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Summary of Results and Lessons Learned from the Sub-Grants Coordinated by the Civil Society Institute under the Programme “Monitoring Justice Sector Reforms in Armenia (JUREMONIA)”

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Executive Summary

This report presents a summary of the **results and lessons learned from the sub-grants** awarded by the **Civil Society Institute (CSI)**, a member of the consortium implementing the “**Monitoring Justice Sector Reforms in Armenia – JUREMONIA**” Programme (the Programme). In particular, the report covers **11 sub-grant projects** coordinated by CSI, of which **seven** were awarded to media organisations and journalists, and **four** to civil society organisations.

The objective of the study is to identify the **scope of implementation and impact** of the Programme through the sub-grants in the context of the implementation of **core strategic documents regulating justice sector reforms**.

The report was developed as an analytical tool to assess the **effectiveness of civil monitoring and public participation** in justice sector reforms. The study provides a **comprehensive analysis** of the implementation of four key reform areas: **anti-corruption reforms, judicial and legal reforms, penitentiary and probation reforms**, as well as **human rights protection**.

The findings of the report aim to contribute to **constructive dialogue** between **civil society organisations (CSOs)** and **state institutions**, and to enhance the **effectiveness of ongoing reforms**.

The “**Monitoring Justice Sector Reforms in Armenia**” Programme was launched on **1 February 2022**. The four-year Programme is implemented with **European Union financial support** by a consortium consisting of the **Netherlands Helsinki Committee, Penal Reform International, Social Justice NGO**, and the **Civil Society Institute NGO**.

Programme Overview and Context

The objective of the “**Monitoring Justice Sector Reforms in Armenia**” (JUREMONIA) Programme is to promote the **meaningful role of civil society** in justice sector reforms. Through the Programme, civil society representatives have been enabled to **increase their influence** on ongoing justice reforms and to contribute to the achievement of **systemic change**.

The research was conducted using a **qualitative research design and methodology**, including comprehensive document analysis, **semi-structured interviews** with representatives of sub-grant projects, and the review of data from **open sources**.

Within the framework of the Programme, a total of **18 sub-grant projects** were implemented, targeting various beneficiary groups, including **CSOs, academic institutions, media organisations and journalists**, and **persons forcibly displaced from Artsakh**. Of these, **11 sub-grants were coordinated by CSI**.

Summary of Key Achievements and Impact, Success Stories

Institutional Capacity Development

In **September 2022**, a **four-day training programme** was conducted to strengthen the capacities of CSOs engaged in justice sector monitoring. The training covered three key thematic areas:

- Penitentiary and probation reforms
- Judicial and anti-corruption reforms
- Police sector reforms

Establishment of a Collaborative Platform

The **JUREMONIA Civil Society Platform** was established to ensure **cross-sectoral cooperation**. The Platform has evolved into a space that expands cooperation and coordinates CSO monitoring efforts, ensuring **effective and continuous state–society dialogue**.

Strengthening the Oversight Role of CSOs

The sub-grants provided under the Programme contributed to strengthening **CSO oversight of public policies**, particularly in monitoring the implementation of national strategies. They also promoted cooperation between state institutions and CSOs and increased **public awareness** through media outputs and public outreach activities.

Development of Networked Cooperation

A **CSO network for the protection of the rights of persons forcibly displaced from Artsakh** was established, along with the **ArmRights.am platform**, which supports the integration of displaced persons and provides **sustainable mechanisms for legal assistance**.

Key Findings of the Reviewed Sub-Grants

Challenges in the Anti-Corruption Sector

- Difficulties in ensuring **reasonable timeframes** in proceedings in Anti-Corruption Courts
- Limited **geographical accessibility**, as the court operates exclusively in Yerevan, creating barriers for residents of the regions
- Low level of **public trust**, with **92% of respondents** indicating that the court's intended purpose has not yet been achieved
- Operational challenges within the **Corruption Prevention Commission**, including insufficient transparency, staffing shortages, and delayed publication of decisions
- Ineffective implementation of preventive tools, including the absence of a **Gifts Registry** and the fragmented system for declarations of **assets, income, interests, and expenditures** of public officials

Systemic Issues in the Judicial System

- Challenges in the application of **alternative preventive measures**, including home detention and administrative supervision, and the inability to ensure full control over imposed restrictions
- Ineffective management of **judicial workload**, including unjustified decisions by the Supreme Judicial Council, disproportionate workload redistribution, and artificial inflation of caseloads
- Failure of administrative courts to ensure **reasonable timeframes**, with judgments published **10–15 months** after the completion of hearings and the first hearing in the Administrative Court of Appeal scheduled **14 months** after admission of an appeal

Deficiencies in the Penitentiary and Probation Sector

- Insufficient independence of medical services in penitentiary institutions, ineffective mechanisms for documenting torture, and lack of independence of medical personnel
- Limited availability and accessibility of **mental health services**, ineffective self-harm prevention mechanisms, and shortages of human resources
- Slow implementation of **restorative justice**, low awareness among convicted persons, and underutilisation of educational opportunities

Gaps in CSO Capacity Development

- Limited use of **international human rights mechanisms** by CSOs due to lack of practical experience and skills in report preparation and submission
- Insufficient skills in structuring and formatting reports in line with **international standards**, reducing the impact of submitted information
- Unsustained CSO engagement in international accountability and monitoring processes, including limited oversight of the implementation of international court decisions
- Lack of structured mechanisms for cooperation and exchange of experience among CSOs, leading to fragmented representation of issues at international forums

Key Human Rights Perspectives

Rights of Persons Forcibly Displaced from Artsakh

Sub-grant results revealed a significant discrepancy between the implementation of actions under **Sector 12 of the RA Human Rights Defender's Strategy** and their actual effectiveness in ensuring the full protection of the rights and freedoms of persons forcibly displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh. Identified challenges include complex citizenship procedures, housing shortages, barriers to access to healthcare, and difficulties in educational integration.

Accessibility of the Legal System

Problems were identified in ensuring the rights of **linguistic minorities**, including the absence of translations of rights notifications into minority languages and the failure to provide information in a language understandable to detained persons in places of detention.

Mechanisms for the Prevention of Torture

Deficiencies were identified in ensuring the independence of medical personnel and in establishing **reliable mechanisms for documenting torture and ill-treatment** within the penitentiary system. In particular, medical staff are not fully independent, and existing training programmes do not adequately reflect the standards and requirements of the **Council of Europe Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT)**.

Human Rights Compliance of Alternative Preventive Measures

The application of home detention and administrative supervision revealed multiple challenges, including insufficient consideration of family members' rights, obstacles to accessing medical care, and the **institutionalised absence of the right to outdoor exercise**.

Protection of the Rights of Vulnerable Groups

The findings highlight the need for **thematic specialisation and sectoral depth** in the protection of the rights of vulnerable groups, as multidimensional forms of discrimination are not sufficiently addressed.

Conclusions

This research conducted within the framework of the **JUREMONIA Programme** demonstrates the **critical role of civil society oversight** in justice sector reforms. The Programme has successfully established a comprehensive evidence base, strengthened the professional capacities of CSOs, and fostered **constructive dialogue** between the state and civil society.

The identified systemic challenges indicate that effective reform implementation requires not only **legislative changes**, but also the strengthening of **institutional capacities**, improvement of **monitoring mechanisms**, and the sustained presence of **civic oversight**. The Programme's sustainability—particularly through the establishment of a support network and platform for persons displaced from Artsakh—has ensured a **long-term impact** in the field of human rights protection.

Methodology

The methodological framework of this research report was developed for the purpose of summarising the **results and lessons learned from 11 sub-grants** awarded by the **Civil Society Institute (CSI)**, a member of the consortium implementing the “**Monitoring Justice Sector Reforms in Armenia – JUREMONIA**” Programme. Of these sub-grant projects, **seven** were awarded to media organisations and journalists, and **four** to civil society organisations (CSOs).

The research aims to identify the **Programme’s contribution and scope of impact** resulting from the sub-grant projects in the process of implementing **core strategic documents in the justice sector**, in particular within the context of the following strategies:

1. **Anti-Corruption Strategy of the Republic of Armenia** and the **2023–2026 Action Plan** derived therefrom
2. **Judicial and Legal Reforms Strategy of the Republic of Armenia for 2022–2026**
3. **Penitentiary and Probation Strategy of the Republic of Armenia for 2019–2023**
4. **2023–2025 Action Plan** derived from the **National Strategy for the Protection of Human Rights of the Republic of Armenia**

The research methodology is based on a **qualitative research design and methods**, which enabled a comprehensive and in-depth assessment of the impact of the reviewed sub-grant projects on the **implementation and revision processes** of the above-mentioned strategies.

Research Design and Approach

Desk Research Methodology and Sources Reviewed

The research is grounded in a **systematic document analysis**, encompassing a comprehensive review of Programme-related documentation. The following key national strategies of the Republic of Armenia and their respective action plans were examined:

1. Anti-Corruption Strategy of the Republic of Armenia and the 2023–2026 Action Plan¹
2. Judicial and Legal Reforms Strategy of the Republic of Armenia for 2022–2026²
3. Penitentiary and Probation Strategy of the Republic of Armenia for 2019–2023³
4. 2023–2025 Action Plan derived from the National Strategy for the Protection of Human Rights⁴

The desk research also included a detailed review of the **outputs of the sub-grant projects**. All materials produced under the 11 sub-grants were analysed, including:

- Analytical reports
- Summaries of monitoring findings
- Packages of developed recommendations
- Programme and project reports

¹ <https://www.arlis.am/hy/acts/184674/latest>

² <https://www.arlis.am/hy/acts/185731/latest>

³ <https://www.arlis.am/hy/acts/137161/latest>

⁴ <https://moj.am/page/575>

- Media outputs (including interviews, media analyses, video materials, debates, and other journalistic content)

To ensure the quality and reliability of the research, a comprehensive review of **open-source information** was also conducted. This included analysis of reports by state institutions, international organisations, civil society organisations, and relevant media publications.

