



Immigration and
Refugee Board of Canada

Commission de l'immigration
et du statut de réfugié du Canada

Canada

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29 December 2005

ARM100691.E

Armenia: State protection available to women forced into arranged marriages (January 2000 - December 2005)
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

Information on forced marriage in Armenia was scarce among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

In August 2003, Inessa Mkrtchyan, an academic from the American University of Armenia, gave a presentation entitled "Violence Against Armenian Women" during the Fifth European Feminist Research Conference held at the Centre for Gender Studies at Lund University, Sweden (Centre for Gender Studies 20-24 Aug. 2003). According to an abstract of the research, Mkrtchyan mentioned that forced marriage was not only present in Armenia, but that it was "the most repeated type of violation" (ibid.). However, neither the text of the report, nor corroborating information to this effect could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within time constraints.

According to Article 32 of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia, found on the country's Ministry of Foreign Affairs Website, "[w]omen and men enjoy equal rights when entering into marriage, during marriage, and in the course of divorce" (Armenia n.d.).

In its 9 September 1999 submission to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Armenia stated that its Criminal Code outlaws either "forcing a woman to marry or forbidding a woman to marry" (Armenia 9 Sept. 1999). While a new Armenian Criminal Code was adopted on 18 April 2003, no articles dealing with marriage could be found (ibid. 1 Aug. 2003).

In its 1999 submission to CEDAW, Armenia also cited Article 1 of its Marriage and Family Code, which stipulated that "the Code's purpose is to contribute to the building of family relations based on the free and full consent of the spouses, free of any financial motivation, and on love and respect" (ibid. 9 Sept. 1999). However, it should be noted that a new Family Code came into force on 19 April 2005 (Canada 4 Nov. 2005) and that it includes several changes, including new regulations regarding pre-nuptial agreements (ArmeniaNow 20 Feb. 2004). Additional information on the contents of this new code could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within time constraints.

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible

information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

References

Armenia. 1 August 2003. *Criminal Code* (Unofficial Translation). United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCR) Refworld 2005.

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ArmeniaNow [Yerevan]. 20 February 2004. Marianna Grigoryan. "Matters of the Heart: The "Prenup" Comes to Armenia in New Code on the Family." <<http://www.armenianow.com/archive/2004/2004/february20/news/prenuptial/index.asp.htm>> [Accessed 5 Dec. 2005]

Canada. Foreign Affairs Canada. 4 November 2005. "Visas and Immigration - Moscow." <<http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/canadaeuropa/russia/embassy3-6-2-en.asp>> [Accessed 5 Dec. 2005]

Centre for Gender Studies, Lund University [Sweden]. 20-24 August 2003. Inessa Mkrtychyan. "Abstract: Violence Against Women in Armenia." <<http://www.5thfeminist.lu.se/ws.php?id=9&raknare=9>> [Accessed 6 Dec. 2005]

Additional Sources Consulted

Unsuccessful attempts to contact the following organizations:

- Ajakits/Helping Hands [Gyumri, Armenia]
- Helsinki Association for Human Rights [Yerevan]
- Third Millenium Without Wars Union [Yerevan]
- Women's Alliance [Yerevan]
- Women's Rights Centre, Yerevan University

Internet Sites, including: Amnesty International (AI), *Armenian Forum* [Princeton], Armenian International Women's Association (AIWA), Council of Europe, European Committee Against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), European Country of Origin Information Network (ECOI), Factiva, Freedom House, Human

Rights Watch (HRW), Middle East Studies Association of North America (MESA), Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights (MAHR), Les Pénélopes, Stop Violence Against Women, United States Department of State, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (PeaceWomen.org), Women Watch, World News Connection (WNC).

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