriage Changing?](#)

88. See [Annual Report on the Activities of the Human Rights Defender, the State of Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms, 2024](#)

89. See [National Minorities](#), official website of the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of the Republic of Armenia.

90. See [Identity and Traditions: National Minorities Living in the Republic of Armenia Face Problems](#).

“In Armenia, as a largely monolithic state where Armenians make up the overwhelming majority, there is a specific problem. When we assume that we are all Armenians and all carriers of the same culture, national minorities become invisible, because their cultures, languages, and traditions lose significance within this universalized ‘one nation, one culture’ framework.”

Key Informant, legal sector

“As for other minorities, the communities themselves raise certain issues, especially in relation to the use of language and the need to provide national minorities with greater opportunities to organize cultural events and maintain their cultural life.”

Key Informant, legal sector

A KI interviewee pointed to issues related to discrimination against girls, noting that these are often framed as internal community matters. These issues primarily concern the practice of early marriage among girls and the resulting violations of girls’ right to education. Such patterns are reported to be particularly visible in Yezidi and Molokan communities. As noted earlier, the tradition of early marriage in these communities often discourages girls from continuing into upper secondary or higher education, and in some cases, may result in their exclusion from, or voluntary withdrawal from, the community if they pursue further education.

“In the case of national minorities, discrimination often occurs primarily within the community itself. This is reflected in the fact that certain services become inaccessible to them, they do not make use of available services, and their fundamental rights remain unrealized.”

Key Informant, public sector

Secondary data also suggest that marriage outside the community is often discouraged, and that access to education remains problematic in some minority communities. These concerns are especially pronounced for girls, whose continuation into higher education may be viewed as conflicting with community expectations and norms. Similar challenges have been reported in the Molokan, Roma, and Yezidi communities⁹¹.

The KI interviewees noted that this issue has no simple or unambiguous solution. On the one hand, there is a legitimate concern with preserving national traditions; on the other hand, there is the need to protect the right to education, the realization of which may sometimes challenge customs through which ethnic identity is reproduced. In their view, resolving this tension ultimately falls within the responsibility of the Armenian state, which is obliged to ensure that everyone’s right to education is protected without discrimination.

“On the one hand, of course, everyone will say that no law formally prevents Yezidi girls, for example, from receiving an education. But at the same time, the state always has an obligation to create a favorable environment in which their rights can actually be exercised. If these girls fear that they may be abducted and forced into marriage on their way to another village or school, and if, because of this, their parents stop allowing them to leave the house once they reach puberty, then this means that the state has not created an environment in which a Yezidi girl can genuinely continue her education.”

Key Informant, education sector

91. Ibid.

Another issue is that such practices are often treated by the broader Armenian public with little criticism. As one KI observed, this apparent tolerance may itself reproduce discriminatory norms.

 *“For example, when people say that this is normal for representatives of a national minority-let us say, within the Yezidi community-it may at first seem that they are simply expressing an opinion, and that there is no specific discriminatory attitude involved. But when we look more closely, we understand that this too is the result of a discriminatory mindset. For example, the idea that because they are Yezidi, it is acceptable for their daughters to marry at the age of 13 or to be denied education-that itself is a discriminatory approach which then becomes normalized in society.”*

Key Informant, public sector

3.7 Experiences of relevant institutions regarding manifestations of discrimination

The seventh subchapter presents the experiences and observations of relevant state authorities and civil society institutions working on discrimination-related issues. It focuses on actions aimed at identifying discrimination, measures for preventing discrimination and mitigating its consequences, as well as challenges related to strengthening the capacities of professionals working in the field of discrimination. It should be noted that the findings in this subchapter reflect practitioners' perspectives and do not constitute a legal assessment of institutional conduct or compliance with applicable law.

Summary takeaways

- KI interviewees reported that most state institutions and civil society organizations working with groups at heightened risk of discrimination do not have internal guidelines for identifying discrimination and instead rely mainly on international documents, the case law of the ECtHR, and UN approaches.
- Institutional actors noted that the absence of comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation in the Republic of Armenia makes it more difficult to develop and apply internal guidelines.
- The lack of professional knowledge and awareness among public officials and civil servants' limits recognition of potentially discriminatory practices and weakens efforts to prevent them.
- The need to strengthen the capacities of sectoral actors is viewed not as a one-time intervention, but as a long-term, institutionalized, and multi-level process aimed at transforming both knowledge and behavior.
- Although efforts to prevent discrimination are ongoing and certain achievements have been recorded, institutional representatives highlighted shortcomings, including the lack of direct work with local residents, the absence of intensive information campaigns, and the sporadic, non-continuous nature of retraining among specialists.
- Beyond the financial support provided by the state to groups subject to discrimination (including persons with disabilities, refugees, older persons, and those in difficult social situations), and the day-to-day care provided by close relatives, the main burden of other forms of support aimed at addressing the consequences of discrimination, physical, psychological, moral, and legal, is largely borne by civil society organizations.

- In the broader context of combating discrimination, KI interviewees suggested that both state institutions and civil society organizations need to develop more effective tools for identifying discrimination, preventing it, and addressing its consequences. Their effective implementation requires, on the one hand, amendments to various laws of the Republic of Armenia and the creation of new institutional mechanisms, and, on the other hand, continuous educational programs and capacity-building activities aimed at strengthening professional competencies.

3.7.1 Actions for identifying, preventing, and mitigating the consequences of discrimination

The effectiveness of efforts to combat discrimination depends to a large extent on the ability to identify its manifestations in a timely manner and prevent them effectively.

KI interviews with representatives of state institutions and civil society organizations working with groups at heightened risk of discrimination showed that most of them do not have internal guidelines for identifying discrimination and instead rely primarily on approaches presented in international documents and training materials.

One of the main reasons for this is that the Republic of Armenia has not yet adopted a dedicated anti-discrimination law.

 ***“There was some experience-sharing that was passed on verbally. But when I was working in the state apparatus, there were no guidelines, no legal justifications, or anything of that kind, unlike in an international organization.”***

Key Informant, education sector

 ***“We mainly use the observations and general comments provided by the UN in relation to the conventions. Then, if the issue concerns the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities, there are also specific guidelines, as well as general and special comments.”***

Key Informant, legal sector

In some cases, certain NGOs and individual lawyers have developed manuals and practical guidance materials⁹² for employers, lawyers, and state institutions that already face, or may face, issues related to discrimination.

 ***“We have published guides and small brochures, and this work began even before I was hired. [Name of organization] has been engaged in this since 2016. The most recent guide we developed was for employers.”***

Key Informant, civil society sector

When discussing preventive measures, the KI interviewees primarily referred to initiatives implemented in the education sector, particularly awareness-raising activities targeting young people.

92. See, for example, [Combating Discrimination; Handbook: Legal Remedies in Discrimination Cases; What Is Discrimination?; and Discussion Exercises for Developing Arguments with Lawyers in Discrimination Cases](#).

 *“It is important to include a wide range of measures, and we do have such measures. For example, we have specific initiatives in the education sector aimed at preventing discrimination, as well as awareness-raising activities among young people in society. We speak about equality, about the negative consequences of discrimination, and we have tried to introduce this topic starting from kindergarten, so that these awareness-raising efforts produce better results later on.”*

Key Informant, public sector

Some KI interviewees also pointed to certain achievements and expressed optimism regarding future progress in preventing discrimination.

 *“In fact, despite the fact that various campaigns are being implemented, including those aimed at preventing gender-based discrimination, I am confident that in a few years we will be talking about smaller numbers, and that year by year we will see that impact in our society, both in terms of relations between men and women and women’s involvement in different sectors.”*

Key Informant, public sector

 *“For example, in 2028, when we summarize the strategy, we will have better results. But what is very important here is that the strategy should also include measures that lead to research and group discussions specifically focused on eliminating discrimination. Once we have those results, clear results and indicators, the picture will become clearer as to where the main problem lies and in which direction more work is needed to prevent discrimination.”*

Key Informant, public sector

KI interviewees also revealed concerns regarding the incompleteness of current preventive measures. In particular, respondents emphasized that, in addition to drafting policy documents and strategies, there is a need for direct, face-to-face work with different groups of the population.

 *“Yes, they have almost completely abandoned prevention. Now they are doing something more like correcting the consequences. Otherwise, those strategies, no matter how well written, will remain on the shelves. Because people are needed to implement the strategy. Many beautiful documents have been prepared, but who will actually carry them out? It should be those people who go into homes, into communities, into businesses. There is still a great deal to be done, for example, in relation to IDPs. IDPs still cannot do much beyond, so to speak, simply receiving assistance...”*

Key Informant, civil society sector

According to the KI interviewees, the effectiveness of discrimination prevention can be strengthened through a range of practical measures. These include amendments to the Labor Code and other laws, the creation of specialized committees or units, the development of concrete mechanisms and tools, as well as awareness campaigns through both traditional and digital media platforms and continuous training for professionals.

“For example, we need to introduce these changes into the Labor Code and establish a concrete requirement that there should be such a commission or a separate department. In turn, the government can submit proposals to the legislative body; for example, in the field of education. The Ministry of Education, or the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, could propose a legislative amendment in a specific field or line of work, adding a requirement that every institution, whether in the private or public sector, should have a structure responsible for preventing discrimination.”

Key Informant, public sector

“There should be continuous development and training, teaching us new things, new tools through which we can try to prevent discrimination and provide support, so that we can build a more developed society. Television also plays a major role in this issue through its programs. Although most people are now more active on social networks, there are also programs that are no longer broadcast on television but instead appear on social media. [Awareness should continue] to be ensured through those social networks as well.”

Key Informant, public sector

KI interviewees stated that aside from the financial support provided by the state to groups with heightened risk of discrimination (such as persons with disabilities, refugees, older persons, and those in difficult social situations), as well as the day-to-day care provided to them by close relatives, it can be said that the main burden of other forms of support aimed at addressing the consequences of discrimination – whether physical, psychological, moral, or legal – is largely borne by civil society organizations. Representatives of NGOs working with groups subject to discrimination emphasized that the most effective way to address the consequences of discrimination is through preventive measures that reduce the likelihood of people finding themselves in situations of heightened vulnerability in the first place.

“With our funds, the state now delegates many services, including those [socially vulnerable] children I mentioned, services for the elderly, care services, and so on. But they are few, the volumes are small. We are telling the government that every elderly person, every child, and every family should at least have access to a service in a difficult life situation, and in addition, there should be preventive functions for a certain percentage of the population so that they do not end up in that situation.”

Key Informant, civil society sector

“...In my opinion, the Ombudsman institution is trying to fulfill its functions as much as possible. From the point of view of discrimination, we very often receive [alerts] from the Ombudsman that, for some reason, a person is not being provided with this or that care. The main issue is that the Ombudsman is trying to uncover all the gaps where the state is falling short and also comes forward with proposals for certain legislative changes. We know that in our society, in our state, there are many elderly persons with disabilities who genuinely want to receive care in a family environment. But that is missing, so one of the joint proposals is that small houses will soon be built so that older persons can receive care in small-home settings.”

Key Informant, public sector

3.7.2 Actions aimed at enhancing the professional capacities of sectoral stakeholders

Observations from the KI interviewees show that a significant share of discriminatory practices is linked to the lack of awareness and professional knowledge among state and public servants. In this context, strengthening the professional capacities of sectoral actors is seen as a key direction for preventing discrimination and ensuring access to services.

Based on the KI interviewees, several main lines of action can be identified.

Training of trainers. One important approach is the formation of a group of specialists in relevant sectors who can later transfer knowledge and skills to other professionals and target groups.

 *“Very often, they are discriminated against by state employees, one could say, because of lack of awareness and inadequate knowledge.”*

Key Informant, public sector

 *“...In order for these [health] services to be accessible to different groups, it is very important both to raise awareness and to raise the level of education of the relevant specialists.”*

Key Informant, public sector

 *“...Preparing ToTs in the relevant field, training of trainers, which will enable specialists in different fields to continuously implement and spread these issues (although certain trainings are being carried out), because how society perceives current phenomena and reality depends a lot on the professional community as well. If they implement this in their own field and are later given the role of trainers, that will allow them to train society itself and the target groups they work with in the future.”*

Key Informant, legal sector

Chain training. Another proposed approach is to implement cascading forms of training, for example, by training teachers, who can then act as further trainers and help involve parents and other community groups.

 *“For example, if we try to train teachers themselves and make them such people who will be trainers of trainers, then through them it will already be possible to train parents of students, organize appropriate courses, and involve [them] in that framework...”*

Key Informant, legal sector

Continuous education and institutional mechanisms. KI interviewees also stressed the need for systematic and periodic training, rather than one-time courses, especially given staff turnover and the constantly evolving nature of discriminatory practices.