Interview Methodology and Stakeholder Selection Criteria

For the purpose of collecting primary data, **semi-structured interviews** were conducted with representatives of **eight out of the eleven sub-grant projects**.

The interviews were structured around thematic areas addressing the **key outcomes of the sub-grant projects**, the main challenges identified during implementation, linkages with relevant strategic documents, and the **impact on beneficiaries**.

Data Collection Tools and Processes

The following key data collection tools were applied during the research:

- Semi-structured interview questionnaires
- Standardised approaches to document analysis
- Matrices for systematising open-source data

Data collection was carried out using a **phased approach**, beginning with the analysis of secondary data and documents, followed by interviews with representatives of the sub-grant projects. This approach enabled the interviews to focus on **specific issues identified during the document analysis phase**.

Analytical Framework Applied

A comprehensive analytical approach was applied to the analysis of the collected data, incorporating the following methods:

- **Thematic analysis** – to identify key trends, challenges, and good practices
- **Comparative analysis** – to assess the alignment of sub-grant outcomes with objectives defined in strategic documents
- **Gap analysis** – to identify potential discrepancies between strategic objectives and sub-grant interventions
- **Triangulation** – to compare and validate data obtained from different sources

The analytical framework was designed to assess not only the **results of the sub-grant projects**, but also their **alignment with strategic documents** and their overall contribution to justice sector reforms.

Methodological Limitations

The research faced certain **methodological limitations**, primarily related to **time constraints**. At the time of preparation of the report, some sub-grant projects were still ongoing or had been completed only shortly before the research was conducted, which limited the possibility of assessing their **long-term impact**.

I. Activities Implemented within the Framework of the “Monitoring Justice Sector Reforms in Armenia – JUREMONIA” Programme

The objective of the “**Monitoring Justice Sector Reforms in Armenia**” (JUREMONIA) Programme is to promote the **meaningful role of civil society** in justice sector reforms. Through the Programme, civil society actors were enabled to **increase their influence** on ongoing justice reforms and to contribute to the achievement of **systemic change**.

A range of initiatives was implemented with a focus on **institutional capacity strengthening**, the development of **evidence-based and well-substantiated policy approaches**, and the promotion of **inclusive dialogue** between state institutions and the public.

Capacity Development Initiatives for Civil Society Organisations

One of the core pillars of the Programme is the strengthening of the capacities of **civil society organisations (CSOs)** engaged in justice sector monitoring.

In **September 2022**, a **four-day training programme** was delivered with the aim of enhancing CSOs’ capacities to conduct **high-quality monitoring** in the justice sector. The training covered three key thematic areas:

- Penitentiary and probation reforms
- Judicial and anti-corruption reforms
- Police sector reforms

This initiative constituted an important step towards fostering a **more skilled and professional civil society**, capable of conducting credible research and developing **evidence-based policy recommendations**.

Establishment of the JUREMONIA Civil Society Platform

To strengthen **cross-sectoral cooperation** among CSOs, a **Memorandum of Understanding on Justice Sector Reforms** was signed, which served as the basis for the establishment of the **JUREMONIA Civil Society Platform**.

The Platform defines four main areas of engagement:

- Legal and judicial reforms
- Penitentiary and probation reforms
- Police reforms
- Anti-corruption reforms

The Platform has become a space that expands cooperation and coordinates CSO monitoring efforts, ensuring **effective and continuous state–society dialogue**.

Small Sub-Grant Schemes and Support

To ensure deeper engagement in justice sector reforms, the Programme provided **sub-grants** to the following beneficiary groups:

Civil Society Organisations

The purpose of these sub-grants was to promote the **meaningful participation of civil society** in justice sector reforms (including police and criminal justice systems) by contributing to the development of an **accountable, transparent justice system** in Armenia that is aligned with **international human rights standards**.

Higher Education Institutions

These sub-grants aimed to support Armenian higher education institutions in developing **new modules and/or academic programmes** related to **access to justice**, including the introduction of new courses or the enhancement of existing curricula.

Media Organisations and Journalists

The objective of these small sub-grants was to engage and support **media organisations, journalists, and journalistic teams** in monitoring, reporting on, and advocating for justice reforms. The grants also supported initiatives aimed at **public awareness-raising**, advocacy, and strengthening cooperation between **civil society and the media**.

Sub-Grants Supporting Persons Forcibly Displaced from Artsakh

Two sub-grants were awarded to support **legal assistance** for persons forcibly displaced from Artsakh, strengthen **rights protection mechanisms**, and promote **social inclusion** in host communities.

Research, Monitoring, and Public Discussions

The Programme supported **evidence-based analysis of justice sector reforms** through sub-grant projects and expert research. **Public discussions** were regularly organised to present findings, engage stakeholders, and promote **policy improvements**.

Forums and State–Society Dialogue

A key component of the Programme was the promotion of **structured and continuous dialogue** between state institutions and civil society. To this end, **multi-stakeholder forums, workshops, and discussions** were organised, addressing issues such as:

- Rights and social inclusion of persons forcibly displaced from Artsakh
- Electronic monitoring and home detention
- Community service as a **restorative justice measure**
- Anti-corruption education and public awareness

These formats contributed to the creation of a **more inclusive and participatory policy-making environment** in the justice sector.

II. Analysis of Sub-Grants within Armenia’s Strategic Frameworks

1. Anti-Corruption Strategy of The Republic of Armenia and The 2023–2026 Action Plan Derived Therefrom

1.1. Overview of Sub-Grants Relevant to the Strategy

Within the framework of the Programme, sub-grant projects were implemented to support the implementation of the **Anti-Corruption Strategy of the Republic of Armenia** and the **2023–2026 Action Plan** derived therefrom, as well as to assess and monitor their effectiveness.

The following sub-grant projects were implemented:

- a) **Monitoring the Impact of Judicial and Anti-Corruption Reforms**, implemented by the “**Media Club**” for Civil Society Development NGO
- b) **Analysing Armenia’s Anti-Corruption Strategy (2019–2022)**, implemented by the **Civitas Foundation**

Under the sub-grant “**Monitoring the Impact of Judicial and Anti-Corruption Reforms**”, the study entitled “**Monitoring the Impact of Judicial and Anti-Corruption Reforms in the Courts of Lori, Tavush, and Shirak Marzes**” was conducted between **June 2023 and May 2024**. The subject of the study was the assessment of the impact of judicial and anti-corruption reforms in three northern regions of Armenia—**Lori, Tavush, and Shirak**.

The research included surveys among **20 judges, 40 lawyers**, and approximately **298 citizens** in the regions. Both **qualitative and quantitative methods** were applied, including sociological surveys, interviews, multi-stakeholders’ focus group discussions, as well as the review of legislation, strategic objectives in the judicial sector, and ongoing reform processes.

The study examined the effectiveness of the **Anti-Corruption Court**, revealing that approximately **92% of respondents** believe that Anti-Corruption Courts are intended to ensure that corruption cases are adjudicated by an **independent and impartial judiciary**; however, this objective has **not yet been achieved**. Statistical data show that in **2023**, out of **282 criminal cases** pending before the court, only **51** were concluded by the end of the year, while in the **first half of 2024**, only **14 out of 258 cases** were concluded. This indicates significant challenges related to **workload and procedural delays**.

To address the problems identified, the study presented a set of recommendations aimed at enhancing the **effectiveness, transparency, and public trust** in the justice system. In particular, it is essential to prevent undue delays in judicial proceedings through the introduction of **contract-based appointment mechanisms for judges** and a more regulated approach to **case allocation**. At the same time, it is necessary to reduce judicial

workload by establishing **reasonable maximum caseload thresholds**, as well as by increasing the number of judges and supporting staff.

To improve the effectiveness of the Anti-Corruption Court, the involvement of highly experienced professionals and the expansion of judicial staff are considered essential in order to shorten the duration of case examination. To strengthen public trust in the justice system, priority measures include increasing the transparency of the **Supreme Judicial Council (SJC)** and the justice system as a whole, as well as introducing mechanisms to provide the public with **accessible explanatory interpretation of** judicial technical information.

Within the framework of the sub-grant “**Analysing Armenia’s Anti-Corruption Strategy (2019–2022)**”, a total of **13 publications**⁵ were prepared and published between **January and November 2024**, seven of which addressed various aspects of the implementation of the Anti-Corruption Strategy, including the transparency of the **Corruption Prevention Commission (CPC)**, the **Gifts Registry**, and the effectiveness of the Anti-Corruption Courts.

1.2. Challenges Identified during Implementation

Sub-grant activities and media publications implemented in the anti-corruption field under the Programme revealed challenges affecting the effective implementation of the **Anti-Corruption Strategy of the Republic of Armenia** and the **2023–2026 Action Plan**.

