IOM Armenia  
Projects: Regulating Migration  

Combating Trafficking in Human Beings  
IOM has been active in counter-trafficking activities in Armenia and has lobbied for the inclusion of an article criminalizing human trafficking into the Armenian Criminal Code, for ratification of the United Nations Convention on Transnational Organized Crime and its protocols, and has contributed to the development of the National Plans of Action to Combat Human Trafficking. IOM was an observer member of the Republic of Armenia (RA) Inter-Agency Commission on Human Trafficking Issues and its successor Council and actively participated in preparation of the 2004-2006 and 2007-2009 National Action Plans to combat human trafficking. IOM is the co-chair of the International Organizations’ Working Group on Counter-Trafficking (together with the UN Development Programme and Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe).

IOM has implemented seven large counter-trafficking projects in Armenia ranging from research and capacity building to victim assistance and public awareness. Working with its partners, IOM offers direct assistance to victims of trafficking. This includes accommodation in places of safety, medical and psychosocial support, skills development and vocational training, reintegration assistance, and the options of voluntary, safe and dignified return to countries of origin, or resettlement to third countries in extreme cases. IOM has provided medical, psychological, legal support and shelters to more than 125 victims of trafficking; foreign victims in Armenia have been assisted to voluntarily return to their home countries.

In 2001, IOM was the first organization to conduct research on human trafficking. “Trafficking of Women and Children from the Republic of Armenia” looked at the incidence of and provided assessment of the conditions contributing to trafficking in migrants, with recommendations for national policy, legislation and operational measures, and further programming, and an assessment of the existing policy and legislative basis for protecting trafficked victims and punishing criminals. The research was done as part of IOM’s “Trafficking in Migrants from the Republic of Armenia” project funded by the Government of the Netherlands.

In 2002, again with funding from the Government of the Netherlands, IOM conducted the study “Irregular Migration and Smuggling of Migrants from Armenia.”

Both studies provided a comprehensive picture of the nature and incidence of irregular migration in Armenia in order to suggest a sound basis for policy and programme intervention. The reports provided recommendations, including the need to raise awareness, provide reintegration assistance, and drafting of legislative amendments, among other things.

As a follow-up, IOM contributed to the efforts of RA authorities to combat trafficking in women and children by reinforcing prevention activities, promoting the further criminalization of trafficking and introducing measures for the reintegration of victims of trafficking. These activities included:

- the design and launch of a wide-ranging public outreach campaign
- training of journalists on proper coverage of human trafficking issues
- compilation of a database on trafficking with profiles of the victims and the type of reintegration assistance provided
- drafting of new legislation addressing human trafficking, as well as developing amendments to Government decisions on the operations of tourism, job placement companies, and marriage agencies review of interagency co-ordination processes and procedures
- putting in place of mechanisms for exchange of information between the competent government agencies and NGOs
- training of NGOs in re-integration support and services to trafficked victims
- training of Government officials to promote the application of legal provisions against trafficking. Networking visits in which Armenian Government officials are familiarized with counter-trafficking related operations of Turkey, the United Arab Emirates and Ukraine.
Further assistance to the Government included specialized expertise and practical skills to law enforcement agencies and Border Guard troops to more effectively detect, investigate and prosecute traffickers, in line with efforts to combat trafficking in persons. The capacity of consular staff to assess and recognize potential and actual victims of trafficking in the countries of destination and to provide them with swift, appropriate and professional assistance was enhanced and a Manual on "Trafficking: Current Issues" was published to provide consular officers with information on Armenia’s fight against trafficking and to advise officers on how to handle and guide cases involving victims of trafficking. Networking visits to Ukraine and a study tour to the United Arab Emirates were organized for MoFA officials.

In parallel, with funding from the US Government, IOM worked to strengthen the ability of civil society to provide protection and reintegration support to victims of trafficking. As part of this initiative, IOM strengthened the capacity of the local NGO “Hope and Help,” to assist potential and actual victims. A toll-free Help Line (0-800-801) was set up and is operated by the NGO. Thirty-one victims received medical and social support, and legal counselling, five received social rehabilitation (vocational training) for further reintegration into society, and eight victims, citizens of other countries, who had been trafficked to Armenia, were returned to their home country with IOM assistance.

As part of its public awareness on the crime of human trafficking, a play was written and its theatre performance toured Armenia in 2004-2005.

Public support and involvement in combating human trafficking in Armenia was strengthened:

- anti-trafficking Resource Centers were established in Giumri, Goris, Vanadzor and Stepanavan to provide local population with relevant information and advise on human trafficking and ways to combat it;
- a guidebook for NGO-s “How to organize counter-trafficking activities in communities” was published;
- 10 journalists were trained and
- a series of TV shows on human trafficking (Mardavors, Manhunt) were broadcast.