 *“One-time training is not enough. It is also necessary to introduce a mechanism that identifies the behavior of a public servant.”*

Key Informant, education sector



Chapter 4. Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1. Conclusions

The main findings of this study are summarized in the preceding sections. Here, we highlight deeper insights into the underlying causes of perceptions and practices of discrimination in Armenian society, focusing on some apparent contradictions in the data, referred to here as paradoxes. Three are particularly notable: 1) the paradox between what people hear about and what they consider worthy of protection; 2) the paradox between awareness and behavior; 3) the paradox between the quantitative and qualitative findings.

Before examining these three paradoxes, one key finding stands out: across the entire study, only 1.7% of respondents who experienced discrimination in the past five years reported it to a relevant authority, a Human Rights Defender's Office, the police, or another state body. This Figure is not an anomaly but a structural feature of how discrimination is experienced and responded to in Armenia, which underpins all three paradoxes.

1. The paradox between what is heard about and what is considered worthy of protection

Although **68.0% of respondents** identified LGBT+ persons as a group facing widespread discrimination in response to the question, *"In your opinion, how widespread is discrimination in Armenia toward each of the following groups?"*, LGBT+ persons accounted for only **2.1% of all responses** to the multiple-response question, *"Which social groups' rights should be protected the most?"*

Taken together, the findings from the two questions point to what this study terms the **"recognition-protection disjunction"**: the public may acknowledge that certain social groups experience discrimination, while not necessarily supporting additional legal protection for those same groups. This pattern is evident across several groups but is particularly pronounced in the case of LGBTQ+ people. While a large share of respondents identified LGBTQ+ people as experiencing widespread discrimination, they were rarely selected among the groups whose rights should receive additional legal protection. Crucially, the absence of explicit legal protection for LGBTQ+ individuals in Armenian non-discrimination legislation both reflects and reinforces this broader disjunction, making it a structural feature of the current framework rather than merely an attitudinal one.

2. The paradox between awareness and behavior

Among respondents who are clearly familiar with the complaint procedure in cases where they witness discrimination, only 32.2% are prepared to report discrimination to formal institutions (the police, the Human Rights Defender, or another state body) if they are confronted with it. The remaining respondents indicated they would prefer to resolve the problem themselves (39.0%), turn to a family member (7.6%), or take no action at all (3.9%).

A striking gender dimension reinforces this paradox: among respondents who experienced discrimination, women are considerably more likely than men to turn to family members rather than formal institutions (11.9% versus 2.2%). This finding points to structurally different response pathways for women, conditioned by economic dependency and social norms, a pattern that recurs throughout the study and that connects directly to the policy recommendations on strengthening the economic and social capacities of groups at risk.

3. The paradox between certain quantitative and qualitative data

Whilst the qualitative interviews highlighted issues such as domestic violence, national minorities, discriminatory attitudes toward women, and the challenges faced by the LGBTQ+ community, the quantitative data revealed a different picture. Only 29.1% of respondents considered discrimination against women to be widespread, and 10.3% of all reported instances of witnessed discrimination referred to discrimination against women. Furthermore, women accounted for only 8.2% of all responses to the multiple-response question on which social groups' rights should be protected the most. This contrast suggests that discrimination against women has relatively low visibility.

This paradox is also apparent in relation to persons with disabilities, where public sensitivity is high at the attitudinal level (95.8% of respondents agree that the state should ensure accessibility of public spaces) while key informants reported widespread failures in accessibility across healthcare, education, transport, and public buildings. For national minorities, the discrepancy takes a different form. While the small sample of self-identified minority respondents (1.3% of the weighted sample) limits statistical conclusions, qualitative evidence from civil society and legal experts points to persistent issues such as linguistic invisibility, limited educational access, practices such as early marriage that may restrict girls' educational and personal choices and forms of discrimination that go unrecognized, because some minority groups are highly integrated. Across all three groups, however, one pattern is consistent: quantitative surveys capture only the visible aspects of discrimination, while qualitative data reveal the deeper structural problems underpinning them.

These paradoxes reflect the way perception itself operates. Perception can be understood as the internal process through which information from the external world is selected, organized, and interpreted, highlighting three key stages: selection, organization, and interpretation. The following section examines each of these components in light of the study's findings.

The findings indicate that discrimination in Armenia is shaped not only by legal and institutional factors but also by social perceptions. While many respondents recognize discrimination and consider it a serious problem, it is often perceived as an ordinary part of social relations, particularly in family and community settings. As a result, the recognition of discrimination does not necessarily translate into reporting or other forms of action.

The study highlights a gap between awareness and behavior. Even among those who understand what discrimination is, know where to seek support, and recognize that they have experienced discrimination, many choose not to report incidents. The most common reasons include the belief that reporting will not lead to meaningful change, concerns about social consequences, and other practical barriers.

These findings suggest that awareness-raising, while important, is unlikely to be effective in isolation. Addressing discrimination requires not only increasing knowledge and promoting rights awareness but also reducing the structural barriers that discourage individuals from seeking protection. Greater attention should therefore be devoted to the economic, professional, social, and institutional factors that sustain discriminatory practices and limit the ability of groups at risk to challenge them. Measures aimed at strengthening reporting mechanisms, improving institutional responsiveness, and increasing the social and economic empowerment of groups at risk are likely to be more effective when combined with awareness-raising efforts.

In international conventions addressing discrimination, as well as in reports of the Human Rights Defender of the Republic of Armenia, one finds approaches that emphasize measures supporting the economic and professional empowerment of groups affected by discrimination. However, informing both those subjected to discrimination and those who engage in discriminatory practices

is far more frequently presented as a means of preventing and overcoming discrimination, thereby creating the impression that awareness-raising holds primary importance. As our research shows, this approach is not effective in isolation; rather, greater attention must be devoted to the economic, professional, and other deep-rooted causes that sustain the reproduction of stereotypes and traditional approaches, as well as to measures aimed at overcoming them.

The study also highlights a significant structural gap: the lack of a coordinated mechanism for collecting data on discrimination in Armenia. Currently, no single institution publishes annual, disaggregated data on discrimination complaints and their outcomes across the police, judiciary, Human Rights Defender's Office, and the health and education sectors. As a result, this study, the first comprehensive population survey on discrimination in Armenia, serves as a baseline without an accompanying system to track changes over time. Without consistent and sustained monitoring, it will be difficult to determine whether recommended interventions lead to measurable improvements. Establishing such a monitoring framework is therefore not merely an administrative enhancement but a fundamental prerequisite for developing evidence-based policies to address discrimination in Armenia.

In the policy recommendations presented below, measures of this nature are given particular importance. The recommendations are organized around seven interconnected thematic areas which aim to address the study's central finding: that discrimination in Armenia is reproduced not only through individual attitudes but through a combination of structural, legal, institutional, and resource-related conditions that together make speaking out, complaining, and seeking redress a non-viable option for the great majority of those who experience it.

4.2. Recommendations

The recommendations below are addressed primarily to the legislative and executive authorities of the Republic of Armenia, to the Human Rights Defender's Office, and to civil society organizations. They are calibrated to the legal, institutional and social conditions identified in the study, prioritizing measures that are achievable within the existing constitutional and administrative architecture. At the same time, the adoption of a comprehensive anti-discrimination law, accompanied by an effective institutional mechanism for its implementation and enforcement, represents a priority recommendation and a necessary precondition for the effectiveness of many of the other measures proposed below.

Taking into account the observations summarized in the subchapters presenting the findings of this study, as well as the underlying causes of discrimination discussed in the conclusion, it is appropriate to identify six main groups or directions of policy recommendations.

Awareness, Tolerance, Diversity and the Protection of Groups at Risk of Discrimination

The study demonstrated a limited public understanding of discrimination and widespread social acceptance of discriminatory practices. This is particularly pronounced with respect to discrimination against women and LGBTQ+ people. The findings point to deeply normalized attitudes that awareness-raising alone cannot be expected to resolve quickly; they require sustained, multi-year campaigns embedded in formal education and institutional training.

The study also revealed a striking divergence between public recognition of groups at risk as targets of discrimination and support for their legal protection, most sharply in the case of LGBTQ+ people, but also for women and national minorities. This gap indicates that visibility campaigns alone are insufficient: public recognition of a group's vulnerability does not automatically translate into normative support for their rights. Measures must therefore combine awareness-raising and visibility with explicit rights-framing and information about legal protections.

The study further revealed that these shortcomings characterize perceptions both among the general population and within the specific groups having a heightened risk of discrimination.

It is therefore recommended to implement awareness-raising and engagement activities in two distinct directions: general and targeted.

General Awareness

- Develop multi-year national awareness campaigns on equality, diversity, and non-discrimination, utilizing both traditional and modern media platforms, including public broadcasters, to produce accessible content on discrimination and available remedies, given that television and radio remain primary information sources for older and rural populations. These campaigns should be anchored institutionally by the HRDO and relevant ministries, sustained across multiple years, and include a recurring national awareness event such as a fixed annual date or week dedicated to anti-discrimination.
- Disseminate information on discrimination through various formats and platforms (traditional and modern media, social networks), including social messages, slogans, brief commentaries, and podcasts. Feature concrete, relatable scenarios and the specific legal protections available, rather than abstract calls for equality. Findings from the Human Rights Defender's annual report and, in the future, from other discrimination surveys and data sources should anchor the factual basis of these campaigns.
- Integrate anti-discrimination education into school curricula, from primary to tertiary level.
- Provide accessible information materials on the rights and protections available under Armenian law, including procedures for reporting discrimination and the main institutions responsible for receiving complaints.
- All awareness-raising materials, whether printed, broadcast, or digital, should carry a consistent reference to the national anti-discrimination platform and hotline (see Section 5), ensuring that every piece of public communication about discrimination also communicates what a person can do if they experience it.
- Ensure that awareness-raising materials explicitly address intersectional discrimination, illustrating how individuals may face compounded disadvantage based on multiple grounds simultaneously, such as being a woman with a disability, an older person from a national minority group, or a displaced person with a low income.

Targeted Engagement and Protection of Groups at Risk

- Implement targeted community-level engagement with population groups that are particularly at risk of discrimination, such as displaced persons from Nagorno-Karabakh.
- Increase the visibility of groups at risk through various media platforms and public communication initiatives while ensuring that these efforts are accompanied by clear information about rights, legal protections, and available remedies. Representatives of the targeted communities should be engaged in the design and implementation of these activities to ensure cultural relevance and effectiveness.
- Establish dedicated monitoring groups to enhance the effectiveness of activities aimed at addressing discrimination. Monitoring groups can play an important role in overseeing, documenting, and publicizing discrimination cases, as well as efforts aimed at prevention and response.
- Design targeted interventions with an intersectional lens, recognizing that individuals within groups at risk may face additional and compounded disadvantages based on overlapping characteristics. For example, programs addressing displacement should also account for gender, disability, and socioeconomic status within that group.

Strengthening equality of access and socio-economic inclusion

The study reveals that being informed is not sufficient to prevent discrimination or to mitigate its consequences. For instance, qualitative data suggest that women without professional qualifications or independent income may remain silent about discrimination, particularly in cases of domestic violence, because speaking out could mean losing their only source of economic security (Section 3.6.2). Similarly, persons with disabilities face compounded barriers: accessibility constraints, social isolation, and dependency on family members all reduce the likelihood of complaint-filing (Section 3.6.1). These barriers are frequently compounded when individuals belong to more than one group at risk, requiring measures that explicitly account for intersectional disadvantage rather than addressing each characteristic in isolation. Strengthening economic and social inclusion is therefore not a peripheral complement to legal reform but a precondition for the effectiveness of legal protection mechanisms. In particular, integration and inclusion of groups at particular risk of discrimination should be a central policy goal.

Policy recommendations include:

- Expanding access to short and long-term vocational training and labor market integration programs for skills and professions that are in demand in the labor market.
- Increasing availability and access to affordable childcare services and early education institutions (kindergartens) including in rural areas.
- Increasing availability and access by persons exposed to violence and discrimination to crisis centers and legal aid services in all marzes, not only in Yerevan, and systematic monitoring by the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs.
- Expanding state-delegated social service provision to civil society organizations, including through the state social ordering mechanism, to deliver support services, particularly at regional level where such services are currently absent or inaccessible.
- Implementing targeted measures to address gender inequality, early marriage, and educational exclusion in minority communities, in cooperation with those communities. Prioritizing outreach

to Yezidi and Molokan communities around girls' right to education and the legal age of marriage, in close coordination with community representatives and the Ministry of Education, as the study identified early marriage and educational exclusion as specific and documented manifestations of discrimination within these communities.