Challenges Related to the Functioning of the Anti-Corruption Court

- Slow pace of proceedings: in **2023**, only **51 out of 282 criminal cases** were concluded; in the **first half of 2024**, only **14 out of 258 cases** were concluded
- The Court operates exclusively in **Yerevan**, creating barriers for residents of the regions
- Approximately **92% of respondents** stated that Anti-Corruption Courts are intended to ensure that corruption cases are adjudicated by an independent and impartial judiciary; however, this objective has not yet been achieved

⁵ <https://www.civilnet.am/news/760682/կորուպցիայի-կանխարգելման-հանձնաժողով%E2%80%A4-թափանցիկության-ու-արդյունավետության-հետոնթաց%2F>
<https://www.civilnet.am/news/763295/սվերնորի-չևերոյված-ռեեստր-դատարկ-հաստիքներ%E2%80%A4-կորուպցիայի-կանխարգելման-հանձնաժողովի-արդյունքներ/>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fn6hGqJiapU&t=97s>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AUIq9X72E>
<https://www.civilnet.am/news/779647/կորուպցիան-հայաստանում-խորանում-է-հեղափոխության-ակնկալիքները-մարում/>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eyFM0kRgq3Q>
<https://www.civilnet.am/news/794409/արժանապատվությունը-և-վաստացող-ու-անսխիթար%E2%80%A4-ինչպես-են-փոխվելու-դատարանների-ու-բանտերի-պայմանները/>
<https://www.civilnet.am/news/798301/>
<https://www.civilnet.am/news/799648/հրազդանի-կիրճը-մասնավորի-ու-պետության-արանքում/>
<https://www.civilnet.am/news/802605/>
<https://www.civilnet.am/news/807483/մետր-քառակուսին-16750-դրամ-օղակածն-զբոսայգու-անհավասար-վարձավճարների-պատմությունը/>

Challenges Related to the Activities of the Corruption Prevention Commission (CPC)

- Insufficient transparency of CPC activities (delayed publication of decisions; publication in **PDF formats that cannot be copied**, limiting accessibility and scrutiny)
- Reduced effectiveness of the **asset, income, interest, and expenditure declaration registry** for public officials, due to: a registry divided into two components, incomplete accessibility, and a system that is more technically complex than before
- Failure to operationalise the **Gifts Registry**, despite the fact that under the 2019–2022 Anti-Corruption Strategy it was to be launched in **2022**
- Approximately **30% of staff positions** (17 out of 57) remaining vacant, significantly reducing the Commission’s operational effectiveness

Ineffectiveness of the Whistleblowing System

- Only one whistleblowing proceeding was initiated and subsequently terminated by the CPC⁶
- In the first nine months of **2024**, criminal proceedings were initiated based on only **16%** of whistleblower reports received⁷
- Low public trust in the system and insufficient awareness among officials

Decline in Public Trust

- According to surveys conducted by the **International Republican Institute (IRI)**, whereas in **2018** some **82%** of respondents believed that anti-corruption efforts had improved, by **2023** this figure had declined to **43%**⁸
- **63%** of respondents believe that corruption cannot be reduced, or can be reduced only partially

1.3. Assessment of Alignment with Strategic Objectives

i. Sub-grant: “Monitoring the Impact of Judicial and Anti-Corruption Reforms”

The Anti-Corruption Strategy of the Republic of Armenia and the 2023–2026 Action Plan derived therefrom were adopted by **Government Decision No. 1871-L of 26 October 2023**.

⁶ It should be noted that whistleblowing proceedings are initiated by the competent authorities as defined by the RA Law “On the Whistleblowing System.” In this case, the whistleblowing proceedings were initiated by the Corruption Prevention Commission, as there were circumstances falling within the Commission’s competence, including cases related to alleged violations of elements of the integrity system.

⁷ It should also be noted that, based on whistleblowing reports received by the RA Prosecutor General’s Office concerning alleged corruption-related incidents, whistleblowing proceedings are initiated where the relevant legal grounds exist. Following the examination of the whistleblowing proceedings, if there are sufficient grounds to initiate criminal proceedings, the Prosecutor’s Office initiates criminal proceedings.

⁸ <https://www.civilnet.am/news/779647/կորուպցիան-հայաստանում-խորանում-է-հեղափոխության-ակնկալիքները>՝ մարում/

The **second strategic objective** of the Anti-Corruption Strategy concerns the improvement of **legal and institutional anti-corruption systems**, including, among its specific objectives, the **institutional strengthening of Anti-Corruption Courts**. Several actions (**2.8–2.11**) are envisaged to implement this objective, with the expected outcome of increasing the **effectiveness, transparency, professionalism, and specialisation** of Anti-Corruption Courts.

The research conducted under the sub-grant “**Monitoring the Impact of Judicial and Anti-Corruption Reforms**” addressed key issues related to the implementation of this specific objective—namely the effectiveness and institutional strengthening of Anti-Corruption Courts.

For each of the actions envisaged under the Strategy, it is important to assess the extent to which the sub-grant project contributed to their implementation or identified barriers to their achievement.

The Strategy envisages the revision and implementation of judicial training programmes, including the specificities of adjudicating corruption-related cases and relevant international standards (**Action 2.8**).

The sub-grant project addressed this issue indirectly by revealing the low effectiveness of the Anti-Corruption Court. During the research, surveys were conducted among different target groups, which encountered practical barriers. In particular, reluctance to cooperate, as stated by **Narine Matevosyan**, representative of the sub-grant recipient organization:

“Judges from Lori and Tavush Marzes participated in the surveys, except for judges from Shirak Marz, from whom we did not receive consent. We also sent a letter to the Judicial Department to obtain consent to work with the Shirak court. The Judicial Department agreed, but the Shirak Marz court still kept everything closed.

We proposed to forward the surveys directly to the court and also prepared anonymous online questionnaires, but we were still unable to get in touch with the judges.”

Overall, the statistical data show that in **2023**, only **51 out of 282 criminal cases** pending before the court were concluded by year-end (**18%**), while in the first half of **2024**, only **14 out of 258 cases** were concluded (**5.4%**). These figures indicate that training—if conducted—has not, on its own, sufficiently contributed to improving the Court’s effectiveness.

The study recommended engaging more experienced judges and increasing supporting staff, complementing the training-related action under the Strategy and emphasizing that **training alone is insufficient without additional systemic measures**.

The Strategy also envisages assessing and ensuring the engagement of experts with **financial and economic expertise** in the work of Anti-Corruption Courts. According to the monitoring report for the first half of **2025** on the implementation of the Anti-Corruption Strategy and Action Plan⁹, as well as an alternative monitoring report by the **Armenian**

⁹ ՀՀ հակակոռուպցիոն ռազմավարության և դրանից բխող 2023-2026 թվականների գործողությունների ծրագրի մոնիթորինգի 2025 թվականի առաջին կիսամյակի գեկույց: [https://moj.am/storage/uploads/AC_Monitoring_Report_2025_1st_half%20\(1\).pdf](https://moj.am/storage/uploads/AC_Monitoring_Report_2025_1st_half%20(1).pdf), էջ 66

Lawyers' Association¹⁰, **two staff positions** were allocated to the Anti-Corruption Court, and **one position** to the Court of Appeal for Anti-Corruption Cases, but recruitment has not yet been completed.

The sub-grant project addressed this issue indirectly. The study found that prolonged examination of cases and excessive workload are partly due to the absence of specialised staff. Among surveyed citizens, **33%** identified court workload as the primary issue, and **24%** identified undue delays in court proceedings.

Although the sub-grant did not directly evaluate the issue of expert engagement, the systemic problems identified (delays, overload, lack of effectiveness) confirm the **relevance and necessity** of engaging specialists in finance and economy in the works of anticorruption courts, which was stated in the action of the Strategy.

Overall Assessment of Alignment with Strategic Objectives

The sub-grant project aligns with the **second strategic objective** of the Anti-Corruption Strategy and the specific objective of “**Institutional Strengthening of Anti-Corruption Courts**” in the following ways:

1. **Direct alignment:** The sub-grant was aimed at monitoring the performance and assessing the effectiveness of Anti-Corruption Courts, directly linked to the Strategy's specific objective.
2. **Added value:** The sub-grant revealed systemic issues (judicial independence, workload, lack of trust in courts, frequent transfer of judges) that indirectly affect institutional strengthening but are not directly addressed through actions **2.8–2.11**.

ii. Sub-grant: “Analysing Armenia’s Anti-Corruption Strategy (2019–2022)”

The **first strategic objective** of the Anti-Corruption Strategy concerns **corruption prevention and the strengthening of integrity systems**, including specific objectives related to (i) the development of the **institutional framework for corruption prevention**, and (ii) the improvement of mechanisms for corruption prevention and integrity strengthening.

Several actions (**1.2, 1.10, 1.20**) are included to implement this objective, which are expected, inter alia, to improve the corruption prevention system, introduce effective mechanisms for enforcing restrictions on acceptance of gifts, and establish the **Gifts Registry**.

The media publications produced under the sub-grant “**Analysing Armenia’s Anti-Corruption Strategy (2019–2022)**” addressed the implementation of the Strategy's specific objectives, focusing on CPC effectiveness, integrity system enhancement, and the state of public trust.

¹⁰ ՀՀ հակակոռուպցիոն ռազմավարության իրականացման 2023-2026 թթ. միջոցառումների ծրագրի 2023-2024 թթ. -ին իրականացման ենթակա գործողությունների հասարակական մշտադիտարկման արդյունքների զեկույց: Չեղիսակ՝ Իրավաբանների հայկական ասոցիացիա: <https://armla.am/55039.html>, page 52

For each relevant action suggested by the Strategy, it is important to assess the extent to which the sub-grant contributed to or revealed challenges in its implementation.

The Strategy stated the necessity of improving the procedures of proceedings conducted by the CPC, defining their specific features, and clarifying CPC functions (**Action 1.2**). The analysis of the sub-grant implementer on this issue pointed out insufficient transparency in CPC activities, such as that CPC decisions were published with delay, and the PDF-format of its publications does not provide the function of copying the text, which reduce transparency and limit opportunities for public oversight¹¹. These issues indicate that the procedural reforms of proceedings should also include mechanisms to enhance transparency and accessibility.

The Strategy notes the necessity of expanding the circle of officials subject to the obligation to declare assets, income and expenditures, and introducing an obligation to submit declarations of interests (**Action 1.10**). The publication prepared under the sub-grant highlighted the decreased effectiveness of the declarations registry due to the registry being divided into two parts, incomplete accessibility, and a more complex system than before¹². While the sub-grant did not directly assess the issue of expanding the scope of declarants, the systemic challenges identified (registry inefficiency and limited accessibility) confirm that expansion should be accompanied by technical and functional improvements of the registry.

The Strategy calls for developing procedures for the enforcement of restrictions on gift acceptance and establishing the **Gifts Registry (Action 1.20)**. The studies indicate that relevant legal acts have been adopted; however, the launch of the registry has been delayed due to lack of funding. CPC record-keeping is currently conducted through electronic forms (Excel), which does not meet registry standards¹³.

The publications produced under the sub-grant directly addressed this issue, noting that the Gifts Registry has not been established, despite the 2019–2022 Anti-Corruption Strategy requiring it to be launched in **2022**. The research demonstrated that the absence of a registry reduces the effectiveness of integrity systems and limits public oversight.

The Strategy also envisages establishing procedures for conducting periodic surveys on the impact of anti-corruption efforts, including anti-corruption measures (**Action 5.4**). According to the Government report, the CPC approved a methodology for studying public opinion on corruption; however, the action was assessed as **partially implemented**.