The coalition, “Attorneys Against Trafficking” was founded and 12 attorneys were trained on providing legal support and representation to victims of trafficking. For the first time in Armenia, the court ruled in favour of labour trafficking victim’s appeal for damages compensation in the amount of US$ 6,000.

Donors

- Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
- United Nations Development Programme
- Government of the United States of America
- Government of the Netherlands

Projects

- **Regional Project: Secondary School Education to Contribute to the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia**

The regional project is aimed at developing and piloting educational materials that will increase the understanding of the dangers of human trafficking, the realities of irregular migration and to inform about available prevention support mechanisms amongst secondary school students, their teachers, and parents in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. It also intends to enhance the capacities of the Ministries of Education of the three countries to address the problem of trafficking in line with the national action plans to combat trafficking in persons. It aims at developing structures through which the inclusion of trafficking into the national secondary school curriculum can be facilitated in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. Additionally, this regional project adds to the efforts to support the development of the secondary school system in the three target countries, supporting human rights, gender, life skills and conflict prevention activities implemented by the International Committee of the Red
Cross, National Red Cross, UN Children’s Fund, World Bank and other international and national organizations.

- **Capacity Building and Public Awareness for Labour Migrant Support Points**

In an attempt to decrease trafficking in human beings and labour exploitation, labour migration opportunities are being promoted and a system of “safe travel”, including pre-migration registration and due diligence inquiry programme, is being piloted in Armenia. For this purpose Labour Migrants Support Points (LMSP) were established in Yerevan (the capital of Armenia), Artashat (Ararat Region) and Giumri (Shirak Region) to register information about labour migrants (including the destination address, employer information, the employment procedure and conditions in the destination country, information about the nature and conditions of certain work and the existence of an employment contract, and potential places of residence) and to provide the latter with information about the credibility of the future employer and the job offer, thus reducing the likelihood of labour migrants becoming victims of trafficking, as well as to make inquiries about destination countries through information nodes in such countries.

IOM built the capacities of the newly established LMSPs as well as organized a large-scale information campaign. Public’s awareness about Support Points and their services, as well as the relationship between labour migration and trafficking, has been raised.

The training programme organized by IOM was specifically tailored for the needs of the LMSP employees and aimed at equipping them with knowledge and skills to service potential and actual migrants, as well as returnees and victims of labour exploitation and trafficking. In addition to providing general information on migration terminology and general understanding of regular and irregular migration, labour migration, its trends and characteristics, smuggling, human trafficking, and IOM’s Role and operations in Managing Migration in Armenia, the training programme addressed such topics as:

- protection of migrant workers in the countries of origin (policy, registration and licensing, support services, including pre-departure orientation, pre-departure registration process, etc.)
- protection of migrant workers in the countries of destination (labour market research and assessment, pre-departure trainings, information dissemination, international cooperation, etc.)
- protection of returnees and support in their reintegration process
- the role of state and private employment agencies
- the measures to prevent or reduce irregular labour migration (activities in countries of origin and transit, border control and visa policy, sanctions against those who facilitate irregular migration addressing illegal recruitment, trafficking and smuggling, and unauthorized employment)
- benefits of regular labour migration (remittances, development, etc.), among others.

International and local legal frameworks for the protection of migrant workers and legislation on counter-trafficking, with special emphasis on migration, labour and counter-trafficking legislations of the United Arab Emirates and the Russian Federation, were thoroughly discussed throughout the training programme. In addition, a session on practical recommendations on behaviour tolerance was organized, which also provided trainees with information on contacts of consulates, NGOs, public and humanitarian organizations that migrants from Armenia can apply in case of need.

The recently adopted Armenian National Referral Mechanism on combating Human Trafficking was also presented during the training; local non-profit organizations providing direct assistance to Victims of Trafficking were invited to present their activities and establish contacts with the LMSPs for further cooperation. In order to solidify the knowledge with skills to deal with migrants, returnees and victims of trafficking, a special one-day workshop on “Skills and Capacity to Provide Counselling and Support to Migrant Workers: Communication
Skills” was organized for the LMSP staff in cooperation with “Ego” Young Psychologists’ NGO.

- **Combating Trafficking in Humans in Armenia: A Social Mobilization**

  The project was aimed at fostering interaction between the government and civil society, further capacity building for assistance and support to the victims of trafficking, and raising awareness of the vulnerable groups and general population to the risks of human trafficking by inciting a public dialogue in the regions of Armenia. It was consistent with and supportive of the Armenian Government's National Counter Trafficking Action Plan. Complementing other counter-trafficking activities of IOM and other stakeholders, mostly implemented in Yerevan, this project had a substantial regional orientation.