Strengthening the legal framework and access to justice

The study identifies a number of legal gaps that operate to the detriment of certain groups frequently targeted by discrimination and weaken their protection. These include a limited legal definition of discrimination that does not allow for the identification and recognition of many forms of discrimination, nor for the development of appropriate legal responses. Another key issue is that adopted laws are often not consistently enforced, and significant challenges exist in legal implementation practices.

Policy recommendations therefore include:

- To quickly adopt a robust, comprehensive, and effectively enforceable anti-discrimination law in the Republic of Armenia ensuring full protection against discrimination in line with international and Council of Europe standards.
- Adoption of implementing regulations under the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2021) to operationalize the accessibility, reasonable accommodation and legal capacity provisions of that law.
- The review and, where necessary, amendment of the Criminal Code and Labor Code to ensure that discrimination-related offences carry penalties that are proportionate, effective and dissuasive, a requirement under Armenia's obligations under CERD Article 4 and the ECHR.
- The Ministry of Justice, in coordination with the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs and the relevant sectoral ministries, should develop and disseminate model anti-discrimination clauses for inclusion in institutional job descriptions and staff conduct codes, starting with public-sector employers. The Human Rights Defender's Office underscores the importance of the adoption of model anti-discrimination clauses by public-sector employers. for example, through periodic information requests to relevant institutions, and report on the level of compliance as part of its existing annual report to the National Assembly.
- Expand state-funded legal aid to cover discrimination cases. Civil society legal aid providers, which currently carry the primary burden of legal support for groups at risk, should receive adequate and predictable state co-financing through the state social ordering mechanism.
- Simplify complaint procedures and reduce financial and procedural barriers.
- Introduce amendments to the Labor Code and other relevant laws, as well as to establish specialized commissions. Amendments to the Labor Code should establish explicit employer obligations to prevent and respond to workplace discrimination and harassment, including designation of an internal responsible unit in organizations above a certain size threshold.

Strengthening the professional capacity of institutions working with groups at heightened risk of discrimination

The study reveals a range of issues and structural barriers that limit the effectiveness of institutions working with groups at risk of discrimination. In particular, there is a need to develop institutional guidelines to support the identification and handling of discrimination cases. This should be complemented by the allocation of sufficient resources to ensure systematic, high-quality, and continuous professional training for staff working with groups at risk, rather than relying on sporadic or one-off initiatives.

The findings further indicate that additional support, guidance, and training are needed to equip police officers, investigators, judges, and other justice-sector professionals with the conceptual and legal tools required to identify and respond to discrimination, particularly indirect discrimination.

Recommendations:

- Continuous capacity-building should rely on training-of-trainers and chain-training methodologies, whereby a core group of specialists is trained first and subsequently transfers knowledge to colleagues and, where relevant, to the broader community. Such training should be ongoing and institutionalized, rather than delivered as one-off initiatives.
- A national training program for public professionals working with groups at risk should be anchored in an institutional mandate. The Human Rights Defender's Office, together with the relevant sectoral ministries, should develop a competency framework for anti-discrimination practice, which can then serve as the basis for accredited professional training modules integrated into pre-service and in-service education for police officers, social workers, healthcare professionals, teachers, etc. The competency framework should explicitly include intersectional discrimination, equipping professionals to recognize situations where overlapping characteristics compound a person's exposure to discriminatory treatment. The Council of Europe and ECRI are established partners for this type of capacity development and have existing programming for Armenia that could be leveraged. Priority target groups for such training should include public officials, law enforcement, and judiciary, including mid-level public servants and community police officers, employers in the private sector particularly in recruitment and HR roles, and frontline professionals including teachers, healthcare workers, social workers, and journalists.
- Develop context-specific guidelines for officials and frontline employees of relevant institutions on identifying and responding to discrimination, taking into account the specific characteristics of their functions and areas of engagement.

Improving reporting mechanisms and protection of victims

The study identified at least five distinct reasons for low reporting rates: (a) procedural and financial burden; (b) distrust of institutions; (c) fear of social consequences, including family pressure, community condemnation, and alienation; (d) limited legal awareness of what constitutes a reportable discrimination incident; and (e) for persons with disabilities, additional physical and communication barriers to accessing complaint mechanisms. Effective incentive mechanisms must therefore address all five, not only procedural simplification.

Policy recommendations therefore include:

- Establish a clearly identifiable, discrimination-specific digital entry point under the authority of the Human Rights Defender's Office⁹³, either as a standalone platform or as a dedicated section within the HRDO's official website. The platform should provide accessible, plain-language information on discrimination, complaint procedures, and available support services; enable secure (including anonymous) reporting and referral to relevant services; and collect anonymized, disaggregated data to strengthen the Human Rights Defender's monitoring and reporting on discrimination. It should be accessible to persons with disabilities and available in the languages of major national minority and migrant communities. The platform could be developed in parallel with, or as part of, the institutional mechanism envisaged under the forthcoming anti-discrimination law.
- Strengthen the Human Rights Defender's Office's existing 24/7 hotline to further enhance its capacity to effectively receive and respond to discrimination-related complaints. The hotline could include a clearly identifiable option (e.g., through an automated phone menu) enabling callers to be connected to staff with specialized training on identifying and responding to discrimination, including indirect and intersectional forms. All frontline staff could benefit from receiving basic training to recognize potential discrimination cases and ensure appropriate referral. The hotline number and the discrimination platform (or dedicated discrimination webpage) should be prominently featured in awareness-raising materials. In addition, the HRDO could systematically collect and maintain statistics based on hotline cases, which could be effectively integrated with administrative data and statistics obtained from relevant state institutions. This combined data set could strengthen the national evidence base on discrimination and contribute to more efficient, consistent, and evidence-based decision-making.
- Develop and disseminate a publicly accessible, simple-language guide to filing a discrimination complaint with the Human Rights Defender's Office, available in Armenian and in the languages of the main national minorities (Yezidi/Kurmanji, Russian, Assyrian, and English), to be distributed through community centers, healthcare facilities, and municipal offices, educational institutions, government agencies, etc.
- Providing accessible information on existing state support mechanisms, including the services of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, state crisis centers for victims of domestic violence, and NGO shelters.

Strengthening Monitoring, Data collection and Evidence Generation

The present study is the first comprehensive population survey on discrimination in Armenia and as such constitutes a significant evidence contribution. However, a single survey does not substitute for a sustainable monitoring architecture. The following measures are recommended to ensure that evidence on discrimination in Armenia is generated, updated and used on a systematic basis.

Measures:

- Introduce discrimination-related modules into existing national statistical surveys, particularly the Integrated Living Conditions Survey (ILCS) conducted by the Statistical Committee of the Republic of Armenia, using standardized international instruments including the Washington Group Short Set of questions on disability, to allow trend monitoring over time.

93. for example, modelled on the Netherlands' discriminatie.nl

- Ensure systematic collection of disaggregated data on discrimination-related complaints by the Police, the Prosecutor General's Office, and the Human Rights Defender's Office, using a shared definitional framework aligned with the forthcoming anti-discrimination law, and publish this data annually. Data generated through the national anti-discrimination digital platform and hotline should be integrated into the cross-institutional discrimination data report as a distinct data stream, capturing experiences that are never reported through formal complaint channels and thus providing an estimate of the 'dark figure' of unreported discrimination, a significant evidence gap highlighted throughout this study.
- Data collection systems should be designed to enable intersectional analysis, capturing not only single-ground discrimination but also cases where multiple characteristics interact. Complaint registration forms and survey instruments should be designed to record multiple grounds simultaneously, allowing patterns of compounded disadvantage to be identified and tracked over time.
- Institutionalize a regular national survey on perceptions, attitudes and experiences of discrimination (every 3-5 years), in order to track changes following any legislative, institutional or awareness-raising interventions. Future survey rounds should also build on lessons learned from previous implementations by periodically reviewing and refining the questionnaire, including clarifying and testing key concepts and questions related to personal experiences of discrimination, in order to improve data quality, comparability, and the accuracy of respondents' interpretations. This review process should continue to involve relevant stakeholders to ensure that questionnaire refinements are informed by diverse perspectives, emerging issues, and practical implementation experience.

See the Recommendation Matrix for details in Annex 5.

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Annexes

Annex 1. Data and Methodology

To examine perceptions, attitudes, and experiences of discrimination in Armenia, the study employed a convergent parallel mixed-methods design (see Figure 39). The mixed-methods approach is chosen for its ability to provide both breadth and depth. This combination allows for triangulation of data, enhancing the validity and reliability of the findings, while addressing Armenia's local research conditions, including sensitivities around topics like discrimination, institutional trust, and vulnerabilities related to displacement, disability, and gender identity/sexual orientation.

Figure 39. Convergent Parallel Mixed-Methods Design



More specifically, the following two approaches of data collection were chosen to be simultaneously implemented during the fieldwork phase, allowing for complementing data collection methods:

1. **Quantitative CATI Survey (Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing):** Provides nationally representative data on perceptions, attitudes, and self-reported experiences across Armenia⁹⁴.
2. **Qualitative interviews:** Offer in-depth insights into rationales, barriers, and lived narratives.

The conceptual understanding of discrimination used in this study

The term discrimination in this report is used primarily in its social and experiential sense, referring to perceived unequal treatment or exclusion (respondents' experiences and observations of perceived discrimination). Unless explicitly stated, references to discrimination do not constitute legal determinations under Armenian or international law. This interpretation and understanding of the term discrimination applies to both the qualitative and quantitative analyses.

The results of this study (both the quantitative and qualitative data) are based on respondents' personal experiences and perceptions of discrimination, which is a common method used in other similar studies⁹⁵. The quantitative survey measures respondents' *subjective* experiences and

94. Armenia's mobile network infrastructure is supported by three primary operators: Viva (also known as Viva MTS), Team (Telecom Armenia), and Ucom. These providers utilize a combination of 2G, 3G, 4G, and 5G technologies to deliver services. As of 2020, 2G and 3G networks covered 99.8% and 98.8% of Armenia's population, respectively, while 4G/LTE service reached 99% of populated areas. Therefore, the RDD method is highly relevant and effective for collecting representative data in Armenia (see [here](#)).

95. See, for example, "[Discrimination in the European Union](#)" study; "[Exploring human rights awareness, attitudes and perception in Scandinavia](#)" study.

perceptions. There may be situations in which a discriminatory act has occurred without being experienced as such because individuals are not aware that it constitutes discrimination, or because the act is perceived as legitimate. Conversely, there may also be situations that are experienced or perceived as discrimination without meeting the legal definition of discrimination. An individual assessment of the experiences reported in the quantitative data falls outside the scope of this report.

Quantitative Component: CATI Survey

CATI survey method provides nationally representative estimates on key aspects of discrimination in Armenia, including:

- public understanding and perception of discrimination,
- prevailing attitudes and stereotypes,
- self-reported experiences of discrimination,
- barriers to reporting,
- awareness of policies and trust in institutions,
- information sources shaping public opinion.

These data establish the overall patterns that the qualitative component further contextualizes.

Target Population and Sampling

The survey covers *adults aged 18+ residing in Armenia for at least three consecutive years*, ensuring relevance to the social, cultural, economic and political context and stability of perceptions.

A total of 2200 complete interviews were conducted, yielding a $\pm 2.1\%$ margin of error at a 95% confidence level (approximately $\pm 2.4\text{--}2.5\%$ after accounting for design effect)⁹⁶. Sampling strategy relied on Random Digit Dialing (RDD) of mobile numbers, covering 99.3% of the population. The strategy ensures automatic proportionality across key demographics (region, gender, age, education).

While interrupted and incomplete interviews are partially captured in the dataset, the CATI methodology and fieldwork conditions do not allow for a precise calculation of overall dropout rates.

Pilot Testing

Prior to the main fieldwork, a pilot study was conducted to test the survey instrument, data collection procedures, and overall feasibility of the study. The pilot fieldwork took place on October 24–25, 2025, and included 30 CATI interviews conducted by trained interviewers and CRRC-Armenia team members.

The primary goal of the pilot was cognitive testing of the questionnaire, as well as assessing the clarity of question wording, the appropriateness of response options, the functioning of skip logic, and the ethical and practical aspects of conducting interviews on sensitive topics such as discrimination.

96. 30 pilot interviews were conducted for cognitive testing and refinement of the instrument.

Findings from the pilot identified several areas requiring refinement, including improving clarity and simplification of question wording, addressing overlapping response categories, adjusting skip logic, and resolving minor technical issues in data collection. These insights informed a comprehensive revision of the questionnaire prior to the launch of the main survey, ensuring better alignment with research objectives, improved respondent comprehension, and reduced interview burden.

A detailed pilot report, including descriptive statistics, identified challenges, and all proposed questionnaire adjustments, is provided in Annex 2.

Data Collection

Data was collected via CATI method using Survey CTO software package.