The sub-grant project addressed this issue indirectly by revealing the decline in public trust. According to International Republican Institute surveys, whereas in **2018** 82% of respondents believed that anti-corruption efforts had improved, in **2023** this figure declined

¹¹ <https://www.civilnet.am/news/760682/կոռուպցիայի-կանխարգելման-հանձնաժողով%E2%80%A4-թափանցիկության-ու-արդյունավետության-հետոնթաց%2F>

¹² <https://www.civilnet.am/news/760682/կոռուպցիայի-կանխարգելման-հանձնաժողով%E2%80%A4-թափանցիկության-ու-արդյունավետության-հետոնթաց%2F>

¹³ ՀՀ հակակոռուպցիոն ռազմավարության իրականացման 2023-2026 թթ. միջոցառումների ծրագրի 2023-2024 թթ. -ին իրականացման ենթակա գործողությունների հասարակական մշտադիտարկման արդյունքների զեկույց; Հեղինակ՝ Իրավաբանների հայկական ասոցիացիա: Pages 36-38

to **43%**¹⁴. Moreover, **63%** of respondents believe corruption cannot be reduced or can only be reduced partially.

The Action 5.4 relates to establishing an institutional mechanism for systematic conduct of such surveys. Thus, the subgrant findings confirm the need for such an institutional tool for systematic monitoring and assessment of public perception.

Overall Assessment of Alignment with Strategic Objectives

The sub-grant aligns with the **first strategic objective** of the Anti-Corruption Strategy and the specific objectives of “**Development of the Institutional Framework for Corruption Prevention**” and “**Improvement of Mechanisms for Corruption Prevention and Integrity Strengthening**” in the following ways:

1. **Direct alignment:** The sub-grant assessed the effectiveness of the corruption prevention system, particularly CPC performance, integrity mechanisms, and the effectiveness of preventive tools, thus directly linked to the Strategy’s specific objectives.
2. **Added value:** The sub-grant highlighted challenges (insufficient CPC transparency, ineffective declarations registry, absence of a Gifts Registry, vacant CPC staff positions, decline in public trust) that indirectly affect the effectiveness of corruption prevention systems.

¹⁴ <https://www.civilnet.am/news/779647/կոռուպցիան-հայաստանում-խորանում-է-հեղափոխության-ակնկալիքները-մարում/>

1.4. Analysis of the Current Situation

The results of the sub-grants indicate that the two key institutional pillars of the anti-corruption system—namely the **Corruption Prevention Commission** and the **Anti-Corruption Courts**—face significant operational challenges.

The challenges related to Anti-Corruption Courts are primarily reflected in the failure to ensure **reasonable timeframes** for case examination and the excessive workload of anti-corruption judges, which results in low institutional effectiveness.

The challenges affecting CPC activities include insufficient transparency, vacant staff positions, delayed publication of decisions, and the incomplete operationalisation of preventive tools. The issue of the **Gifts Registry** remains unresolved. Although the 2019–2022 Strategy required the registry to be launched in **2022**, and the 2023–2026 Strategy envisages the adoption of relevant legal acts, the registry has not been operationalised in practice in line with applicable international standards and requirements.

2. Judicial and Legal Reforms Strategy of The Republic of Armenia for 2022–2026 and The Related Action Plan

2.1. Overview of Sub-Grants Relevant to the Strategy

Within the framework of the Programme, sub-grant projects were implemented to support the implementation of the **Judicial and Legal Reforms Strategy of the Republic of Armenia** and the related **2022–2026 Action Plan**.

These sub-grant projects include:

- a) **“For the Effective Application of Criminal and Administrative Proceedings and Judicial Acts”**, implemented by the **Foundation for the Protection and Development of Rights**, in cooperation with the **Rights Centre NGO**
- b) **“Support to the Protection of Citizens’ Right to a Fair Trial”**, implemented by the **Investigative Journalists NGO**

Within the framework of the sub-grant **“For the Effective Application of Criminal and Administrative Proceedings and Judicial Acts”**, a study was conducted on the **law-enforcement practice of home detention and administrative supervision**, as well as a policy brief entitled **“On Certain Issues in the Field of Administrative Proceedings and the Compulsory Enforcement of Judicial Acts.”**¹⁵

The study on the law-enforcement practice of home detention and administrative supervision was conducted in **2023**. The subject of the study was issues related to the application of **alternative preventive measures**—home detention and administrative supervision—introduced by the new **Criminal Procedure Code**, which entered into force on **1 July 2022**.

¹⁵ <https://ldpf.am/uploads/files/bf875b9d7e3bb39ddc6c9f057eb5cc72.pdf>

As part of the research, **11 in-depth interviews** were conducted with prosecutors, investigators, defence lawyers, representatives of the Probation Service, and judges. Statistical data were collected from the **Prosecutor General’s Office of the Republic of Armenia** and the **Investigative Committee of the Republic of Armenia**.

One of the outputs of the research was the development of a **checklist for judges**, outlining the circumstances to be taken into account when deciding on the application of home detention.

The policy brief “**On Certain Issues in the Field of Administrative Proceedings and the Compulsory Enforcement of Judicial Acts**” was developed on the basis of an analysis of current legislation, taking into account established judicial practice, comparative experience, and relevant **international standards**.

Within the framework of the sub-grant “**Support to the Protection of Citizens’ Right to a Fair Trial**”, a study was conducted in **2024** examining the **effectiveness of the judicial system**, judicial workload, and challenges in the implementation of judicial reforms. The main sources for the study were existing judicial practice, statistical data on cases pending before judges, decisions adopted by the **Supreme Judicial Council (SJC)**, hearing schedules of administrative and appellate courts, and a comparative analysis of publicly available data.

The aim of the study was to identify the **structural and functional challenges** affecting the effective implementation of the Judicial and Legal Reforms Strategy and the 2022–2026 Action Plan. The findings were published both in the form of media materials and in a dedicated report¹⁶.

2.2. Challenges Identified during Implementation

The sub-grant projects implemented in the judicial and legal field under the Programme revealed challenges affecting the effective implementation of the **Judicial and Legal Reforms Strategy** and the related **2022–2026 Action Plan**, as well as the overall effectiveness of justice.

Challenges in the Application of Alternative Preventive Measures

Home detention – key challenges:

- Inability to ensure full monitoring of imposed restrictions (limitations on communication; prohibition on the use of telephone/internet)
- Difficulties related to the selection and modification of the place of residence (impossibility of installing electronic devices; lack of access to water or electricity)
- Failure to adequately take into account the needs and rights of family members
- Absence of the right to outdoor exercise, unlike persons held in places of detention
- Obstacles to accessing medical care and exercising other fundamental rights
- Practical problems related to transporting accused persons to court (e.g. lack of specially equipped vehicles)

¹⁶<https://hetq.am/static/datakan%20gorcer/%D4%B4%D5%A1%D5%BF%D5%A1%D5%AF%E2%80%A4%20%D5%B4%D5%B7%D5%BF%D5%A1%D5%A4%D5%AB%D5%BF%D5%A1%D6%80%D5%AF%E2%80%A4%20%D5%A6%D5%A5%D5%AF%D5%B8%D6%82%D5%B5%D6%81.pdf>

For example, during a semi-structured interview, sub-grant implementer **Anna Maralyan** noted:

“Even when defining the place of residence, important details are not taken into account. There have been cases where the person owned a house, but the water source was outside. The court defined a specific square meter area where the person could stay, while the water source was outside that area.”

Administrative supervision – key challenges:

- Practical impossibility of monitoring certain restrictions (e.g. it is almost impossible to monitor compliance with a ban on visiting certain places or communicating with specific persons)
- Unsubstantiated imposition of restrictions by courts (for example, in some cases courts prohibited leaving the place of residence during certain hours, whereas it would have been more reasonable to prohibit visiting specific locations)

Challenges in Administrative Proceedings and Review of Normative Legal Acts

- Limited scope of interim measures in proceedings challenging normative legal acts: only suspension of the contested act is envisaged; no other interim measures are provided
- Problems related to the legal consequences of declaring a normative act invalid: invalidity enters into force and applies from the moment the judicial act enters into legal force, rather than retroactively from the time of adoption
- Imperative requirement for e-proceedings: in certain proceedings, procedural actions must be carried out exclusively in electronic form

Cooperation and Law-Enforcement Challenges

- Different levels of cooperation among state institutions (the Prosecutor’s Office is more open and cooperative, while the Investigative Committee is more closed)
- Lack of in-depth professional discussions with the **Ministry of Justice (MoJ)**
- Lack of feedback on the identified problems and challenges
- Slow pace of legislative amendments

Key Challenges Identified in the Judicial System

Problems in managing judges’ workload:

- Unsubstantiated SJC decisions: in **2023**, the names of **48 criminal-specialised judges** were temporarily removed from the case allocation list without sufficient analysis
- Disproportionate workload relief: some judges were relieved from receiving new cases for **six months**, while others for only **ten days**
- Artificial workload inflation: some judges schedule subsequent hearings **three to five months** later

As noted during a semi-structured interview by **Sara Petrosyan**, representative of the **Investigative Journalists NGO**:

“When assessing judges’ workload, the Supreme Judicial Council does not have clear criteria. For example, at the time of the SJC decision, Judge N. Badalyan of the Court of General Jurisdiction of Tavush Marz had only 28 cases pending. Under these conditions, the SJC decided that Narek Badalyan had an extremely heavy workload. Moreover, four months later the SJC again identified an excessive workload for Judge Badalyan. On 8 August 2023, it again decided to temporarily remove the judge’s name from the case allocation list for 8–12 August.

For another judge, D. Balayan, the name was removed from the case allocation list three times in 2023, but for significantly shorter periods. The first time, Balayan’s name was removed for two months—from 31 January to 31 March 2023. The Judicial Department reported that 118 cases were pending before him.”