  The project was aimed at strengthening interaction between the government and civil society in preventing human trafficking, prosecuting perpetrators and protecting victims; at further development of capacities within the civil society for supporting and assisting victims of trafficking; and at strengthening of public support and involvement in combating human trafficking in the regions of Armenia.

  **Technical Cooperation on Migration and Capacity Building**

  Through its technical cooperation programmes, IOM has been offering advisory services on migration or migration-related issues to the RA Government to assist it in the development, implementation, and management of migration policy and legislation to prevent irregular migration, facilitate regular beneficial migration, and provide assistance with various aspects of migrant processing.

  Thus IOM has collaborated with the RA Government on “Capacity Building in Migration Management Programme” (CBMMP). Initially CBMMP aimed at establishing a unified migration policy of the Government of Armenia and strengthening the legislative basis for migration management in the country. At the second stage of its development CBMMP focused on strengthening the administrative and operational mechanisms and structures for migration management. As an outcome of CBMMP, in 2004 the Armenian Department for Migration and Refugees (DMR), the predecessor of the Migration Agency (MA) adopted the “Concept Paper on State Regulation of Population Migration.”

  With new developments in the country and in anticipation of new reforms of migration management in Armenia, the RA Government requested IOM to conduct an assessment of the migration management in Armenia, including for the Migration Agency at the Ministry of Territorial Administration of the Republic of Armenia (MA); Ministry of Labour and Social Issues and other relevant government agencies (such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Police) on existing migration management capacity. The assessment was conducted with the Swedish Migration Board, and looks at the current policies, legislative bases, structures, procedures, technical capacity and equipment. The main purpose of the assessment was to develop recommendations for a new management structure capable of dealing more effectively with migration issues and challenges facing the country. Additionally a preliminary review of the existing migration related legislation was also carried out.

  The assessment can be used as a baseline analysis study, which will provide guidance for designing parts of the RA National Plan of Action for Migration and Asylum, currently requested by the EU, in the European Neighborhood Policy framework. "The Review of Migration Management in Armenia Assessment Mission Report" launched in Spring 2008 and builds into future projects where more concrete recommendations will be formulated.

  IOM aims to assist the new waves of reforms of migration management, including Introduction of the System of Electronic Passports and Identification Cards with Biometric Parameters and the creation of the new centralised body on migration management and establishment of migrant accommodation centres complying with international best practices and humanitarian standards.

  **Capacity Building**
In order to respond to the Government's needs to develop coherent responses to migration challenges in a changing international environment, IOM's technical co-operation also focused on capacity building for officials dealing with migration management and working towards solutions for emerging migration issues. Since 1993 IOM has done extensive capacity building for the Migration Agency/Department of Migration and Refugees, National Security Service and its Border Guards Troops, Interpol Armenia National Central Bureau, Police and its Department of Passports and Visas, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its Consular Services, Ministry of Labour and Social Issues, etc. In particular the Training Centre of the Border Guards Troops was established and extensive training programmes have been organized for border guards and police on legislation, human rights, examination of identity and travel documents and fraud detection, counter-smuggling and counter-trafficking, as well as English language and computer skills, including the use of border control and management technologies.

As part of its various projects, IOM has equipped the Border Crossing Control Points, the Training Centre of the Border Guards Troops with various equipment. IOM aims to continue further institutional development of the Border Control Detachment.

IOM has also built the capacities of local NGOs dealing with issues of migration and facilitated the creation of the regional networking and dialogue among NGOs in the three South Caucasus states. Thus IOM funded the Armenian Sociological Association to establish a centre for humanitarian and logistical assistance for voluntary returning migrants.

**Border Management**

IOM has assisted the RA Government in border management reform. IOM is supporting the RA Government in expanding its border management reform through expansion of the Border Management Information System to border crossing points.

**Donors**

- Government of the United States of America
- IOM 1035 Facility

**Projects**

- **Further Expansion and Establishment of the Network of Border Management Information System: Republic of Armenia**

  In 2000 IOM conducted an Assessment on border management in RA and in 2004 IOM undertook an independent technical evaluation of the Border Management Information System (BMIS), which was installed at Yerevan Zvartnots International Airport in 1999. Following the Assessment and Technical Evaluation in 2004 and 2005 as part of US Government funded “Expansion of Border Management Information System”, the BMIS Project was expanded to the Bagratashen land border with the Republic of Georgia.