As the survey was conducted using CATI method, response options were administered verbally by interviewers, and in some cases, respondents were not exposed to the full set of answer categories simultaneously. This differs from self-administered modes (e.g., online surveys), where respondents can visually process all response options before making a selection. As a result, response distributions may reflect mode-related effects, including differences in cognitive processing and recall. This should be considered when interpreting results, particularly for questions with multiple responses.

Survey Instrument

To examine perceptions, attitudes, and self-reported experiences of discrimination in Armenia a standardized questionnaire was used as the data collection tool. It was co-designed with the DIHR-HRDO reference group and includes modules on:

- understanding of discrimination,
- attitudes and stereotypes,
- personal and witnessed experiences,
- reporting practices and barriers,
- awareness and trust,
- information sources,
- demographic characteristics.

In addition to the closed response options, an “Other” category was included, allowing respondents to provide an open-ended answer that better reflected their views or experiences.

Sensitive topics (e.g., sexual orientation, discrimination in law enforcement) use indirect or experience-first techniques to reduce social desirability bias (see survey Instrument in Annex 3).

Data Processing and Final Dataset

Post-field procedures included:

- logical and statistical consistency checks,
- integration of paradata and back-check verification,
- coding of open-ended responses,
- application of weights based on Census benchmarks,
- anonymization and removal of all personal identifiers⁹⁷.

Weighting

The main objective of weighting was to align the achieved sample with the population distribution across key demographic characteristics:

- **gender:** male, female,
- **age group:** 18-29, 30-44, 45-59, 60+⁹⁸,
- **settlement type:** capital, other urban, rural,
- **education:** primary or less, secondary, vocational, tertiary.

The analysis applies survey weights based on gender, age, region of residence, and education level. The purpose of weighting is to align the achieved sample with the population distribution across these key demographic characteristics. Accordingly, the results can be considered representative of the adult population of Armenia with respect to these variables (see Table 2).

Table 2. Sample and Population distributions

Characteristics	Group	Population	Sample before weights	Difference	Sample after weights	Difference
Age Group	18–29	16%	15%	1	16%	0
	30–44	27%	35%	-7	27%	0
	45–59	23%	24%	-1	23%	0
	60+	34%	26%	8	34%	0
	Refuse to answer	No Data	<1%	No Data	No Data	No Data
Gender	Male	43%	41%	3	43%	0
	Female	57%	60%	-3	57%	0

97. The final dataset was prepared in SPSS and CSV formats with a detailed codebook.

98. Because respondents reported their exact age, a new variable, age-group, was created to classify them into the above categories for weighting purposes.

Education	Primary or less	<1%	<1%	No Data	<1%	0
	Secondary	51%	39%	12	51%	0
	Vocational	24%	25%	-1	24%	0
	Tertiary	25%	36%	-11	25%	0
	Refuse to answer	No Data	<1%	No Data	No Data	No Data
Settlement type	Capital	32%	34%	-2	32%	0
	Other Urban	29%	36%	-6	29%	0
	Rural	39%	31%	8	39%	0
	Refuse to answer	No Data	<1%	No Data	No Data	No Data

Quality Assurance

For quantitative component quality assurance followed a multi-phase protocol to ensure data integrity and reliability:

- **Pre-Field:** Interviewers underwent two days of training covering study objectives, ethical considerations, the use of CATI, and sensitivity in engaging respondents. A Field Monitoring Internal Dashboard was set up for real-time oversight, and automated checks in Survey CTO monitored survey duration, completeness, and logical consistency.
- **In-Field:** Daily quality assurance was conducted through dashboard monitoring of key metrics (e.g., interview duration, frequency of “Don’t Know/Refused” responses, and outliers identified via IQR. Supervisors reviewed 10% of audio recordings (1:5 ratio) and conducted 5-10% back-checks. Paradata will be analyzed to detect interviewer effects.
- **Post-Field:** Data cleaning was conducted in three phases, including logical and statistical checks, coding of open-ended responses, and application of survey weights. Reliability tests (such as Cronbach’s alpha) will be conducted to assess internal consistency. A non-response analysis was performed, and all quality assurance procedures were documented in a comprehensive document - Field Report (see Annex 3)

Qualitative Component

The qualitative component of the study is designed to complement the survey by providing in-depth insights into discrimination dynamics, lived experiences, and institutional responses. It consisted of two distinct qualitative methods: key informant interviews and in-depth interviews as case studies.

Key Informant Interviews (KIs)

KIs capture institutional, expert, and practitioner perspectives on:

- forms and drivers of discrimination,
- barriers to reporting and redress,
- institutional practices and enforcement gaps,
- opportunities for awareness-raising and advocacy.

A total of 12 KIs were conducted:

1. Four pre-fieldworks consultative KIs with one from each of the following sectors: education, civil society, legal sector, public administration. The purpose of conducting these interviews was to refine the survey and qualitative guides, identify sensitive areas, and ensure cultural relevance.
2. Subsequently, eight additional KIs were conducted during the quantitative research phase, purposely selected to deepen understanding of systemic and institutional aspects of discrimination, including the implementation and enforcement of anti-discrimination measures, and to identify opportunities and challenges for awareness-raising. (See the selection matrix in Annex 4).

In-Depth Interviews (IDIs)

Four IDIs were carried out as intersectional case studies, selected among survey respondents. The sampling strategy followed a 2x2 quadrant model that cross-tabulates vulnerability (V) traits (V: 0-1 vs. ≥ 2) with prior discrimination experience (DEX: Yes vs. No). This approach ensured representation of diverse narratives (e.g., individuals with high risks to discrimination but low reported experience, and vice versa). Accordingly, the IDI interviewees represented four categories in relation to discrimination⁹⁹:

1. those without presumed vulnerability characteristics related to discrimination and without experience of discrimination (IDI 1);
2. those without presumed vulnerability characteristics related to discrimination and with experience of discrimination (IDI 2);
3. those with presumed vulnerability characteristics related to discrimination and without experience of discrimination (IDI 3);
4. those with presumed vulnerability characteristics related to discrimination and with experience of discrimination (IDI 4).

The distinction between these categories was intended to provide a more comprehensive understanding of:

- the contexts of discrimination, as well as perceived risk factors, protective factors, and resilience;
- the interaction between different dimensions of vulnerability;
- the experiences described by interviewees and the institutions involved;
- personal coping strategies and their impact on everyday life.

99. The interviewees in the IDIs were selected on the basis of their responses to the questions asked during the CATI survey.

Recruitment relied on an opt-in mechanism during the CATI survey to ensure participant safety and voluntary consent. These case studies have provided nuanced, personal accounts that highlight the intersection of identity, vulnerability, and lived experience.

IDIs provide rich, narrative accounts of intersectional experiences of discrimination. They allow exploration of complexities that structured surveys cannot fully capture, including emotional responses, coping strategies, and long-term impacts.

Sub-Criteria for IDI Selection

To ensure diverse exploration of the research problem, the selection process will further apply sub-criteria covering urban and rural areas, a spectrum of political perspectives, intersections of characteristics (e.g., gender, disability, displacement, and ethnicity), and variation across age groups. This approach is intended to capture the broadest possible range of experiences and attitudes, while also highlighting how discrimination is shaped by multiple, overlapping identity factors.

Together, the KIIs and IDIs form a comprehensive qualitative framework that complements the quantitative survey, enabling a richer, contextually grounded understanding of discrimination in Armenia. Table 3 below shows the distribution of qualitative methods:

Table 3. Distribution of Qualitative Interviews

Type	# Number	Focus Areas
KIIs (consultative)	4	Preliminary expert insights for tool development
KIIs	8	Institutional perspectives, enforcement, advocacy
IDIs	4	Lived experiences, intersections
Total	16	

Data Collection Instruments for Qualitative Component

- The pre-fieldwork (consultative) KII guide is a non-standardized, flexible tool used in interviews with experts and practitioners. Its purpose was to gather informative expert insights to inform our quantitative and qualitative tools development, to make sure the tools are comprehensive and multi-perspective (see Annex 5 for the pre-fieldwork KII guide) .
- The KII guide that was used during the fieldwork phase is a semi-structured tool with open-ended questions and probes to explore institutional perspectives, enforcement challenges, awareness raising opportunities and challenges, advocacy experiences, and policy recommendations (see Annex 6 for KII guide) .
- The IDI guide is non-standardized, tailored to individual narratives, focusing on lived experiences, intersections, coping strategies, and impacts (see Annex 7 for IDI guide) .

All tools include trauma-informed perspectives and were informed by a desk review, CRRC-Armenia’s internal social research experts, and the pre-fieldwork consultative interviews, to ensure relevance and sensitivity. Interviews focused on educational settings, community-level awareness, and advocacy experience, the enforcement of anti-discrimination policies, institutional practices, and barriers to redress.

Quality Assurance

For qualitative component quality assurance also followed a multi-phase protocol to ensure data integrity and reliability:

- **Pre-Field:** All KII interviews were conducted by CRRC-Armenia team members who had sectoral knowledge of the research topic and experience in conducting sensitive research. Prior to fieldwork, briefing sessions were held to align the research team on study objectives, ethical standards, informed consent procedures, and the use of the KII guide. These sessions also focused on interview techniques, probing, and handling sensitive topics to ensure consistency across interviews.
- **In-Field:** Quality assurance during fieldwork was ensured through debriefing sessions. These regular internal discussions helped address emerging issues, ensure consistent probing, and achieve saturation on topic-related information in subsequent interviews.
- **Post-Field:** Post-field quality assurance included verbatim transcription of all interviews and review of the transcripts. Transcripts were then systematically coded using a predefined coding framework to ensure analytical consistency across interviews. All quality control procedures and decisions were documented as part of the methodological annex in the Field Report.

Analytical Approach

Quantitative Analysis: Survey data were analyzed using weighted percentages, means, and confidence intervals, applying *survey* procedures in R to account for the complex survey design.

For bivariate analyses, an overall test of statistical significance was first conducted to assess whether observed differences between groups were statistically significant after accounting for survey weights. The choice of statistical test depended on the measurement level of the outcome variable. For ordinal outcome variables, survey-adjusted rank tests were applied, while for categorical outcome variables, survey-adjusted chi-square tests were used.

When the overall significance test indicated statistically significant differences between groups, post-hoc analyses were conducted to identify which specific groups differed from each other. For variables re-coded into binary categories, survey-weighted logistic regression models were used, followed by Estimated Marginal Means (EMMs) and pairwise comparisons. Bonferroni-adjusted p-values were applied to account for multiple comparisons.

For ordinal outcomes analyzed through survey-weighted rank tests, pairwise survey-weighted rank comparisons were conducted as post-hoc tests. Bonferroni correction was again applied to reduce the risk of Type I error arising from multiple group comparisons.

Robustness checks included the estimation of the design effect (DEFF) and multiple imputation procedures for handling missing values¹⁰⁰.

Most survey questions included “Don’t know” and “Refuse to answer” response options. These were included in the analysis where they provided analytical value; particularly in cases where capturing uncertainty, lack of awareness, or reluctance to respond adds to the interpretation. In contrast, for questions focused on scales or rating distributions, the main interest there was in the distribution of substantive responses rather than the share of respondents without a definite answer.

100. Note: This applies to small numbers only and is not executed systematically.

For multiple-choice questions (explicitly marked as such in the questionnaire and in the title of the figures), the share of each response option was calculated as a proportion of the total number of selected answers, rather than as a share of respondents. This approach better captures the relative weight and importance of each option, particularly in cases where respondents could select more than one answer. Accordingly, the primary analytical focus in such questions is on the distribution of selected options rather than strict respondent-level attribution. Respondents who answered “Don’t know” or refused to answer are excluded from the calculation. Therefore, these calculations allow assessment of the distribution of selected options among substantive responses, but they cannot be used to determine the share of respondents who selected each option.

A total of 2,200 people responded to the survey, constituting the full sample. For questions that were answered by all respondents, the number of observations is therefore 2,200. Because weights are used in the analysis, the raw number of observations is not reported for questions that were not answered by all respondents. Displaying N’s in weighted analyses could be misleading, as the weights alter the contribution of each observation and the unweighted counts no longer directly correspond to the presented results. Consequently, N’s are included only in those graphs where calculations were based on the unweighted sample.

Throughout this report, the category of “persons with disabilities” is operationalized using the Washington Group Short Set (WG SS) of questions, which captures functional limitations across six domains: seeing, hearing, walking, cognition, self-care, and communication. Respondents are classified as having a disability if they report “a lot of difficulty” or “cannot do at all” in at least one domain. On this basis, 11.9% of the sample is classified as having a disability. This Figure is substantially higher than the officially registered disability rate in Armenia (approximately 2% of the population), because the WG SS captures a broader set of functional limitations, including those of older respondents and of respondents with undiagnosed or unregistered conditions, rather than only those who have obtained formal disability status. Unless otherwise specified, references in this report to “persons with disabilities” follow the WG SS definition. Administrative figures (e.g., the 161,459 individuals registered with formal disability status) are cited separately and identified as such.