Slow functioning of administrative courts:

- Delays in publishing judgments: judges publish judgments **10–15 months** after completion of case hearings.
- Hearings scheduled too far in the future: in the Administrative Court of Appeal, the first hearing was scheduled **14 months** after the appeal was admitted.
- Lack of statistics: the Judicial Department does not maintain statistics on the workload of administrative court judges.

Lack of transparency in new notarial powers:

- Lack of statistical data: the Notary Chamber does not have official statistics on applications for issuing payment orders; moreover, there were cases where the MoJ reported that the Chamber issued **6,300 orders in seven months**, while the Chamber’s own communication stated that the number was **7,176 in six months**¹⁷
- Inability to assess workload reduction: in the first half of **2024, 8,525 applications** were transferred to notaries; however, court caseloads decreased by **62,785 cases**, making it impossible to attribute changes and assess impact.

Insufficient transparency of judicial reforms:

- Absence of measurable indicators: the 2022–2026 Judicial and Legal Reforms programme does not include measurable results.
- Monitoring results are not published: publication of SJC monitoring reports is not mandatory.

2.3. Assessment of Alignment with Strategic Objectives

i. Sub-grant: “For the Effective Application of Criminal and Administrative Proceedings and Judicial Acts”

The Judicial and Legal Reforms Strategy of the Republic of Armenia and the related 2022–2026 Action Plan were adopted by **Government Decision No. 1133-L of 21 July 2022**.

The Strategy includes several strategic objectives, of which **Objective 5** relates to **criminal justice reforms**, while **Objective 7** concerns reforms of **administrative law and administrative proceedings**. The actions proposed under these objectives are expected i) to increase the effectiveness and accessibility of the right to judicial protection, and the

¹⁷ <https://hetq.am/hy/article/169903>

public functions of the justice sector bodies and the MoJ, and ii) to guarantee the right to effective judicial protection in the field of administrative justice.

The studies conducted under the sub-grant “**For the Effective Application of Criminal and Administrative Proceedings and Judicial Acts**” addressed key issues related to the achievement of these objectives—namely the application of alternative preventive measures and challenges in administrative proceedings.

For each relevant action envisaged under the Strategy, it is important to assess the extent to which the sub-grant contributed to its implementation or identified barriers to its achievement.

The Strategy calls for equipping the **Probation Service** with the necessary electronic monitoring tools for the purpose of applying alternative to detention measures (home detention and administrative supervision) and sanctions alternative to imprisonment (**Objective 5, Action 2**). It is envisaged that alternative preventive measures with the use of electronic monitoring tools will be applied to at least **100 persons**.

According to the implementation report for the 1st and 2nd halves of **2022** on the implementation of the Strategy and the 2022–2026 Action Plan, **200 electronic monitoring bracelets** and **150 in-home monitoring devices** were procured and provided with the relevant management software¹⁸.

The sub-grant addressed challenges in implementing this action through its study of the law-enforcement practice of home detention and administrative supervision. The research revealed significant challenges in applying alternative preventive measures, including the inability to fully monitor restrictions (limitations on communication; prohibition on the use of telephone/internet), issues related to selecting and changing the place of residence (impossibility of installing electronic devices; lack of water/electricity), inadequate consideration of family members’ needs and rights, and obstacles to accessing medical care and exercising other fundamental rights.

These results indicate that although the procurement of electronic devices envisaged by the Strategy has been implemented, effective operation of the system requires the revision of legal and procedural regulations to address emerging practical problems. The sub-grant also produced a **checklist for judges** on factors to be taken into account when deciding on home detention, which adds value to the implementation of this action.

The Strategy calls for identifying and inventorying problems and gaps arising from the application of the Administrative Procedure Code and developing a package of legislative amendments (**Objective 7, Actions 1–2**). It is envisaged that approximately **50%** of the identified problems will be mapped and documented, and that approximately **60%** of the documented issues will receive legislative solutions.

Within the framework of the sub-grant, the policy brief “**On Certain Issues in the Field of Administrative Proceedings and the Compulsory Enforcement of Judicial Acts**” was prepared on the basis of an analysis of current legislation. Speaking about the research approach, sub-grant representative **Genya Petrosyan** stated:

¹⁸ <https://moj.am/storage/uploads/16a34ce0be-1982-4247-9200-118d31b996ab.pdf>

“The research was developed on the basis of an analysis of the current legislation, taking into account established judicial practice, comparative experience, and international standards. During the study, the results of interviews conducted with individual lawyers and representatives of civil society organisations were also taken into account.”

The study identified and documented specific issues, including the limited scope of interim measures to be used in proceedings which challenge normative legal acts, problems related to the legal consequences of declaring a normative act invalid (invalidity enters into force from the moment the judicial act becomes final rather than retroactively), and challenges related to the imperative requirement for e-proceedings.

The identification and presentation of these issues in the form of a policy brief contributes to the implementation of **Objective 7, Action 1** (inventorying problems). The sub-grant also revealed cooperation challenges, including different levels of cooperation among state institutions, lack of in-depth professional discussions with the MoJ, lack of feedback on identified issues, and the slow pace of legislative amendments.

Overall Assessment of Alignment with Strategic Objectives

The sub-grant project aligns with **Objective 5** and **Objective 7** of the Judicial and Legal Reforms Strategy in the following ways:

1. **Direct alignment:** The sub-grant was aimed at identifying challenges in the implementation of actions envisaged under the Strategy (practice of applying alternative preventive measures; inventorying administrative proceedings issues), directly linked to the Strategy’s objectives.
2. **Added value:** The sub-grant revealed issues that indirectly affect the achievement of the Strategy’s objectives (insufficient legal regulation, cooperation challenges, slow pace of legislative amendments).

ii. Sub-grant: “Support to the Protection of Citizens’ Right to a Fair Trial”

Objective 1 of the Judicial and Legal Reforms Strategy concerns the establishment of a unified governance system for “**E-Justice**” and ensuring access to electronic databases. The actions envisaged under this objective are expected to increase the effectiveness and transparency of the justice system.

The research conducted under the sub-grant “**Support to the Protection of Citizens’ Right to a Fair Trial**” addressed key issues related to the achievement of the Strategy’s objectives, namely judicial system effectiveness, workload management, and challenges in the implementation of judicial reforms.

The Strategy envisages modernisation of the electronic system for case assignment and allocation in courts, as well as improving the official system for publishing judicial acts (**Objective 1, Action 10**). It is envisaged that at least **50% of court cases** will be allocated and assigned through the electronic system, taking into account judges’ workload and the complexity of cases. According to an alternative monitoring report prepared by the

Armenian Lawyers' Association¹⁹, the modernisation contract has been signed, but the indicators suggested under the Strategy had not yet been achieved.

The sub-grant addressed this issue indirectly by identifying significant problems in managing judges' workload. The research found that SJC decisions on workload relief were adopted without sufficient analysis; in 2023, the names of **48 criminal-specialised judges** were temporarily removed from the case allocation list. Disproportionate workload relief was also recorded (some judges were relieved from receiving new cases for six months, others for only ten days). Artificial workload inflation was identified as well, with some judges scheduling subsequent hearings three to five months later.

These issues indicate that modernising the electronic case assignment and allocation system should be accompanied by systematic statistical record-keeping and mechanisms for the objective assessment of judges' workloads. The sub-grant also identified that the Judicial Department does not maintain statistics on the workload of administrative court judges, which hinders evidence-based decision-making.

The research also identified challenges in ensuring **reasonable timeframes** for case examination by administrative courts: judges publish judgments **10–15 months** after completion of hearings, and in the Administrative Court of Appeal the first hearing was scheduled **14 months** after the appeal was admitted. These issues indicate an insufficient level of judicial system effectiveness.

The sub-grant also identified transparency challenges in judicial reforms: the 2022–2026 judicial reforms programme lacks measurable results, and publication of SJC monitoring reports is not mandatory.

Overall Assessment of Alignment with Strategic Objectives

The sub-grant project aligns with **Objective 1** of the Judicial and Legal Reforms Strategy in the following ways:

1. **Direct alignment:** The sub-grant assessed the effectiveness and transparency of the judicial system, directly linked to Objective 1.
2. **Added value:** The sub-grant revealed systemic issues (ineffective workload management, lack of statistics, insufficient transparency of judicial reforms) that indirectly affect the achievement of the Strategy's objectives.

2.4. Analysis of the Current Situation

The results of the sub-grants reflect the current state of Armenia's judicial and legal system in the context of implementing the objectives of the **Judicial and Legal Reforms Strategy (2022–2026)**.

Although procurement of electronic monitoring devices envisaged under the Strategy has been completed, the application of alternative preventive measures continues to face significant practical challenges. Challenges related to home detention and administrative

¹⁹ ՀՀ Ղատական և իրավական բարեփոխումների 2022-2026 թվականների ռազմավարությունից բխող գործողությունների ծրագրի 2022-2024 թվականներին իրականացման ելթակա գործողությունների հասարակական մշտադիտարկման արդյունքների գեկույց: Հեղինակ՝ Իրավաբանների հայկական ասոցիացիա:
<https://armla.am/55140.html>, pages 29-31

supervision include the inability to fully monitor restrictions, problems related to selecting the place of residence, inadequate consideration of family members' rights, and obstacles to accessing medical care. These issues indicate that effective operation of the system requires **comprehensive legal and procedural regulation**.

The Strategy envisages inventorying issues arising from the application of the Administrative Procedure Code and developing legislative solutions. Sub-grant findings identified concrete problems, including the limited scope of interim measures in proceedings challenging normative legal acts, challenges related to the legal consequences of declaring a normative act invalid, and issues related to the imperative requirement for e-proceedings. At the same time, cooperation challenges were identified—different levels of cooperation among state institutions, lack of in-depth professional discussions with the MoJ, and the slow pace of legislative amendments.

The Strategy envisages modernising the electronic system for case assignment and allocation, taking into account judges' workload and case complexity. However, sub-grant findings indicate significant problems in managing judges' workload. SJC decisions on workload relief were adopted without sufficient analysis, disproportionate workload relief and artificial workload inflation were recorded. The Judicial Department does not maintain statistics on the workload of administrative court judges, which hinders evidence-based decision-making.

