

Human Rights Defender Releases 2011 Annual Report _ RA Ministry of Defense
Defender's assessment of the developments in the activities of the RA Ministry of Defense in
2011

Shortcomings and problems identified

- Some cases of deaths occurred in the RA Armed Forces were conditioned by the problems resulting from non statutory relations and insufficient effectiveness of the prevention measures undertaken by officer personnel.
- Some officers serving in the RA Armed Forces expressed their desire to early denounce the agreement of military service; however, supreme commanders made unreasonable delay in the process and in some cases a differentiated approach was displayed towards the officers.
- Numerous complaints were received from military servicemen concerning the fact that the servicemen without any disciplinary penalty were not released from service after the 24 months service prescribed by the law which was reasoned by different justifications not deriving from the law.
- Persons having service postponement because of health condition were forced to appear for the second examination earlier than the period of postponement.
- By the decisions of the Central Military-medical Commission under the Ministry of Defense 500 servicemen were recognized as unfit for military service and were early discharged. Such a number of early discharged servicemen testifies to the fact that military commissariats were unsuccessful in efficient organization of detailed medical examination when conscripting into the military service.
- The compulsory military service in the Central Apparatus of the RA Ministry of Defense was carried out by uncertainty of a number of conditions and criteria of the military service that is being carried out in the military station close to populated area. In some cases these conditions were breached.
- Compulsory military servicemen's relocation to the Central and Garrison Military Prosecutor's offices for continuation of the service included corruption risks: existence of compulsory military service in these bodies is not acceptable.
- The measures undertaken by the management of the Ministry of Defense towards preventing corrupted enrichment of state officials in the system of the Ministry were not sufficient. Existence of such corruption phenomena considerably threatens the productivity of the Ministry's activities and contributes to the increase of human rights violations made by this state body.
- The issue of housing conditions of many servicemen remained unresolved.

Positive developments

- In 2011, Ministry of Defense Hotline received about 1370 calls, of which 650 were set in process and received a positive solution; the remaining 720 were registered as a false alarm.
- The Ministry of Defense built and rebuilt about 5 residential buildings, in the result about 210 soldiers were provided with the service apartments (about 90 servicemen in the city, and about 120 servicemen in the regions).
- According to official data, in 2011 the death cases were significant reduced in the RA Armed Forces as compared to previous years.
- A number of military barracks, medical centers, canteen buildings, etc. were renovated in compliance with typical structures.
- In 2011 in order to exclude non-statutory relationship, the following methodological guidelines have been developed by the Defense Minister and delivered to troops: special message "Commander is soldier's best friend", methodological guidelines "For immediate increase of the fighting spirit and alertness of the Armenian Army", "For immediate increase of military discipline", "For immediate increase of military discipline and prevention of emergency cases and accidents". The explanatory work for military units and discussions with participation of staff and commanders were carried out, as well as methodological guide "Crimes against Military Subordination Order and Statutory Relations between Servicemen" was prepared and delivered to the troops.
- In October 2011, the Defense Minister, the Military Prosecutor and the Human Rights Defender had a working meeting to discuss issues connected with struggle against crimes and human rights protection in the Armed Forces which resulted in the creation of a group working to prevent crimes in the RA Armed Forces.
- In 2011 the handbook "On Human rights and Fundamental Freedoms of the Armed Forces Personnel" was translated with the support of the OSCE Office in Yerevan and the "Human Rights in the Armed Forces" training program was developed.
- Before the introduction of the course in the Armed Forces and military educational institutions, with the support of the OCSE Office in Yerevan lectures on human rights in the Armed Forces and their protection mechanisms were delivered to all military units and military educational institutions of the RA Ministry of Defense; deputies of the heads of military units and stations, lawyers and other specialists were present at the lectures.
- With the support of the OCSE Office in Yerevan the draft of the handbook "Leadership in the Armed Forces" was developed which aims at the development of the relations

between the personnel of the Armed Forces, establishment of new management methods and means and prevention of non-statutory relations. After analysis of the textbook by the Ministry of Defense and the Armed Forces Supreme Headquarters Staff steps will be taken for the introduction of the same course.

- Working groups composed of the deputy Defense Minister and deputy head of the Armed Forces Supreme Headquarter were sent to military units deployed in the border of the country and remote areas, whose goal was to personally meet with staff members as well as to make orders aimed at strengthening the discipline and understand the moral and psychological conditions of the servicemen.
- A constructive cooperation has been underway between the Ministry of Defense and the Human Rights Defender's office in consideration of complaints, solution of existing problems and in raising awareness on human rights protection in the RA Armed Forces.

Karen Andreasyan,

Human Rights Defender of
the Republic of Armenia

The list of the identified positive developments, gaps and shortcomings is not exhaustive.

The introduced Chapter (18) of the HRD Annual Report 2011 is available in full at http://pashtpan.am/pages/downloadPdf/file_id/533.

Summary of the HRD Annual Report 2011 Chapter 15 concerning the activities of the RA National Commission on Television and Radio will be published next.

The HRD Annual Report 2011 was developed based on the complaints received by the Staff of the Human Rights Defender, legislation analysis, trustworthy and non-disclaimed publications in press, reports of the international and local organizations as well as information received during the interviews with field specialists and human rights defenders.

Staff of the Human Rights Defender
of the Republic of Armenia

Address: 56A Pushkin str, Yerevan, Armenia

Tel: (37410) 53 88 42; (37477) 36 11 49

Email: s_harutyunyan@ombuds.am

siranush.harutyunyan@yahoo.com

Website: www.pashtpan.am