During the analysis, selected variables were disaggregated by gender, age, type of settlement, and socio-economic status. The distribution of the sample across the first three characteristics is presented in Table 2, while the distribution by socio-economic status is provided in Annex 4.

Qualitative Analysis: Qualitative data were analyzed thematically, following a coding framework aligned with the survey modules. NVivo software was used to organize and code transcripts, allowing for the identification of patterns in rationales, barriers, institutional experiences, and personal narratives.

Themes emerging from the qualitative data provided depth and contextual understanding for interpreting quantitative results.

Integrative Analysis: Following the convergent parallel mixed-methods design, the two datasets were integrated during the interpretation stage. Quantitative patterns were compared and contrasted with qualitative narratives, allowing the latter to contextualize, explain, and refine statistical findings.

This triangulation produced a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of discrimination dynamics and lived experiences in Armenia than either method could achieve alone.

Ethical Considerations

According to applicable regulations including no law mandating the establishment of ethics in the Republic of Armenia, formal institutional ethical approval was not required for this type of social research. However, CRRC-Armenia follows internal ethical procedures and adheres to international standards, ensuring informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity, and respondent safety throughout the study.

Ethical standards, data protection, privacy, and confidentiality are paramount, adhering to a “do not harm” policy, particularly for sensitive topics like discrimination, stigma, and vulnerabilities.

CRRC-Armenia upholds a robust framework of policies and procedures grounded in internal guidance on ethical research principles and practices, aligning with international ethical research standards and protocols, such as those outlined by the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) and the International Statistical Institute (ISI). Our commitment is reinforced through rigorous staff and interview training, ethical review processes, and adherence to internal data protection regulations, ensuring the integrity and safety of all research activities. This study, focusing on sensitive topics like discrimination, stigma, and groups with heightened risk to discrimination (e.g., Gender, LGBTQ+, displacement, disability), brings specific ethical considerations that we acknowledge and address through tailored protocols and collaborative oversight with partner organizations.

Driven by the above, CRRC-Armenia has a commitment to ensure several ethical considerations are met, or, in specific cases, discussed and reflected upon within its management staff, and the partner organizations involved in the study process. These considerations include data protection and archiving procedures and local considerations.

Challenges and Limitations

The research team faced several technical challenges and limitations during data collection process¹⁰¹, which are transparently outlined below.

Quantitative Component:

- **Trust and rapport-building:** Establishing trust with participants, especially when discussing personal or sensitive experiences of discrimination, required additional time and careful interviewer engagement. On the one hand, this contributed to interviewer dropout; on the other, occasional participant discomfort likely increased the chance of socially desirable responses to certain questions. This risk was particularly difficult to detect and manage due to the telephone-based mode of data collection.
- **Timing of fieldwork:** Data were collected in November-December, a particularly busy period due to end-of-year workloads and Christmas-New Year preparations. This limited participant availability and prolonged the data collection process. In addition, interviewer productivity remained low and dropout rates were high due to the sensitivity of the research topic and the intensified year-end workload.
- **Sensitivity of the topic:** The sensitive nature of the research topic led to some interview dropouts and interrupted interviews. From an analytical perspective, it cannot be ruled out that respondents provided socially desirable answers or were hesitant to share certain experiences during data collection.

101. It should be noted that unlike other data collection methods, no sample related challenges were recorded during RDD.

- **Lower perceived relevance:** Compared to political or other topics that currently attract greater public attention and media coverage in Armenia, some potential respondents considered the topic less engaging, which could also negatively affect their willingness to participate.
- **Open-ended questions:** Capturing detailed open-ended responses during CATI interviews was challenging for interviewers, increased interview duration, and created additional complexity for data processing and cleaning.
- **Selection criteria:** The additional selection criterion requiring a minimum of 3+ years of residency in Armenia has also contributed to slowing down the fieldwork.

These factors may introduce potential biases in the data, including social desirability bias, non-response bias, and possible underreporting of sensitive experiences. Despite this, the direction of these effects is not uniform and may vary across questions and respondent groups. These considerations should therefore be kept in mind when interpreting the results presented in the “Results” section.

Qualitative Component:

KIIs

- **Limited availability of key informants:** Many key informants, particularly from public administration and legal sectors, had constrained schedules, especially during the end-of-year period, which led to delays and repeated rescheduling.
- **Extended coordination and follow-up:** Securing confirmation for interviews often required multiple follow-ups after formal invitations, increasing the time and effort needed for recruitment.
- **Variability in depth across sectors:** The level of detail and openness varied across sectors, reflecting differences in institutional culture, mandates, and perceived risks of participation.

IDIs

- **Recruitment difficulties, particularly among men:** Recruiting male participants proved challenging, as men were generally less willing to engage in in-depth discussions on discrimination and personal experiences, especially for longer qualitative interviews.
- **Dropout after initial consent:** In most cases, participants who initially agreed to participate later withdrew or became unresponsive, requiring additional recruitment efforts.
- **Time constraints of participants:** Many participants cited work obligations and irregular schedules as reasons for limited availability or shortened interviews.
- **Emotional sensitivity of the topic:** Discussions around discrimination occasionally triggered emotional discomfort, requiring interviewers to adapt the pace or depth of questioning. This factor also made it difficult for some participants to open up; when discussing certain questions, they sometimes preferred to provide brief or alternative answers in response to the interviewers’ efforts.

Despite the challenges and limitations outlined above, the collected data are complete and demonstrate accuracy, validity, replicability, and reliability, making them suitable for conducting high-quality analyses.

Annex 2. Qualitative Analysis on Settings of Discrimination

KI and IDI interviewees identified 15 settings¹⁰² in which discrimination occurs (see Table 4).

Table 4. Settings of discrimination (IDIs & KIIs)

	Settings of discrimination
I	Workplace
II	Healthcare institutions (hospital, polyclinic)
III	Educational institutions
IV	Public spaces
V	Service and retail settings (cafés, restaurants, shops, shopping malls)
VI	Public transport
VII	Community
VIII	Family
IX	Social networks
X	Banks
XI	Politics
XII	Local government
XIII	State institutions
XIV	Law enforcement agencies
XV	Court

A review of the qualitative data indicates that interviewees identified approximately 15 target groups at heightened risk of discrimination (see Table 5).

Table 5. Targets of discrimination (IDIs & KIIs)

	Targets of discrimination
1	Women
2	Woman with a disability
3	Refugee / Immigrant
4	Forcibly displaced person / person from Nagorno-Karabakh
5	Forcibly displaced person / person from Nagorno-Karabakh/ Women

102. The Latin notation is intentional and serves as a coding device for jointly examining manifestations of discrimination directed at different targets across different settings.

6	Person with a physical disability
7	Person with a mental disability
8	Child with a disability
9	Socially disadvantaged person
10	Elderly
11	LGBTQ+ community members
12	People with noticeable physical differences (weight, height, etc.)
13	Child who struggles academically
14	Stranger / outsider
15	National minority

KI and IDI interviewees identified 15 main manifestations of discrimination¹⁰³ (see Table 6).

Table 6. Manifestations of discrimination (IDIs & KIIs)

	Manifestations of discrimination
A	Verbal targeting of difference (labeling, stigmatization, mockery, etc.)
B	Gender-based harassment
C	Discriminatory treatment in hiring (including both personal and impersonal forms)
D	Discriminatory treatment in the provision of services (e.g., withholding information)
E	Discriminatory treatment affecting freedom or ease of movement
F	Discriminatory treatment in receiving attention or care (e.g., being seated at the front of the class, treating a weaker student badly, neglecting the elderly within the family)
G	Discriminatory treatment in the exercise of voting rights
H	Discriminatory treatment in career advancement
I	Discriminatory treatment in determining salary level
J	Discriminatory treatment in the exercise of the right to education
K	Rude and contemptuous treatment
L	Discriminatory treatment in work assignments (e.g., assigning one-person heavier work and another lighter tasks)
M	Restricting control over one's time
N	Physical abuse
O	Psychological abuse

103. The Latin-letter labeling is intentional and serves as a coding system for the joint analysis of manifestations of discrimination directed at different targets across different settings (see Table 5).

The manifestations of discrimination recorded across different settings, classified by target group, are presented systematically in Table 7. The table makes it possible to compare the settings and forms in which discriminatory practices occur, revealing both broader patterns and features specific to particular target groups.

Table 7. Comparative insights of targets, manifestations, and settings of discrimination (IDIs & KIIs)

Targets	Settings														
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII	XIII	XIV	XV
Women	B , H , I	J					G , M	F , G , J , K , M , N , O			X		G , H	D, F	D , F
Woman with a disability	I	D													
Refugee / Immigrant								G					D , K		
Forcibly displaced person / person from Nagorno-Karabakh													D		
Forcibly displaced person / person from Nagorno-Karabakh/ Women	C				K		A		A						
Person with a physical disability	I	E	E	E	E	E				E , D			E		D , F
Person with a mental disability		D	F, J	A				G	A			A			
Child with a disability			E	A											
Socially disadvantaged person		D	A , F , K , N	A , K , N											
Elderly		D				E		F							
LGBTQ+ community members	A , C	F		A , K			A	G						A , G, K	
People with noticeable physical differences (weight, height, etc.)	C		A												
Child who struggles academically			F												
Stranger / outsider	C , L														
National minority			A												

Annex 3. Survey Questionnaire

Introduction

Hello: my name is _____. I represent the Caucasus Research Resource Center-Armenia Foundation, an independent non-partisan research organization.

We are conducting a study to assess perceptions, attitudes, and lived experiences of discrimination in Armenia, providing evidence-based insights to inform awareness-raising campaigns, policy interventions, and trust-building efforts with institutions like the Human Rights Defender's Office.

Please note that participation in this study is voluntary, but your input is very important and valuable, hence we kindly ask for your support in participating in this important study by answering our questions.

Although our system will record random segments of our conversation to monitor the quality of my work, the recording will be deleted immediately after the research is completed, and the data will be analyzed in an aggregated manner. Any contact details collected during the survey will be used solely for verification or quality control purposes.

The interview will take approximately 20 minutes.

Technical Variables

Call Result. Please, mention the call result.

Respondent answered	1
Number not answering/not picking up	2
Number unavailable/Number does not exist	3

Agreement. Do you agree to participate?

[Technical instruction: Ask if "Call Result" = 1.]

The respondent agreed to participate in the survey.	1
The respondent refused to participate in the survey.	2
The respondent did not speak the language of the interview.	3
The respondent did not participate in the survey due to health problems.	4
The respondent was driving.	5
Other (please specify)	999

Refusal Reason. Please, mention the reason for refuse.

[Technical instruction: Ask if “Agreement” = 2.]

No time for participation these days.	1
I do not want to share my personal information.	2
Can not participate due to current family problems.	3
No answer/do not know	4
No trust in international organizations	5
Other (please specify)	999

Start Time. [Automatically registered by SurveyCTO.]

Duration. [Automatically registered by SurveyCTO.]

Interviewer ID. Interviewer, please select your name from the list.

D0a. Do you confirm you are 18 or older?

Yes	1
No	0 [Finish]

D0b. Do you in Armenia more than 3 years?

Yes	1
No	0 [Finish]

Demographics

Note. Now I'd like to ask you a few questions about yourself.

D1. Now I am going to register your gender.

[Interviewer! Don't read out the options, correspond.]

Female	1
Male	2
Other (please specify)	999
Refuse to answer	-99

D2. Please mention your already completed age.

[Interviewer! Enter "-99" if respondents refuse to answer.]

D3a. In which country did you grow up?

Armenia	1
Nagorno Karabakh (Artsakh)	2
Russia	3
Georgia	4
France	5
Iran	6
USA	7
Lebanon	8
Syria	9
Other (please specify)	999
Refuse to answer	-99

D3b. In which region are you living now?

Yerevan	1
Aragatsotn	2
Ararat	3
Armavir	4
Gegharkunik	5
Lori	6
Kotayk	7
Shirak	8
Vayots dzor	9
Tavush	10
Syunik	11
Refuse to answer	-99

D4. Do you live in a rural or urban area?

[Technical instruction: Ask if “D3b”! = 1]

Urban	1
Rural	2
Refuse to answer	-99

D5. Which language do you usually speak at home?

[Interviewer! Don’t read out the options, correspond.]

Armenian	1
Russian	2
English	3
Yezidi	4
Other (please specify)	999
Refuse to answer	-99

Attitudes And Perceptions

Note: Now I would like to talk a little about your opinion on discrimination.

A1. In your own words, what does “discrimination” mean?

[Interviewer! If the respondent doesn’t know, please mention “-98”, if refuses to answer “-99”.]