Significant challenges were also identified in ensuring reasonable timeframes in administrative courts and in ensuring adequate transparency of judicial reforms.

3. Penitentiary and Probation Strategy of The Republic of Armenia for 2019–2023 and The Action Plan

3.1. Overview of Sub-Grants Relevant to the Strategy

Within the framework of the Programme, sub-grant projects were implemented to identify key challenges and support implementation under the penitentiary and probation strategy priorities, as well as to assess and monitor their effectiveness.

These sub-grant projects include:

- a) **“My Voice Is Heard”**, implemented by journalist **Armenak Davtyan**
- b) **“I Have the Right to Be Healthy”**, implemented by journalist **Armenak Davtyan**
- c) **“Media for Reforms: Promoting Public Dialogue on the Penitentiary and Probation Systems”**, implemented by the **Public Journalism Club NGO**

ii. Sub-grants: “My Voice Is Heard” and “I Have the Right to Be Healthy,”

Within the framework of the sub-grants **“My Voice Is Heard”** and **“I Have the Right to Be Healthy,”** media analyses and publications were produced focusing on penitentiary and probation issues, with particular emphasis on: (1) the modernisation of medical services in penitentiary institutions, and (2) the introduction of a **risk and needs assessment system** for persons deprived of liberty. Recommendations were also developed²⁰. The investigative findings were published in the **Aravot** newspaper and broadcast through the **Radiolur** programme.

Within the framework of the sub-grant **“Media for Reforms: Promoting Public Dialogue on the Penitentiary and Probation Systems,”** a total of **12 discussions** were conducted between **February and July 2023**. The discussions were held via live broadcast, ensuring dialogue between stakeholders, including representatives of state institutions and civil society. The discussions addressed the following thematic areas:

1. **Education and restorative justice**

The role of education in rehabilitation processes and the transition from punitive justice to restorative justice were discussed. Issues raised included the underutilisation of educational opportunities, lack of awareness among convicted persons, and challenges related to values change and motivation.

2. **Mental health and self-harm**

Issues related to the prevention of self-harm and suicide, as well as deaths in detention, were discussed. Key concerns included the insufficient functioning of psychological services, lack of human resources (psychologists), low motivation and inadequate social guarantees, and the rapid classification of deaths as suicide without proper examination.

3. **Healthcare**

Access to medical assistance in penitentiary institutions was discussed. Key concerns included shortages of medical staff, part-time employment of physicians, and problems related to the independence of medical personnel and the documentation of torture.

²⁰ Պատժից պայմանական վաղաժամկետ ազատման գործընթացը բարելավելու առաջարկներ՝ դատապարտյալների կողմից: <https://hanunazatutyan.am/library/pva-azatum>

4. **Pardon and conditional early release**

The grounds for rejecting pardon applications by the President and for rejecting applications for conditional early release were discussed.

5. **Labour rights and contact with the outside world**

Employment opportunities for persons deprived of liberty and legal and practical possibilities for contact with the outside world were discussed. One specific issue raised was that applications by convicted persons to participate in public discussions were rejected by the Penitentiary Service without detailed justification.

6. **Criminal subculture and a human-centred system**

Issues related to criminal subculture, distrust towards the justice system, and the human-centred nature of penitentiary institutions were discussed. Concerns raised included the continuing occurrence of violence, including violence by staff against convicted persons.

7. **Reform monitoring**

A dedicated discussion was held on actions implemented under the JUREMONIA Programme, the identified challenges, and recorded progress.

3.2. Challenges Identified during Implementation

The sub-grant projects and media publications implemented in the penitentiary and probation fields under the Programme revealed challenges that highlight problems in the effective implementation of the **2019–2023 Penitentiary and Probation Strategy** of the Republic of Armenia.

Problems Related to the Quality and Independence of Medical Services

- Lack of sufficient independence of medical staff providing services in penitentiary institutions (PIs), particularly in the context of documenting torture and ill-treatment, notwithstanding the fact that—according to the **2020 annual report** on the implementation of the four-year strategy published by the MoJ—the “**Penitentiary Medicine Centre**” CJSC carried out personnel reforms, under which approximately **50% of medical staff were replaced in 2020** (with qualified and motivated staff) and **20% in 2021** (Action 34)²¹.
- Absence of reliable mechanisms for documenting torture and ill-treatment

Insufficiency of Mental Health Services

- Need to ensure the provision of quality psychological services in PIs and shortage of human resources (psychologists)
- Ineffective system for the prevention of self-harm and suicide
- Rapid classification of deaths as suicide without appropriate investigation, despite an overall decrease in mortality cases
- Insufficient professional skills among social workers and psychologists

²¹ ՀՀ քրեակատարողական և պրոբացիայի ոլորտի քառամյա ռազմավարության 2020 թվականի տարեկան հաշվետվություն, https://www.moj.am/storage/uploads/prob210216_Strategy_2020.pdf pages 52-53

Slow Introduction of the Risk and Needs Assessment System

- The risk and needs assessment tool for persons deprived of liberty was developed and piloted only at **Abovyan PI** with **10 juvenile detainees**, whereas the Strategy envisaged piloting in at least **four** penitentiary institutions (Action 19)²².
- For adult prisoners, the tool remains at the stage of an initial draft and has not been officially approved.

Challenges in Restorative Justice and Social Reintegration

- Underutilisation of educational opportunities for convicted persons within rehabilitation processes
- Low level of awareness among convicted persons about available services and rights
- Difficulties in ensuring values change and motivation in the context of transitioning from punitive to restorative justice

Ineffectiveness of Conditional Early Release and the Pardon Mechanism

- High rate of rejection of pardon applications by the RA President without clear justification²³
- Unclear grounds for rejecting applications for conditional early release

Human Rights and Communication Restrictions

- Applications by convicted persons to participate in public discussions are rejected by the Penitentiary Service without substantiated reasoning
- Limitations—both legal and practical—on contact with the outside world, hindering social reintegration processes
- Difficulties in exercising labour rights

Safety and Violence Prevention Challenges

- Continuing occurrence of violence in penitentiary institutions, including incidents of violence by staff against convicted persons
- Ongoing influence of criminal subculture and slow progress in establishing a human-centred system²⁴
- Lack of trust in the justice system

Institutional Issues of the Probation Service

- Insufficient level of recognition of the Probation Service's status and inadequate social guarantees for probation officers
- Insufficient number of staff positions for implementing social and psychological work (despite the recruitment of approximately 10 vacant positions in 2020, mainly in criminology, psychology, and social work)

²² Ibid, pages 31-32

²³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RAxilJhijmc>

²⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kdm6ZwwaSxc>

Systemic Gaps in Monitoring and Evaluation

- Limited tools for measuring reform impact and monitoring
- Low level of public participation and civil oversight
- Lack of transparency of statistical data and outcomes required for objective assessment of systemic reforms

3.3. Assessment of Alignment with Strategic Objectives

i. Sub-grants: “My Voice Is Heard” and “I Have the Right to Be Healthy”

The **2019–2023 Penitentiary and Probation Strategy** of the Republic of Armenia was adopted by **Government Decision No. 1717-L of 28 November 2019**.

One of the objectives of the Strategy was to improve the quality of medical care and service provision. A specific objective under this area was the modernisation and quality improvement of medical services for persons held in penitentiary institutions, including the establishment of a medical service system ensuring that persons deprived of liberty receive medical care of the **same quality** as that available to other members of society.

Another objective concerned the review of the human resource management policy in the Penitentiary Service and the revision of the status of the Probation Service, including, as a specific objective, the engagement of a greater number of social workers and psychologists in the Probation Service in order to strengthen restorative justice approaches.

Several actions were envisaged for the implementation of these strategic objectives and tasks (**Actions 8, 19, 25, 34, 42, 47**), including the modernisation of medical services in penitentiary institutions with the expectation of creating the necessary preconditions for providing adequate medical services to persons deprived of liberty.

The media analyses and publications produced under the sub-grants “**My Voice Is Heard**” and “**I Have the Right to Be Healthy**” addressed the implementation of these strategic tasks, focusing on challenges related to medical services in penitentiary institutions and the introduction of a risk and needs assessment system.

For each relevant action envisaged by the Strategy, it is important to assess the extent to which the sub-grant contributed to its implementation or revealed barriers to implementation.

The Strategy envisaged the operationalisation of the “**Penitentiary Medicine Centre**” **CJSC** and the creation of necessary conditions for providing quality medical care and services. The sub-grant project addressed this issue by highlighting problems related to the independence of medical personnel and ineffective mechanisms for documenting torture. While the Strategy’s implementation reports indicate successful operationalisation of the CJSC since **September 2019** and personnel reforms (replacement of around **50%** of medical staff in 2020²⁵ and **20%** in 2021²⁶ with qualified staff), the publications produced under the sub-grant indicate that improving the quality of medical services requires not

²⁵ ՀՀ քրեակատարողական և պրոբացիայի ոլորտի քառամյա ռազմավարության 2020 թվականի տարեկան հաշվետվություն, https://www.moj.am/storage/uploads/prob210216_Strategy_2020.pdf, pages 52-53

²⁶ ՀՀ քրեակատարողական և պրոբացիայի ոլորտի քառամյա ռազմավարության 2021 թվականի տարեկան հաշվետվություն, https://www.moj.am/storage/uploads/22_n.PEN_PROB_STRATEGY.pdf, pages 50-51

only personnel reforms but also the establishment of **functional independence of medical personnel**.

The Strategy envisaged periodic training for medical staff. The implementation report indicates that in **2021, 71 representatives** of the CJSC medical staff received training, including on the topic of **procedures for documenting medical examinations and notifying competent authorities in cases of ill-treatment**²⁷. The sub-grant project complements this action indirectly by demonstrating that although trainings have been delivered, they have not fully addressed systemic issues related to documenting torture and ensuring the independence of medical staff.

