

**CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES
UNDER ARTICLE 19 OF THE CONVENTION**

Concluding observations of the Committee against Torture
(Extracts for follow-up of CAT/C/ARM/CO/3)

ARMENIA

(...)

C. Principal subjects of concern and recommendations

(...)

Allegations of torture and ill-treatment in police custody

8. The Committee is seriously concerned by numerous and consistent allegations, corroborated by various sources, of routine use of torture and ill-treatment of suspects in police custody, especially to extract confessions to be used in criminal proceedings (arts. 2, 4, 12 and 16).

As a matter of urgency, the State party should take immediate and effective steps to prevent acts of torture and ill-treatment throughout the country. The Committee urges the State party to promptly, thoroughly and impartially investigate all incidents of torture, ill-treatment and death in custody; prosecute those responsible; and report publicly on the outcomes of such prosecutions. In addition, the State party should unambiguously reaffirm the absolute prohibition of torture and publicly warn that anyone committing such acts or otherwise complicit or acquiescent in torture will be held personally responsible before the law for such acts and will be subject to criminal prosecution and appropriate penalties.

(...)

Fundamental legal safeguards

11. Notwithstanding the safeguards provided by law, in Government Decision No. 574-N of June 2008 and Chief of Police instruction 12-C of April 2010, and by the Court of Cassation in its December 2009 decision in the case of G. Mikaelyan, the Committee expresses its serious concern about reports received regarding the State party's failure in practice to afford all detainees all fundamental safeguards from the very outset of their de facto deprivation of liberty, including timely access to a lawyer and a medical doctor and the right to contact family members. The Committee is concerned by reports that police officials do not keep accurate records of all periods of deprivation of liberty; do not afford fundamental safeguards to individuals in

detention, particularly persons deprived of their liberty for whom a protocol of detention has not been drawn up; do not effectively notify detainees of their rights at the time of detention; do not adhere to the three-day time limit for transferring people deprived of their liberty from a police station to a detention facility; and do not promptly bring detainees before a judge. The Committee also notes that the number of public defenders in the State party remains insufficient (art. 2).

In the context of the current legislation reform, including the amendment of the Criminal Procedure Code, the State party should take prompt and effective measures to ensure, in law and in practice, that all detainees are afforded all legal safeguards from the very outset of their deprivation of liberty. These include the rights to access to a lawyer, to an independent medical examination, to notify a relative, to be informed of their rights, and to be brought promptly before a judge.

The State party should take measures to ensure audio- or videotaping of all interrogations in police stations and detention facilities as a further preventive measure. The Committee encourages the State party to implement as soon as possible its plan to require police to create an electronic protocol of detention immediately upon the de facto deprivation of liberty of persons in police stations. The State party should ensure access to these records by lawyers and relatives of those detained.

The State party should increase the funding provided to the Public Defender's Office of the Chamber of Advocates to ensure the availability of effective legal aid.

Investigations and impunity

12. The Committee is deeply concerned that allegations of torture and/or ill-treatment committed by law enforcement officials and military personnel are not promptly, impartially or effectively investigated and prosecuted. The Committee is particularly concerned by reports that the Office of the Prosecutor directs the police to investigate some claims of torture and ill-treatment allegedly perpetrated by police officers, rather than assign these complaints to an independent investigation service. In this regard, it is concerned that the Office of the Prosecutor does not regularly ensure that different prosecutors supervise the investigation of a crime and allegations of torture made against police officials by the suspected perpetrator of that crime. The Committee is also concerned that the Special Investigation Service has been unable to gather sufficient evidence to identify the perpetrators in a number of cases in which torture or ill-treatment by officials was alleged, leading to concerns regarding its effectiveness. The Committee is further concerned by reports that officials alleged to have committed torture or ill-treatment are not immediately suspended from their duties or transferred as appropriate for the duration of the investigation, particularly if there is a risk that they may otherwise be in a position to repeat the alleged act or to obstruct the investigation (arts. 2, 11, 12, 13 and 16).

The State party should:

- (a) **Take concrete steps to ensure prompt, thorough and impartial investigations into allegations of torture and ill-treatment by law enforcement officials and military personnel leading to the prosecution and punishment of those responsible with penalties that are consistent with the gravity of the act committed;**
- (b) **Ensure that all investigations into crimes involving public officials are undertaken by an independent and effective body;**
- (c) **Ensure that all officials alleged to be responsible for violations of the Convention are suspended from their duties while any investigation into the allegations is in progress.**

The Committee urges the State party to provide information on the number of complaints filed against public officials alleging acts that constitute torture or ill-treatment under the Convention, as well as information on the results of investigations into those complaints and any proceedings undertaken, at both the penal and disciplinary levels. This information should describe each relevant allegation and indicate the authority that undertook the investigation.

(...)

29. The Committee requests the State party to provide, by 1 June 2013, follow-up information in response to the Committee's recommendations relating to: (a) conducting prompt, impartial and effective investigations; (b) ensuring or strengthening legal safeguards for persons detained; and (c) prosecuting suspects and sanctioning perpetrators of torture or ill-treatment, as contained in paragraphs 8, 11 and 12 of the present document.

(...)
