



ՀԱՅԱՍՏԱՆԻ ՀԱՆՐԱՊԵՏՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՄՇՏԱԿԱՆ ՆԵՐԿԱՅԱՑՈՒՑՉՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ
PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA

2203/237/2017

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Armenia to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and in response to the Note Reference: YB/GN/TT dated 10 April 2017, has the honour to transmit to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights the information provided by the Government of the Republic of Armenia.

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Armenia to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights the assurances of its highest consideration.

Attached: 1 page.



OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS
HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
Geneva

**RECENT STEPS TAKEN BY THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA TO COMBAT
INTOLERANCE, NEGATIVE STEREOTYPING, STIGMATIZATION,
DISCRIMINATION, INCITEMENT TO VIOLENCE AND VIOLENCE AGAINST
PERSONS, BASED ON RELIGION OR BELIEF**

1. In December 2015 Armenia held a referendum on Constitutional amendments which provide more comprehensive and effective protection of human rights in Armenia. According to Article 29 of the Constitution, any discrimination based on any ground such as sex, race, color, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or other personal or social circumstances shall be prohibited. The Article 56 of the amended Constitution prescribes that everyone shall have the right to preserve his or her national and ethnic identity; and that persons belonging to national minorities shall have the right to preserve and develop their traditions, religion, language and culture.
2. The Article 41 of the amended Constitution stipulates, that everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right shall include the freedom to change religion or belief and, either alone or in community with others and in public or in private, the freedom to manifest them in preaching, church ceremonies, other rites of worship or in other forms.
3. With the view to fill the legislative gaps, as well as to further improve the legislation in force, the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Armenia in co-operation with specialized NGOs carried out a study on legal and societal grounds of discrimination and intolerance in Armenia, as well as on appropriateness of adoption of a separate law on fight against discrimination. The findings of the study were summarized and it was concluded that the adoption of the separate law on anti-discrimination is appropriate. Subsequently, the Ministry of Justice initiated a procedure to develop a standalone anti-discrimination law, which, among others, shall define the term of "discrimination", the types thereof, as well as mechanisms to prove the discriminatory attitude. It shall comprehensively address all grounds of discrimination, including discrimination based on religion or belief. It is expected to adopt a standalone anti-discrimination law by the end of 2017.
4. On 4 May, 2017, the Government adopted the 2017-2019 Plan of Actions for the National Strategy on Human Rights Protection of the Republic of Armenia, which, among others, envisages the drafting of a new law on religious organizations. The law will strengthen the guaranties for religious freedom in the Republic of Armenia. Furthermore, the 2017-2019 Action Plan envisages the drafting of a standalone legislation regulating enjoyment of minorities' rights to preserve and protect their national identity, customs, religion, language and culture.
5. Religious organizations of the Republic of Armenia operate freely, as well as build their meeting houses and places of worship. In recent years, Jehovah 's Witnesses have built a new meeting house, and Armenia's Yazidi Community has built the world's second largest cathedral complex in the Republic of Armenia. A new Yazidi temple, museum and seminary are under construction in the Aknalich village. The new temple will be the largest Yazidi temple in the world.