Overall Assessment of Alignment with Strategic Objectives

The sub-grant project aligns with the **second strategic objective** of the 2019–2023 Penitentiary and Probation Strategy and the specific objective of “**Modernisation of Medical Services in Penitentiary Institutions**” in the following ways:

1. **Direct alignment:** The sub-grants assessed the quality and provision of medical services in penitentiary institutions, directly linked to the Strategy’s specific objective.
2. **Added value:** The sub-grants highlighted the continuing presence of systemic issues (insufficient independence of medical personnel; inadequate mechanisms for documenting torture) which are not directly addressed by Action 34, but significantly affect the effectiveness of medical service modernisation.

ii. Sub-grant: “Media for Reforms: Promoting Public Dialogue on the Penitentiary and Probation Systems”

One of the Strategy’s objectives was to review the human resource management policy in the Penitentiary Service and revise the status of the Probation Service, including the engagement of more social workers and psychologists in the Probation Service within the framework of strengthening restorative justice approaches. The Strategy aimed to ensure the necessary social and psychological support for persons under probation supervision, envisaging **25 additional staff positions** (22 social workers and 3 psychologists) and establishing effective cooperation mechanisms between the Penitentiary and Probation Services in line with **European standards**.

Another strategic objective related to the **rehabilitation and reintegration** of persons deprived of liberty and persons under probation supervision. Under this objective, specific objectives included the introduction of a **risk and needs assessment tool** and improving the quality of psychological services. Actions **19, 42, and 47** were envisaged to implement these objectives, with the expected outcome of enhancing reintegration effectiveness and ensuring the necessary social and psychological support.

The 12 discussions held under the sub-grant “**Media for Reforms**” addressed practical issues related to the implementation of the Strategy’s specific objectives, including education, mental health, restorative justice, and probation service development.

²⁷ ՀՀ քրեակատարողական և պրոբացիայի ոլորտի քառամյա ռազմավարության 2021 թվականի տարեկան հաշվետվություն, pages 51-52

The Strategy envisaged introducing a risk and needs assessment tool for persons deprived of liberty (**Action 19**). Implementation reports show that the tool for juveniles was developed and piloted at **Abovyan PI** with **10 juveniles**, while the tool for adults remains at the initial drafting stage²⁸.

The sub-grant project addressed this issue indirectly by raising, during discussions, concerns about insufficient skills among social workers and psychologists. While the sub-grant did not directly evaluate the implementation of the risk assessment tool, the identified issues (insufficient staff skills and human resource shortages) confirm the importance and necessity of this action envisaged by the Strategy.

The Strategy envisaged improving the quality of psychological services (**Action 42**). The sub-grant directly addressed this issue by raising concerns about the inadequate functioning of psychological services, ineffective prevention of self-harm, and insufficient mental health services. While implementation reports indicate that training of psychologists has taken place, the media outputs produced under the sub-grant suggest that training has not been sufficient to resolve systemic challenges.

The Strategy envisaged revising the status of the Probation Service and ensuring social guarantees (**Action 47**). The sub-grant addressed this by raising issues related to institutional problems and inadequate social guarantees for the Probation Service. Implementation reports indicate that draft amendments to the Law on Probation were developed and approximately 10 vacant positions were filled; however, the sub-grant findings confirm that these measures have not been sufficient to resolve systemic issues.

Overall Assessment of Alignment with Strategic Objectives

The sub-grant project aligns with the Strategy's first strategic objective and the specific objectives related to rehabilitation, risk assessment, psychological services, and probation development in the following ways:

1. **Direct alignment:** The sub-grant facilitated public discussion of penitentiary and probation reforms, directly linked to the Strategy's specific objectives.
2. **Added value:** The sub-grant highlighted systemic issues (insufficient accessibility of psychological services, slow implementation of restorative justice, institutional issues of the Probation Service) that complement the actions envisaged by the Strategy by illustrating practical implementation challenges.

3.4. Analysis of the Current Situation

The results of the sub-grants indicate that two key institutional components of the penitentiary and probation sector—**medical services** and the **probation system**—face significant operational challenges.

Challenges related to medical services concern ensuring the independence of medical personnel and the ineffectiveness of mechanisms for documenting torture and ill-treatment, which limits the provision of quality medical services. Despite the

²⁸ ՀՀ քրեակատարողական և պրոբացիայի ոլորտի քառամյա ռազմավարության 2020 թվականի տարեկան հաշվետվություն, https://www.moj.am/storage/uploads/prob210216_Strategy_2020.pdf, page 31

operationalisation of the **Penitentiary Medicine Centre CJSC** and personnel reforms, the sub-grant findings indicate the continued presence of systemic problems.

Mental health service challenges include insufficient availability of psychological assistance, ineffective self-harm prevention mechanisms, and shortages of human resources. The introduction of the risk and needs assessment tool is essential for strengthening reintegration effectiveness; however, progress remains slow: the tool has been piloted only at **Abovyan PI** with a limited number of juveniles, while the adult version remains at the initial drafting stage.

Institutional issues of the Probation Service include an insufficiently defined status and inadequate social guarantees, as well as an insufficient number of staff positions for carrying out social and psychological work. While implementation reports indicate the development of draft legislative amendments and the filling of approximately 10 positions, the sub-grant findings suggest that these measures have not been sufficient to address systemic challenges.

Challenges in implementing restorative justice include the underutilisation of educational opportunities for convicted persons, low awareness of available services, and difficulties related to values change. The ineffectiveness of conditional early release and the pardon mechanism, as well as limitations affecting human rights and communication, hinder social reintegration processes.

Systemic gaps in monitoring and evaluation, limited tools for measuring reform impact, and low levels of public participation hinder objective assessment of reform effectiveness.

At the same time, it is important to emphasise that the sub-grants highlighted the development of sustainable dialogue with responsible institutions. For example, according to **Seda Muradyan**, representative of the **Public Journalism Club NGO**:

“This was a strategic direction for us. In all discussions hosted by the media centre, we sought to ensure dialogue with the institutions responsible for or overseeing the given area. For example, if the issue related to the penitentiary system, we engaged representatives of the penitentiary administration; if it concerned healthcare, representatives of the relevant ministry. This combination was very important, and we can say that in 90% of our discussions we managed to ensure it.”

4. Assessment of the Human Rights Component

4.1. Overview of Sub-Grants Implemented in the Human Rights Defender (HRD) Field

i. Sub-grant: “Strengthening Mechanisms for the Protection of the Rights of Persons Forcibly Displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh”

This sub-grant project was implemented by the **Armenian Lawyers’ Association** from **February 2024 to January 2025 (inclusive)**. Within the framework of the sub-grant, a comprehensive legal support system was introduced for persons forcibly displaced from **Nagorno-Karabakh (NK)**. By consolidating the efforts of CSOs into a single network, a **CSO network for the protection of the rights of persons forcibly displaced from Artsakh** was established²⁹. Within the Programme, the **ArmRights.am platform** was also created³⁰, with the primary purpose of facilitating the integration of persons forcibly displaced from Artsakh in Armenia through the strengthening of rights protection mechanisms.

A total of **305 free legal consultations** were provided, including: **127** consultations delivered through outreach visits, **31** telephone consultations, **11** office-based consultations, and **136** requests received through the ArmRights.am platform. The geographical coverage included **23 communities**, including **Yerevan**. In the course of consultations, **85 individual letters** addressed to state authorities were prepared, as well as **five letters of a systemic nature**. As a result of **55 letters**, the issues raised received a positive resolution.

Public awareness-raising and network-based activities were also integral to the sub-grant. A total of **20 videos** on the legal issues faced by displaced persons from Artsakh were produced and disseminated.

Based on the identification of legal and systemic problems, evidence-based recommendations were developed, submitted to the Government of the Republic of Armenia, and discussed with stakeholder participation through public events. In particular, the sub-grant provided a detailed mapping of the legal problems faced by displaced persons from Artsakh, including, but not limited to: complexities in obtaining RA citizenship; challenges affecting persons within the same family holding different legal statuses; non-systematic and discretionary approaches in passport and civil status services; the housing crisis; time limitations on the use of state certificates; discrepancies between market prices and the amounts of state support; tax issues related to rental arrangements; difficulties in the appointment and payment of pensions; complexities in transferring funded (accumulative) pension accounts; employment and professional integration challenges; the need for vocational retraining; procedural difficulties in re-issuing documents; and limited awareness of procedures related to engaging in agricultural activities.

²⁹ <https://armrights.am/am/network-about>

³⁰ <https://armrights.am/am/about>

ii. Sub-grant: “Improving the Health Status of Persons from Artsakh by Increasing State Support”

This sub-grant project was implemented by the **Investigative Journalists NGO**. The sub-grant supported a field-based journalistic investigation in **four communities of Ararat Marz**, aimed at identifying hidden problems faced by displaced persons from Artsakh and assessing the effectiveness of state programmes.

The findings documented multi-layered problems within the healthcare system. In particular, among approximately **2,000 displaced healthcare professionals**, only about **200** were aware of the relevant registration procedures, which significantly hindered their professional integration. It was also found that psychological support was not provided in a systematic manner: it was delivered in small-group formats and did not include large-scale, comprehensive interventions.

Another group of identified issues related to the social consequences of housing insecurity. A significant proportion of displaced persons continue to lack stable housing, and frequent changes of residence negatively affect their opportunities to engage in the labour market, as well as the realisation of children’s right to education. Rising social tension in some cases resulted in an increase in divorces.

The sub-grant also underscored challenges in the education sector. Complex and multi-factor reasons for being excluded from education were documented, including psychological, social, and cultural factors. Cases of bullying and discrimination were noted, affecting both educational participation and social integration of children.

Overall, the sub-grant concluded that the state response to the issues identified was neither adequate nor comprehensive.

Complementarity of the initiatives

Both programmes implemented in the HRD field emphasise the multifaceted nature of the challenges faced by persons displaced from Artsakh—across legal, socio-economic, cultural, and psychological dimensions. Both initiatives also demonstrate that state policy in this area has not been sufficiently effective and that a more comprehensive and systemic response is required.

iii. Sub-grant: “From Training to Results: Strengthening CSOs’ Capacities for Submitting Reports”

This sub-grant programme was implemented by the **Rights Centre NGO** from **10 October 2024 to 15 October 2025 (inclusive)**. The main objective of the programme was to strengthen the capacities of Armenian CSOs—through targeted training, consultancy, and mentoring—to prepare and submit **high-quality and impactful reports** to international human rights mechanisms.