Now I would like to give the accepted description of “discrimination”.

Note: Discrimination means treating people unfairly or excluding them because of their personal characteristics or group membership, this can be done directly by people or indirectly by (state) institutions. For example, when someone is denied a job or treated unfairly because of their gender, ethnicity, or disability.

A2. In your opinion, how serious of a problem is discrimination in Armenia?

[Interviewer! Read out options.]

Very serious	1
Somewhat serious	2
Not very serious	3

Not a problem at all	4
Don't know	-98
Refuse to answer	-99

A3. Now I will ask you two questions about different groups of people in Armenia. For both groups, please tell me what you think about them using a maximum of 3 words or characteristics.

[Interviewer! Mention maximum 3 options.]

[Technical instruction: show one question per group. Groups should be from different rows.]

A3_a	Group 1	A3_b	Group 2
A3_a1	Women in Armenia	A3_b1	Men in Armenia
A3_a2	People in Armenia with mental disabilities, for example with Depression, Autism, Schizophrenia	A3_b2	People in Armenia without any mental disabilities, such as Depression, Autism, Schizophrenia
A3_a3	People in Armenia with physical disabilities, for example people who have difficulties hearing, seeing, or mobilizing (in wheelchairs)	A3_b3	People in Armenia without any physical disabilities, such as hearing, seeing, or mobilizing issues (in wheelchair)
A3_a4	National minorities in Armenia, such as Molokans, Yezidis, or Assyrians	A3_b4	People in Armenia who are of Armenian ethnicity
A3_a5	Displaced People in Armenia who are displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh)	A3_b5	People in Armenia who are not displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh)
A3_a6	Migrants living in Armenia, such as Indians, Russians or Ukrainians	A3_b6	People in Armenia who were born and/or raised in Armenia
A3_a7	LGBTQ+ people in Armenia.	A3_b7	People in Armenia who are not LGBTQ+

A4. In your opinion, how widespread is discrimination in Armenia towards the following social groups?

[Interviewer! Read out options.]

[Technical instruction: Randomize groups.]

		Very widespread	Fairly widespread	Fairly rare	Very rare or not at all	Don't know	Refuse to answer
A4_1	Women	4	3	2	1	-98	-99
A4_2	People with mental disabilities	4	3	2	1	-98	-99
A4_3	People with physical disabilities	4	3	2	1	-98	-99

A4_4	National minorities (e.g. Molokans, Yezidis, and Assyrians)	4	3	2	1	-98	-99
A4_5	Displaced people from Nagorno Karabakh (Artsakh)	4	3	2	1	-98	-99
A4_6	LGBTQ+ people	4	3	2	1	-98	-99
A4_7	Refugees/migrants (including those from Russia, India or Ukraine)	4	3	2	1	-98	-99

A5. How often do people around you make discriminatory comments or jokes regarding the groups listed earlier?

[Interviewer! Read out the options.]

Often	4
Sometimes	3
Rarely	2
Never	1
Don't know	-98
Refuse to answer	-99

A6. To what extent do you agree that all people in Armenia, including from different social groups, have equal opportunities to participate in our society?

[Interviewer! Read out the options.]

Fully agree	5
Somewhat agree	4
Neither agree nor disagree	3
Somewhat disagree	2
Fully disagree	1
Don't know	-98
Refuse to answer	-99

A7. Now I will read several statements, please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with them.

[Interviewer! Read out the options.]

[Technical instruction: Randomize the statements.]

Options.

Fully agree	5
Somewhat agree	4
Neither agree nor disagree	3
Somewhat disagree	2
Fully disagree	1
Don't know	-98
Refuse to answer	-99

	Statements
A7_1	When jobs are scarce, men should have more rights to a job than women.
A7_2	Public institutions should be adapted to people with mental disabilities.
A7_3	Most members of national minorities prefer their own community's development over Armenian's Economy.
A7_4	People displaced from Nagorno Karabakh (Artsakh) prefer to live from Social Welfare and special treatment they receive.
A7_5	If I were to rent out my apartment, I would prefer not to rent it out to Indians.
A7_6	I would feel uncomfortable to sit next to someone who is HIV-positive in a restaurant
A7_7	It is primarily a woman's duty to take care of children and the household.
A7_8	I would feel uncomfortable working closely with a person who has a mental disability
A7_9	The state is responsible for accessibility of public spaces for people with physical disabilities
A7_10	I would prefer that my (potential) child would learn in the school/classroom without children with a physical disability.
A7_11	National minorities, such as Yezidis, Assyrians, Molokans, choose to prefer their own traditions over obtaining a degree in education.
A7_12	People displaced from Nagorno Karabakh (Artsakh) should receive priority in finding employment opportunities.
A7_13	Workplaces are justified in avoiding hiring LGBTQ+ people because it would make customers or colleagues uncomfortable.
A7_14	People who are LGBTQ+ became victims of propaganda.
A7_15	Migrants and refugees living in Armenia, such as Russians or Indians, steal jobs from locals.
A7_16	A workplace that prioritizes diversity in their workforce would be attractive to me.

A8. Imagine that Armenia adopts a new law to combat discrimination. The rights of which social groups do you think should be extra protected under this law?

[Interviewer! Don't read out the options.]

[Technical instruction: allow multiple options.]

Women	1
People with mental disabilities	2
People with physical disabilities	3
National minorities (e.g. Molokans, Yezidis, and Assyrians)	4
Displaced people from Nagorno Karabakh (Artsakh)	5
LGBTQ+ people	6
Refugees/migrants (including those from Russia or Ukraine)	7
Other (please specify)	999
No one	0
Don't know	-98
Refuse to answer	-99

A9. Now, please tell us in what contexts and areas of life you think discrimination is widespread in Armenia.

[Interviewer: Don't read out the options. Choose all that apply.]

[Technical instruction: allow multiple answers.]

At the workplace	1
In healthcare institutions	2
In education institutions	3
In police	4
In courts or legal proceedings	5
In housing or rental situations	6
At state institutions (ministries or other entities)	7
At Municipal service offices	8
In public spaces (transport, streets, shops)	9
In entertainment and cultural venues (restaurants, clubs, theatre)	10
In other personal settings, e.g. friends, neighbors, relatives, except from the family	11
In the army	12

In families	13
Other (please specify)	999
Don't know	-98
Refuse to answer	-99

Experiences

Note: Now we would like to talk about your personal experiences or witnessed experiences on discrimination.

Even if you haven't experienced anything personally, your opinion helps us understand how people feel in Armenia. There are no right or wrong answers. Please, remember that everything is anonymously registered, no answer will lead back to you or your personal information.

Note: Before we start the questions, I would like to remind you briefly of the general definition of Discrimination, which means: treating people unfairly or excluding them because of their personal characteristics or group membership, this can be done directly by people or indirectly by (state) institutions. For example, when someone is denied a job or treated unfairly because of their gender, ethnicity, or disability.

E1. In the past five years, have you personally felt that you were treated discriminatory?

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	-98
Refuse to answer	-99

E2. How often have you personally felt that you were treated discriminatory?

[Interviewer: Read out the options.]

[Technical instruction: ask question if E1 = 1]

Yes, very often	4
Yes, regularly	3
Yes, occasionally	2
Yes, once	1
Don't know	-98
Refuse to answer	-99

E3. Where have you personally experienced or suspected that you have experienced discrimination?

[Interviewer: Don't read out the options. Choose all that apply.]

[Technical instruction: Ask the question if E1=1, allow multiple answers.]

At the workplace	1
In healthcare institutions	2
In education institutions	3
In police	4
In courts or legal proceedings	5
In housing or rental situations	6
At state institutions (ministries or other entities)	7
At Municipal service offices	8
In public spaces (transport, streets, shops)	9
In entertainment and cultural venues (restaurants, clubs, theatre)	10
In other personal settings, e.g. friends, neighbors, relatives, except from the family	12
In the army	13
In families	14
Other (please specify)	999
Don't know	-98
Refuse to answer	-99

E4a. What do you believe was the MAIN reason for the discrimination you experienced?

[Technical instruction: Ask the question if E1=1.]

[Interviewer! Don't read out the options. Choose only one option]

E4b. What do you believe were other reasons, if any, for the discrimination you experienced?

[Interviewer! Don't read out the options. Choose multiple options]

[Technical instruction: Ask the question if E4a! = -98 or -99, and don't show the options mentioned in E4a, allow multiple options.]

Gender / Sex	1
Age	2
Race / Ethnicity	3

Religion / Beliefs	4
Physical disability status	5
Mental disability status	6
Sexual orientation or Gender Identity	7
Social or economic status	8
Refugee or immigrant status	9
Language/accent	10
Political views	11
Displacement (from NK or another region)	12
Pregnancy / Motherhood	13
Position in workplace	14
(Chronic) Illness	15
There is no other reason [show only for E4b]	0
Other (please specify)	999
Don't know	-98
Refuse to answer	-99

E5. Through which way(s) have this treatment manifested?

[Interviewer: Read out the options. Accept all that apply.]

[Technical instruction: Ask the question if E1=1.]

Discriminatory comments	1
Exclusion or ignoring	2
Violence or threat	3
Negative Stereotypes in Media/Politics	4
Non-verbal expressions (body language, facial expressions)	5
Discriminatory treatments	6
Other (please specify)	999
Don't know	-98
Refuse to answer	-99

E6. Have you changed the way you behave in public or around others to avoid being treated unfairly or discriminated against?

[Interviewer: Read out the options. Accept all that apply.]

[Technical instruction: Randomize options]

I dressed differently than I would ideally like.	1
I avoided wearing certain religious symbols that I would actually like to wear.	2
I adjusted how I walk, speak, or present myself.	3
I didn't speak my family's native language in public.	4
I have changed my name / use a different name than my own.	5
I avoided going to certain places or at certain times in public.	6
I was more suspicious of strangers in public.	7
Other (please specify)	999
I have not changed my behavior.	0
Don't know.	-98
Refuse to answer.	-99

E7. Have you personally ever seen or heard someone else being treated discriminatory?

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	-98
Refuse to answer	-99

E8. Which groups have you seen being discriminated against?

[Interviewer: Don't read out the options. Choose all that apply.]

[Technical instruction: ask if E7=1.]

Women	1
People with mental disabilities	2
People with physical disabilities	3
National minorities (e.g. Molokans, Yezidis, and Assyrians)	4
Displaced people from Nagorno Karabakh (Artsakh)	5
LGBTQ+ people	6

Refugees/migrants (including those from Russia or Ukraine)	7
Men	8
Religious minorities	9
People experiencing/living in poverty	10
Other (please specify)	999
No one	0
Don't know	-98
Refuse to answer	-99

E9. What do you believe was the MAIN reason for the most recent incident of discrimination you have seen or heard?

[Interviewer: Don't read out the options. Choose all that apply.]

[Technical instruction: ask question if E7=1.]

Gender / Sex	1
Age	2
Race / Ethnicity	3
Religion / Beliefs	4
Physical disability status	5
Mental disability status	6
Sexual orientation or Gender Identity	7
Social or economic status	8
Immigrant or refugee status	9
Language/accent	10
Political views	11
Displacement (from NK or another region)	12
Pregnancy / Motherhood	13
Position in workplace	14
(Chronic) Illness	15
Other (please specify)	999
Don't know	-98
Refuse to answer	-99

E10. Where have you witnessed the recent incident of discrimination in Armenia?

[Interviewer: Don't read out the options. Choose all that apply.]

[Technical instruction: ask if E7=1.]

At the workplace	1
In healthcare institutions	2
In education institutions	3
In police	4
In courts or legal proceedings	5
In housing or rental situations	6
At state institutions (ministries or other entities)	7
At Municipal service offices	8
In public spaces (transport, streets, shops)	9
In entertainment and cultural venues (restaurants, clubs, theatre)	10
In other personal settings, e.g. friends, neighbors, relatives, except from the family	11
In the army	12
In families	13
Other (please specify)	999
Don't know	-98
Refuse to answer	-99

E11a. With whom you discussed or share the most recent incident of discrimination you personally experienced or witnessed?

[Interviewer! Don't read out the options. Choose all that apply.]

[Technical instruction: ask if E1=1 or E7=1.]

With Family	1
With Friends, relatives, neighbors	2
I shared it in social media	3
I did not discuss	0
Other (please specify)	999
Don't know	-98
Refuse to answer	-99

E11b. Where did you report the most recent incident of discrimination you personally experienced or witnessed?

[Interviewer! Don't read out the options. Choose all that apply.]

[Technical instruction: ask if E1=1 or E7=1.]

Police	1
Ombudsman / Human Rights Defender's Office	2
Workplace HR, manager or employer	3
Court	4
Civil society organization / NGO	5
Public Defender's Office	6
I did not report	0
Other (please specify)	999
Don't know	-98
Refuse to answer	-99

E12. What was the outcome?