  In 2007-2008 within the scope of IOM project “Further Expansion and Establishment of the Network of Border Management Information System: Republic of Armenia” funded by the US Government, RA Government and Aviainfotel CJSC, the BMIS was expanded to the Meghri land border with Iran, Giumri Airport, and Bavra, Gogavan land border and Airum railway station (last three borders with Georgia).

  The information system via a centralized data storage, retrieval and analysis will provide information on traveller flows, asylum seekers, irregular migrants, human trafficking and unaccompanied minors, and will monitor the data against watch lists.

  IOM is exploring possibilities for establishment of a comprehensive and effective data exchange system between law enforcement bodies in Armenia and countries of destination, on migrants who experience difficulties being abroad and seek assistance.
In 2007, at the request of the RA Government, IOM conducted an assessment of Security standards at Yerevan Zvartnots International Airport, which resulted in the “Report on National and Aviation Security Standards at Zvartnots International Airport” that gave recommendations as to improving security standards at the facility.

As a follow-up, IOM is exploring possibilities for assisting the RA Government with integrated border management (cooperation and coordination among border management agencies).

- **Integrated Solutions to Directly Access Interpol Criminal Information**

  In 2007, the IOM Mission in Armenia, in cooperation with Interpol General Secretariat and Interpol Armenia National Central Bureau (NCB), implemented the project “Integrated Solutions to Directly Access Interpol Criminal Information” with the help of which the NCB’s network has been enhanced and some central units at Police Headquarters, such as the Department of Passport and Visas, were connected to the Interpol I-24/7 telecommunication database system. This provided direct access to the international police information databases containing information on persons in the international search, including terrorists, missing persons, persons involved in trafficking and money laundering; lost or stolen passports and travel documents; stolen vehicles; lost or stolen works of art, etc. In parallel the project provided training for users in English language, computer skills and on the system itself.

  The collaboration between IOM and Interpol was presented as a success story at the 36th ICPO (International Criminal Police Organization) – Interpol European Regional Conference in Bulgaria in May 2007.

  As a follow-up, together with Interpol Armenia NCB, the IOM Mission in Armenia will collaborate to link the regional police departments, the remaining border crossing points and other concerned law enforcement authorities (Customs Service, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Justice, Tax Service) to the database.

- **Capacity Building of Armenian Border Guards and Allied Services Personnel**

  An important part of border management activities is the training of border management personnel in travel document security and fraud detection, English language basics and computer fundamentals, migration and asylum legislation and human rights. As a result of the training a pool of national experts has been formed that continues to deliver training to the personnel involved in border control and visa issuance. The project target groups included representatives of state government structures dealing with border crossing, document examination, and passport and visa issuance procedures.

  Building on the IOM previous training programs implemented since 1999, this project aimed at improving the border management system of Armenia and reducing illegal migration flows by enhancing the capacity of the border guards and related personnel. In-house training capacity has been built and training for up to 250 participants among border guard and related services’ personnel in document examination and fraud detection, English language and computer operation will be conducted.

  The overall objective of the project was to contribute to the efforts of the Government of Armenia to improve the border management system of Armenia and reduce illegal migration flows.

  Two training of trainers (in document examination and counter-trafficking) were provided to selected trainers. Eighteen staff training courses were held for a total of two hundred and fifty three participants from the border guard and allied services. These covered the areas of document examination and fraud detection, legislation, counter-trafficking and smuggling prevention as well as in English language and computer operation. Besides, in-house training capacity was further developed within the border related agencies as a result of the training of trainer in document examination and counter-trafficking and the updated training curriculum in document examination. In addition expertise has been built for border guards and border related agencies in the area of document inspection and fraud detection, English language,
data entry and computer use and maintenance, counter-trafficking and smuggling prevention as well as relevant migration legislation. As part of the Project, in November 2007 IOM also conducted an assessment of Security standards at Yerevan Zvartnots International Airport, which resulted in the “Report on National and Aviation Security Standards at Zvartnots International Airport.”

- **Support to the Armenian Government in Introduction of Identity and Travel Documents with Biometrical Parameters**

This project aims to contribute to the enhancement of migration management capabilities and capacities of the Government of the Republic of Armenia, specific to biometric technology and information through carrying out a series of training activities and provision of technical assistance and consultancy. The project will raise the awareness of the key government officials on the biometric documents and will develop the draft plan to introduce the biometric system in Armenia. Opportunity will be provided for sharing experiences on good practices of biometric technologies applied in EU Member States. IOM will also equip the Consular Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affair and Police Department of Passports and Visas with multi-functional, biometric passport supporting printing service, as requested by the Armenian Foreign Ministry on behalf of the government.