[Interviewer! Read out the options.]

[Technical instruction: Ask the question if E11b= 1-6]

Resolved satisfactorily	1
Acknowledged but not resolved	2
No response received	3
Situation worsened after reporting	4
Still under review / waiting	5
Closed without any arguments	6
Other (please specify)	999
Don't know	-98
Refuse to answer	-99

E13. What made you not report the incident?

[Interviewer! Don't read out the options. Choose all that apply]

[Technical instruction: Ask the question if E11b = 0.]

Did not know where to report	1
Did not trust any institutions	2
Believed it would not make a difference	3
Fear of retaliation or negative consequences	4
Not serious enough	5
Resolved informally / personally	6
Fear to be judged by the family members	7
Fear to be judged by the community (relatives, friends, neighbors, people from the same settlement)	8
Other (please specify)	999
Don't know	-98
Refuse to answer	-99

Awareness of Policies, Mechanisms, And Trust in Institutions.

Note: Now we have almost completed most of the questionnaire, and I am going to ask you a few questions about your awareness of policies, mechanisms, and trust in institutions.

AW1. Of which institutions, agencies, or offices are you aware that protect individuals against discrimination?

[Interviewer! Don't read out the options. Choose all that apply]

Local community	1
Workplace HR, manager or employer	2
Police	3
Ombudsman / Human Rights Defender office	4
Public Defender's Office	5
Public advocacy organization / NGO	6
Government agency (e.g., Ministry)	7
Media / social media	8
I don't know any	-95
Other (please specify)	999
Refuse to answer	-99

AW2. Do you know how to file a complaint if you experience or witness discrimination?

[Interviewer! Read out the options.]

Yes, I know exactly how	3
Yes, partly	2
No, I don't know	1
Refuse to answer	-99

AW3. If you personally experienced discrimination, where would you most likely go first for help?

[Technical instruction: Allow one option to choose.]

[Interviewer! Don't read out options.]

Family member	1
Relative, friend or neighbor	2
Local community	3
Workplace HR, manager or employer	4
Police	5
Ombudsman / Human Rights Defender office	6
Public Defender's Office	7
Public advocacy organization / NGO	8
Government agency (e.g., Ministry)	9
Media / social media	10
I would resolve the issue myself	11
I would not seek help / I would do nothing	12
Other (please specify)	999
Don't know	-98
Refuse to answer	-99

AW4. How much do you trust police to take discrimination complaints seriously?

[Interviewer! Read out the options.]

Fully trust	4
Somewhat trust	3
Somewhat distrust	2
Do not trust at all	1
Don't know	-98
Refuse to answer	-99

AW5. How much do you trust courts or judicial institutions to deliver fair outcomes in discrimination cases?

[Interviewer! Read out the options.]

Fully trust	4
Somewhat trust	3
Somewhat distrust	2
Do not trust at all	1
Don't know	-98
Refuse to answer	-99

Information Sources

IN1. What are your two main sources of information for receiving news about social issues, news, or public events?

[Interviewer! Read out the options. If the respondent names the internet, clarify whether he/she means internet news websites or social networks such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, twitter, etc.]

[Technical instruction: Allow maximum two options to choose. Randomize.]

Colleagues	1
Family members	2
Neighbors, friends	3
Internet, EXCEPT social media	4
Social media	5
Newspapers, news magazines	6

Radio	7
TV	8
AI (such as ChatGPT)	9
Other (please specify)	999
Don't know	-98
Refuse to answer	-99

Socio-Economic Status

Note: Before finishing the survey, I would like to ask you some questions about your socio-economic status.

S1. Do you have a relative, a friend, a colleague who is a member of the following social groups?

		Yes	No	RA
S1_1	People with mental disabilities	1	0	-99
S1_2	People with physical disabilities	1	0	-99
S1_3	National minorities (e.g. Molokans, Yezidis, and Assyrians)	1	0	-99
S1_4	Displaced people from Nagorno Karabakh (Artsakh)	1	0	-99
S1_5	LGBTQ+ people	1	0	-99
S1_6	Refugees/migrants (including those from Russia or Ukraine)	1	0	-99

S2. Do you have difficulty in any of the following areas, even if you use glasses, a hearing aid, or other assistive devices?

[Interviewer! Read out the options.]

	List of disabilities	No difficulty	Some difficulty	A lot of difficulty	Cannot do at all	RA
S2_1	Seeing	4	3	2	1	-99
S2_2	Hearing	4	3	2	1	-99
S2_3	Walking or climbing steps	4	3	2	1	-99
S2_4	Remembering or concentrating	4	3	2	1	-99
S2_5	Washing all over or dressing	4	3	2	1	-99
S2_6	Communicating (understanding or being understood by others)	4	3	2	1	-99

S3. Which describes your marital status?

Single / Never married	1
Married	2
Divorced	3
Widowed	4
Refuse to answer	-99

S4. What is the highest level of education you have achieved to date?

No primary education.	1
Primary education (either complete or incomplete).	2
Incomplete secondary education.	3
Completed secondary education.	4
Secondary technical education.	5
Incomplete higher education.	6
Completed higher education (BA, MA, or Specialist degree).	7
Post-graduate degree.	8
Don't know	-98
Refuse to answer	-99

S5. Which of the following best describes your situation? Please think about the activity or situation which is primary for you.

[Interviewer! Read out the options.]

Retired and not employed	1
Student and not employed	2
Not employed (not looking for a job)	3
Not employed (looking for a job)	4
Employed/ Working either part-time or full time (even if the respondent is retired / is a student), including seasonal work	5
Self-employed (even if the respondent is retired / is a student), including seasonal work	6
Disabled and unable to work	7
Other (please specify)	999
Refuse to answer	-99

S6. There are a number of ethnic groups living in Armenia. Which ethnic group do you consider yourself a part of?

[Interviewer! Don't read out the options. Choose all that apply.]

Armenian	1
Georgian	2
Other Caucasian ethnicity (Abkhazian, Lezgin, Ossetian, etc.)	3
Russian	4
Kurd or Yezidi	5
Assyrian	6
Other ethnicity (specify)	999
Don't know	-98
Refuse to answer	-99

S7. Which of the following statements best describes the current economic situation of your household?

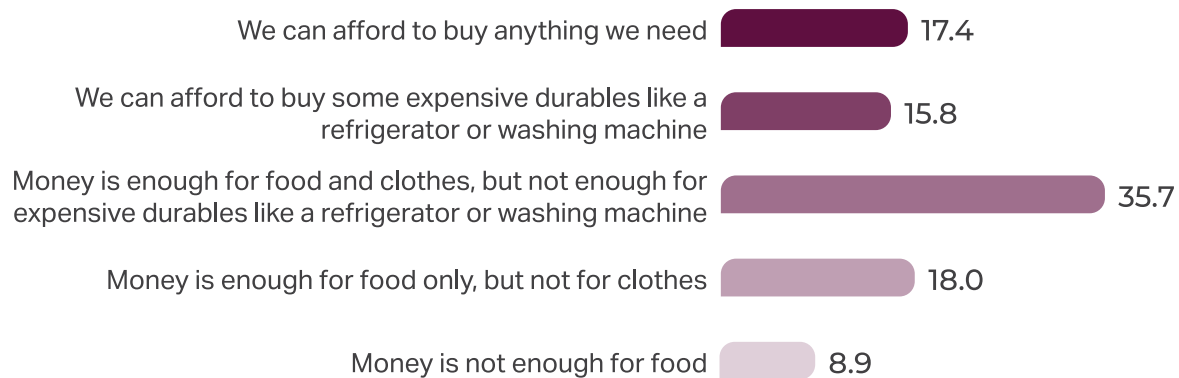
Money is not enough for food	1
Money is enough for food only, but not for clothes	2
Money is enough for food and clothes, but not enough for expensive durables like a refrigerator or washing machine	3
We can afford to buy some expensive durables like a refrigerator or washing machine	4
We can afford to buy anything we need	5
Don't know	-98
Refuse to answer	-99

Comments

Note. Thank you for your time and participation in the survey.

Annex 4. Figure 40

Which of the following statements best describes the current economic situation of your household? (%)



Annex 5. Policy recommendation matrix

Policy Recommendation Matrix

Study of Perceptions, Attitudes and Experiences of Discrimination in Armenia CRRC-Armenia / HRDO / DIHR, 2026

The matrix presents 25 recommendations across 7 thematic areas. Each recommendation sets out the core proposal, the concrete actions required to implement it, the expected outputs in the short term (Years 1–2) and long term (Years 3–5), the actors responsible for implementation (lead in bold), and the study evidence and legal basis that grounds it. Recommendations are calibrated to Armenian institutional realities and the mandate of the Human Rights Defender's Office. Items marked with a bullet (•) are individual sub-actions within each cell.

#	Recommendation	Concrete Actions / Measures	Short-term (Year 1–2)	Long-term (Year 3–5)
1.1	National public communication campaign on discrimination Design and launch a sustained multi-year national campaign anchored by the HRDO to build public understanding of discrimination as a legal concept and a violation of rights.	• Develop plain-language materials in Armenian and minority languages (Yezidi/Kurmanji, Russian, Assyrian) • Produce TV and radio content featuring real-life scenarios and available remedies • Distribute materials through municipal offices, healthcare facilities, and schools • Sustain campaign across multiple years, not as a single wave	• Design campaign strategy; produce core materials; launch pilot	• Annual campaigns; assess reach through follow-up population survey
1.2	Integrate non-discrimination content into school curricula from primary level onward	• Develop age-appropriate curriculum modules at primary, secondary, and VET levels • Include non-discrimination content in pre-service and in-service teacher training • Pilot in ten schools in Year 1; evaluate; scale nationally	• Develop module; pilot; train first cohort of teachers	• National rollout; module integrated in mandatory teacher certification
1.3	Targeted awareness for public officials, law enforcement, employers, and healthcare professionals	• Mandatory annual anti-discrimination module in civil servant in-service training • Integrate into Police Academy curriculum and police in-service training • Employer workshops on hiring, promotion, and sexual harassment obligations • Training for GPs and hospital staff on patient rights and non-discrimination	• Develop training modules; pilot with civil service and police	• Institutionalize as mandatory; link to professional performance appraisal
1.4	Dedicated rural and regional outreach program	• Mobile outreach teams covering all ten marzes • Partnerships with local community leaders and regional media • All materials reference the national anti-discrimination platform and hotline (see Area 6)	• Map coverage gaps; identify community entry points per marz	• Program embedded in marz administration annual work plans

#	Recommendation	Concrete Actions / Measures	Short-term (Year 1–2)	Long-term (Year 3–5)
2.1	Priority access to vocational training and employment support for discrimination-exposed groups	- Amend state vocational program eligibility criteria to explicitly include discrimination-exposed groups - Track employment outcomes of graduates by vulnerability category - Develop private-sector partnerships for internship and mentoring placements	Amend program criteria; launch outreach to vulnerable communities	Track outcomes; adjust program design based on evidence
2.2	Expand state-co-financed crisis center and shelter network to all marzes	- Gap assessment of shelter capacity by marz in Year 1 - Expand state social ordering to fund NGO-operated shelters in underserved marzes - Ensure all shelters meet disability accessibility standards - Implement 2024 amendments to the Law on Prevention of Violence within the Family	Gap assessment; expand social ordering calls; develop accessibility checklist	Full marz coverage; multi-year state funding mechanism
2.3	Outreach to Yezidi and Molokan communities on girls' right to education and legal marriage age	- Engage community representatives in program design from the outset - School retention support (transport, materials) for girls in affected communities - Social worker outreach to families at risk of early withdrawal from education	Partnership with community organizations; map scale of issue per marz	Institutionalized program in Ministry of Education marz-level plans
2.4	Dedicated rights information program for internally displaced persons from Nagorno-Karabakh	- Produce accessible materials addressing sub-ethnicity-based discrimination specifically - Deploy HRDO information points at IDP reception and integration centers - Referral protocol to legal aid, HRDO complaint procedure, and social services	Rapid design; deploy at reception centers; train HRDO liaison officers	Integrate into sustained IDP integration programming
2.5	Expand the availability of affordable childcare and early education institutions (nurseries and kindergartens), particularly in rural areas, to enable women to develop and maintain their professional skills and reduce economic dependency as a root cause of discrimination.	- Commission a national mapping of nursery and kindergarten availability, capacity, and cost by marz and settlement type, disaggregated by urban/rural status, to establish the baseline gap - Priorities the expansion of state-funded nursery and kindergarten places in rural marzes with the largest documented shortfalls, through capital investment and state social ordering to NGO-operated providers - Introduce a targeted subsidy scheme for low-income households to cover nursery and kindergarten fees, with particular attention to women-headed households and households affected by displacement from Nagorno-Karabakh - Develop a regulatory framework incentivizing larger employers (above 100 staff) to contribute to workplace-adjacent or community-based childcare provision, in line with the general principle of shared family responsibility under the Law	- Complete the national mapping and gap analysis by marz; publish findings - Launch a pilot expansion of subsidized nursery and kindergarten places in two to three rural marzes with the highest identified gaps - Draft the regulatory framework for employer-supported childcare contributions	- Achieve nationally defined minimum coverage ratios for nursery and kindergarten places across all marzes, with rural-urban gap closing as a tracked indicator - Subsidy scheme operational and reviewed for uptake; adjust based on evidence from pilot marzes - Employer-contribution framework adopted and integrated into Labor Code implementing regulations - Childcare expansion embedded in the next National Human Rights Strategy Action Plan cycle

#	Recommendation	Concrete Actions / Measures	Short-term (Year 1–2)	Long-term (Year 3–5)
		on Ensuring Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (2013) • Ensure all newly established or expanded nurseries and kindergartens meet inclusive education standards for children with disabilities, consistent with the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2021) • Introduce flexible, part-day and extended-hours childcare options to accommodate the working schedules of women re-entering the labor market or enrolled in vocational training (cross-reference Recommendation 2.1)		
3.1	Priority adoption of the Package of Draft Laws on Ensuring Legal Equality and Protection from Discrimination	• Government and National Assembly to priorities adoption; most recent draft circulated June 2024 • Incorporate all OSCE/ODIHR recommendations from the interim opinion of 6 September 2019 • Law must define: direct and indirect discrimination, harassment, associative discrimination, instruction to discriminate, and victimization • Establish a dedicated enforcement mechanism (HRDO-linked equality council) with power to investigate and make binding recommendations • Provide civil remedies including compensation, which are absent from the current framework	• HRDO formal submission to National Assembly urging priority adoption; convene technical working group	• Law adopted; implementing regulations issued; enforcement mechanism operational
3.2	Implement the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2021, No. ZR-194) through adopting implementing regulations	• Adopt implementing regulations on accessibility standards with clear timelines and penalties • Establish an inspection mechanism for accessibility compliance in public buildings and transport • Issue regulations on reasonable accommodation obligations for employers above a defined size threshold • Review legal incapacity provisions that create additional discrimination barriers, as identified by KIs	• Draft implementing regulations; gap audit of public buildings	• Full compliance across marzes; enforcement track record established
3.3	Amend the Labor Code to establish explicit workplace anti-discrimination and anti-harassment obligations	• Require organizations above 50 staff to designate an internal anti-discrimination responsible person • Include sexual harassment as an explicit Labor Code violation with civil and criminal liability • Introduce proportionate and dissuasive penalties for violations • Include discrimination compliance in the Labor Inspectorate's routine inspection mandate	• Draft amendment; consultation with trade unions and employers	• Amendment adopted; enforcement operational; outcomes published annually

#	Recommendation	Concrete Actions / Measures	Short-term (Year 1–2)	Long-term (Year 3–5)
3.4	Expand free legal aid to explicitly cover discrimination cases	- Amend state legal aid eligibility regulations to include discrimination complaints - Co-finance NGO legal aid providers through the state social ordering mechanism - Introduce court fee waivers for discrimination cases, analogous to existing labor dispute waivers - Enable NGOs to file third-party complaints with the HRDO on behalf of victims	Regulatory amendment on eligibility; expand social ordering to include discrimination cases	Stable multi-year funding; geographic coverage across all marzes
4.1	National competency framework and training-of-trainers program on anti-discrimination practice	- HRDO and Ministry of Justice (or other relevant state authority) jointly develop an anti-discrimination competency framework for professionals - Train first ToT cohort of 40 participants from police, social work, education, health, and legal sectors - Integrate framework into pre-service curricula of the Police Academy, social work degree programs, and medical faculties - Leverage existing Council of Europe and ECRI programming for Armenia on content and funding	Draft framework; convene expert working group; deliver first ToT cohort	Framework embedded in pre-service curricula; annual refresher cycles
4.2	Mandatory internal anti-discrimination guidelines for all public institutions	- Ministry of Justice to issue model anti-discrimination institutional guidelines - Mandatory adoption in all ministries, regional administrations, courts, and police units - Guidelines to include: discrimination identification checklists, complaint referral protocols, and non-retaliation procedures - Include compliance reporting in annual institutional performance reviews	Draft model guidelines with civil society input; issue ministerial circular	Universal adoption; HRDO monitors compliance through annual reporting
4.3	Anti-discrimination accountability in job descriptions and performance appraisals of institutional leaders	- Civil Service Council to issue guidance on including anti-discrimination responsibilities in senior leadership job descriptions - Annual performance appraisals for directors of public institutions to include a discrimination prevention indicator - Public institutions above a defined threshold to designate an anti-discrimination focal point	Issue guidance; pilot in three ministries	Universal adoption; linked to anti-discrimination law implementation requirements
4.4	Sustained state co-financing of civil society organizations providing discrimination-related support	- Expand state social ordering calls to explicitly include discrimination complaints support, legal aid, and psychosocial services - Shift from annual to multi-year (three-year) social ordering contracts for established providers - Geographic coverage requirement: at least one funded provider per marz	Expand social ordering criteria; map existing NGO provision by marz	Multi-year contracts in place; geographic coverage achieved; impact monitored

#	Recommendation	Concrete Actions / Measures	Short-term (Year 1–2)	Long-term (Year 3–5)
5.1	Continue strengthening the accessibility and user-friendliness of the HRDO complaint procedure by continuously adapting it to evolving needs, modern accessibility standards, and user-centered solutions.	• Redesign the complaint submission form: plain language; maximum one page; online and paper versions • Develop accessible formats: audio guide, Easy Read version, screen-reader compatible online form • Translate complaint guidance into minority languages (Yezidi/ Kurmanji, Russian, Assyrian) • Reduce required documentation burden: initial submission should require minimal evidence	• Internal HRDO process review; redesign forms; accessibility audit	• Sustained uptake monitoring; iterative improvement based on user feedback
5.2	Structured complaint follow-up and outcome publication to rebuild institutional trust	• Publish annual outcome statistics, disaggregated by reason and setting • Publish anonymized case summaries demonstrating that reporting can lead to outcomes	• Review existing internal HRDO case management procedures and, where necessary, strengthen them to improve consistency and efficiency; introduce standard acknowledgment letters.	• Routine annual publication; findings cited in ECRI and ACFC monitoring reports
5.3	Address social and cultural barriers to reporting through community-based referral channels	• Train community-level intermediaries (social workers, community nurses, school counsellors) to receive disclosures and make referrals • Develop a referral protocol linking community intermediaries to HRDO, legal aid, and shelter services • Develop communication messages that explicitly address shame, fear of community judgment, and family pressure as recognized barriers	• Identify intermediary cadre; develop training and referral protocol; pilot in three marzes	• National coverage; integrated into community health and social work structures
6.1	Establish a clearly identifiable, discrimination-specific digital entry point under the authority of the Human Rights Defender's Office (HRDO), either as a standalone platform or as a dedicated section within the HRDO's official website.	• Year 1 – design and scoping: Co-design the platform with disability organizations, minority community representatives, migrant community representatives, and civil society organizations. Define functional requirements, accessibility standards, and data architecture, including protocols for anonymized and disaggregated data collection. Procure a development partner through an open and competitive process. • Year 2 – development and pilot phase: Develop the platform in Armenian and in the languages of major national minority and migrant communities. Build a secure reporting interface enabling both anonymous and identified submissions, with clear referral pathways to relevant support services. Ensure full accessibility compliance (WCAG 2.1 AA), including compatibility with screen readers and other assistive technologies. • Information hub function: Provide accessible, plain-language information on discrimination, including: definitions and forms of	• Scoping, co-design, procurement, content development, accessibility review, pilot launch	• Operational at scale; continuous improvement; platform data integrated into annual monitoring

#	Recommendation	Concrete Actions / Measures	Short-term (Year 1–2)	Long-term (Year 3–5)
		discrimination; protected grounds and rights under Armenian law; HRDO complaint procedures; and an interactive map of legal aid providers and support services disaggregated by marz. • Reporting and referral function: Enable users to submit reports without providing personal data, while offering tailored automated guidance based on the type of case. Include an optional secure callback function for users who wish to be contacted. • Data function: Collect anonymized and disaggregated data from submissions to support the HRDO's monitoring, analysis, and reporting on discrimination trends, in line with data protection standards. • Launch and outreach: Launch the platform together with a national communications campaign to ensure awareness and uptake, in coordination with broader awareness-raising activities under Thematic Area 1.		
6.2	Strengthen the Human Rights Defender's Office's anti-discrimination hotline as a dedicated, non-digital reporting and referral channel within a broader multi-channel discrimination response system.	• Recruit and train specialist staff (minimum four full-time equivalent positions) in discrimination identification, including indirect and intersectional discrimination, trauma-informed communication, and standardized referral pathways to relevant services and institutions. • Maintain an anonymous reporting option, whereby no personal data is required for the initial call, while allowing callers to voluntarily provide contact details for follow-up if they wish. • Ensure language accessibility through service provision in Armenian, Yezidi/Kurmanji, and Russian, with structured interpreter support or referral mechanisms for additional languages as required. • Launch the hotline in Year 1 as an early operational component of the overall system, including ahead of the full operationalization of the digital entry point. • Increase public awareness and visibility of the HRDO's hotline.	• Recruit and train staff; establish operating protocols; soft launch in Year 1	• Extended hours; aggregated anonymized data integrated into HRDO annual report
6.3	Integrate platform and hotline data into systematic evidence on unreported discrimination	• Design data collection architecture during platform build (Year 1): anonymization, consent framework, categorization by reason, setting, and region • Publish aggregated platform and hotline data as a dedicated annex to the HRDO annual monitoring report • Use data to identify systemic patterns and inform policy prioritization	• Design data architecture; complete privacy impact assessment; develop data governance framework	• Routine annual publication; evidence cited in government policy and international monitoring reports

#	Recommendation	Concrete Actions / Measures	Short-term (Year 1–2)	Long-term (Year 3–5)
7.1	Integrate a discrimination monitoring module into national statistical surveys (ILCS)	- Statistical Committee to add Washington Group Short Set (disability) and discrimination experience questions to the Integrated Living Conditions Survey - Pilot module design in Year 1; validate with CRRCA-Armenia and academic partners - Align question design with the present survey to enable trend comparison	Engage Statistical Committee; form technical working group; design and pilot module	Routine inclusion in ILCS; five-year trend data available for policy review
7.2	Commission a follow-up population survey on perceptions, attitudes and experiences of discrimination	- Use comparable methodology to the present study (CATI, WG SS disability module, same attitudinal statements) to enable trend analysis - Expand the qualitative component to include more in-depth interviews with national minority members - Publish findings publicly and present to the National Assembly	Secure funding commitment; agree methodology with CRRCA-Armenia; design funding model	Survey conducted in Year 4–5; published; presented to policymakers; feeds into next NHRS cycle
7.3	Establish an HRDO Annual Discrimination Monitoring Report as a formal, cross-institutional publication	- Designate HRDO as coordinator with inter-agency data sharing agreements - Report to integrate: complaint register data; platform and hotline data; court case data; media monitoring; and survey results - Disaggregated by reason, setting, region, gender, age, and disability status - Report formally submitted to the National Assembly and shared with Council of Europe ECRI, ACFC, and UN treaty bodies	Design report template; negotiate data sharing agreements; publish first edition	Routine annual publication; established as an internationally recognized evidence base on discrimination in Armenia
7.4	Incorporate recommendations into the next National Human Rights Strategy Action Plan with assigned budgets and milestones	- HRDO to submit formal advocacy input to the Government for the next NHRS Action Plan incorporating these recommendations - Each recommendation to be assigned: a responsible ministry, a budget line, a deadline, and a monitoring indicator - Annual inter-ministerial progress review chaired by the Ministry of Justice - Progress reported to international monitoring bodies in state reports	HRDO drafts formal advocacy submission; engages Ministry of Justice on the Action Plan's next revision	All major recommendations reflected in at least one Action Plan cycle; progress reviewed

Note on sequencing: Recommendations 3.1 (comprehensive anti-discrimination law) and 6.1–6.2 (digital platform and hotline) are foundational, their adoption substantially increases the effectiveness of all other measures. Recommendations 1.3, 2.4, 3.3, 4.2, 5.1, and 5.2 are achievable within the existing legal framework and HRDO mandate and should be initiated in Year 1. Recommendations 1.2, 4.1, 7.3, and 7.4 require early initiation to produce results within the Year 3–5 window.