Within the framework of the programme, a number of documents and alternative reports were prepared and submitted to international platforms addressing key human rights issues. In particular, a document dedicated to the **EU–Armenia dialogue** was developed and submitted to the **European Commission** on behalf of the JUREMONIA platform, addressing discrimination, torture and inhuman treatment, as well as the use of pre-trial detention.

According to programme representative **Tatevik Gharibyan**:

“One of the results of the programme was the preparation and submission, within the framework of the 68th session of the UN Committee against Torture, of an alternative report in response to Armenia’s 5th periodic report. The report was developed through the cooperation of organisations operating under the JUREMONIA platform and contributed to raising, at the international level, systemic issues in the field of torture prevention. Some of the recommendations included in the report were later reflected in the Committee’s concluding observations.”

The programme also provided targeted consultancy and ongoing support to CSOs throughout the report drafting and submission processes. Organisations working on various thematic issues received support, and the reports they prepared were submitted to the relevant international and regional human rights bodies.

4.2. Integration with the National Human Rights Protection Strategy

Overall integration analysis

By **Government Decision No. 1978-L of 26 December 2019**, the **National Human Rights Protection Strategy** and the related **2023–2025 Action Plan** were approved. A comparative analysis of sub-grant results across the four areas covered by the Programme indicates that, although systematic integration of the human rights component was not envisaged at the programme design stage, a significant portion of the implemented activities nevertheless addressed human rights issues.

As a result, certain sub-grants developed thematic focus areas and addressed specific sectors and objectives of the National HR Strategy, contributing to identifying existing problems.

Assessment of the Degree of Integration by Sector

Anti-corruption

Sub-grants implemented in this sector indirectly touched upon targeted areas under **Sector 3** of the National HR Strategy (**Right to a fair trial**). For example, identified challenges related to the effectiveness of the Anti-Corruption Court are linked to **Action 3.9** of the National HR Strategy, which concerns ensuring guarantees of a fair trial.

Judicial and legal reforms

Sub-grants in the judicial sector correspond to the objectives of **Sector 2 (Right to be free from torture)** and **Sector 3 (Right to a fair trial)** of the National HR Strategy. For example, challenges identified in the application of alternative preventive measures (home detention and administrative supervision) touch upon the objectives of both Sector 2 and Sector 3.

Penitentiary and probation

Sub-grants in this sector addressed issues under **Sector 1 (Right to life)** and **Sector 2 (Right to be free from torture)** of the National HR Strategy. In particular, problems related to the independence of medical services and ineffective mechanisms for

documenting torture correspond to the objectives of **Actions 2.1, 2.6, and 2.12** of the National HR Strategy. The insufficient availability of mental health services and the ineffective system for preventing self-harm are linked to **Action 1.2** of the National HR Strategy.

Protection of the rights of persons forcibly displaced from NK

Sub-grants implemented in this area are directly linked to **Sector 12** of the National HR Strategy (**Protection of the rights of persons forcibly displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh**). The results of the sub-grants revealed a significant mismatch between the reported implementation of actions under the National HR Strategy and their actual effectiveness.

In particular, the non-systematic approaches in passport and citizenship services and the complexities of obtaining citizenship indicate that **Action 12.1**, which envisaged the creation of a comprehensive database, has not, in practice, resolved existing problems. Action 12.1 also did not contribute to addressing challenges faced by persons within the same family holding different legal statuses.

Housing crisis issues and the lack of stable residence, time limitations on the use of state certificates, and discrepancies between market prices and state support levels indicate that the implementation of **Action 12.2** (development and dissemination of public awareness materials) cannot be considered a priority intervention, while more urgent issues have remained outside the framework of the National HR Strategy.

Thus, the actions under Sector 12 of the National HR Strategy have, by nature, been disconnected from the actual needs and legal problems of displaced persons, as evidenced by the sub-grant results.

CSO capacity development in the field of human rights protection

The programme implemented under this component contributed to strengthening CSO capacities in the documentation and analysis of human rights violations and in submissions to international human rights mechanisms. Activities implemented under the sub-grant were relevant to achieving the objectives of the National HR Strategy.

In particular, the results are consistent with the objectives of **Sector 2** (Right to be free from torture) and **Sector 3** (Right to a fair trial). Alternative reports prepared by CSOs addressed issues related to the prevention of torture and inhuman treatment, medical safeguards for persons deprived of liberty, and ensuring effective investigation and fair trial guarantees.

At the same time, the programme contributed to strengthening CSO capacity in the protection of the right to equality and non-discrimination. In addition, the programme strengthened CSO capacities in the area of international accountability and monitoring, supporting external oversight of Armenia's compliance with its international human rights obligations.

5. Analysis of Sub-Grants' Contribution to Reforms

5.1. Effectiveness of Reforms in Addressing Identified Challenges

A comprehensive analysis of the 11 sub-grants implemented under the Programme shows that they have had an impact on monitoring the implementation of strategies adopted to advance reforms across different sectors, as well as on the subsequent review of related processes. Although the reports published by the **Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Armenia (MoJ)** do not explicitly state that reforms or process changes were undertaken as a direct result of issues raised through the sub-grants, a significant convergence can nevertheless be observed between the challenges identified and subsequent policy responses.

Coordination of the implementation of the anti-corruption, judicial and legal, penitentiary and probation strategies, as well as the **National Human Rights Protection Strategy**, and publication of implementation and results reports are carried out by the MoJ.

5.2. Success Stories

The sub-grants implemented under the Programme contributed to:

1) Strengthening CSOs' oversight in the implementation of public policies (strategies). For example:

- The “**Media for Reforms**” initiative contributed to the continuous organisation of constructive dialogue between civil society and state institutions. The series of 12 discussions enabled structured exchange among representatives of relevant sectors.
- The studies conducted and mapping exercises produced an extensive evidence base for analysing the impact of reforms across different sectors and the scope of challenges within those sectors. Examples include: the report “**Support to the Protection of Citizens' Right to a Fair Trial**” prepared by the **Investigative Journalists NGO**; the policy brief “**On Certain Issues in the Field of Administrative Proceedings and the Compulsory Enforcement of Judicial Acts**” authored by the **Foundation for the Protection and Development of Rights**; and the systemic challenges mapped, and recommendations presented, by the **Armenian Lawyers' Association** regarding the integration of persons forcibly displaced from NK and the protection of their rights.
- The initiatives implemented by journalist **Armenak Davtyan** contributed, on the one hand, to strengthening dialogue between journalists and competent state authorities, and, on the other hand, to enhancing cooperation between journalists and CSOs—particularly in the field of criminal justice.

2) Identifying key issues in the field of human rights protection. For example:

- The support system established by the **Armenian Lawyers' Association** for persons forcibly displaced from NK provided **305 free legal consultations** across **23 communities**, including Yerevan. A total of **85 individual letters** to state authorities were prepared, and as a result of **55** of these letters, the issues raised received positive resolution.

- Through the Armenian Lawyers' Association initiative, a key element of network-based cooperation was created—the **CSO network for the protection of the rights of persons forcibly displaced from Artsakh**, which consolidated the efforts of different organisations and ensured coordinated legal support. In addition, the **ArmRights.am** platform was developed, with the main purpose of facilitating the integration of persons forcibly displaced from Artsakh in Armenia through strengthening rights protection mechanisms. Both instruments are important mechanisms from the perspective of ensuring sustainability.
- The **Investigative Journalists NGO** identified key challenges related to health, education, and housing security among persons forcibly displaced from Artsakh.
- As a result of programme activities implemented by the **Rights Centre NGO**, CSOs prepared and submitted alternative reports and communications to international platforms addressing torture and ill-treatment prevention, fair trial guarantees, and broader human rights protection issues. A significant portion of these reports served as the basis for international bodies' concluding observations and interim responses, ensuring evidence-based articulation—at the international level—of human rights challenges present in Armenia.

5.3. Lessons Learned

The comparative analysis of results achieved through the sub-grants implemented under the Programme makes it possible to identify a number of systemic characteristics and factors that are essential for designing and implementing civil society capacity development programmes. These findings may serve as a benchmark for planning similar interventions and increasing their effectiveness in the future.

1. **The need for continuity in CSO capacity development.**
The analysis shows that effective CSO engagement at international and national levels requires continuous capacity development. One-off trainings or short-term interventions are not always sufficient to build sustainable skills for report drafting, legal analysis, and the operational use of international mechanisms.
2. **The need to combine fact-finding with analytical capacity.**
It was observed that fact-finding work carried out by CSOs often has high informational value, but does not always translate into structured analysis and actionable policy recommendations. This underscores the importance of developing documentation, legal analysis, and policy communication skills in an integrated manner.
3. **Lack of structured mechanisms for cooperation and exchange of experience.**
The analysis indicates that the absence of institutionalised mechanisms for cooperation and experience-sharing among CSOs can limit the completeness and impact of submitted materials. Where coordinated approaches and joint submissions are lacking, issues are often presented in a fragmented manner and without mutual reinforcement.
4. **Institutional limitations in cooperation with state bodies.**
During implementation, cases were recorded where cooperation with state bodies was limited, due both to gaps in institutional capacity and to the absence of fully developed cooperation mechanisms. This demonstrates that the influence of civil society monitoring and recommendations largely depends on state institutions' readiness and ability to engage in constructive dialogue.
5. **The importance of ensuring institutional sustainability.**
The analysis suggests that more sustainable and long-term outcomes are possible

where programme interventions focus not only on delivering individual activities, but also on strengthening CSOs' institutional capacities— including deeper thematic specialisation, development of cooperation formats, and ensuring knowledge transfer.

Speaking about the Programme's results, successes, and lessons learned, **Artak Kirakosyan**, Co-Coordinator of the JUREMONIA Programme and Director of the **Civil Society Institute**, emphasised:

“The most important indicator of the effectiveness of state strategies is an improvement in people's lives, rather than the completion rates of actions. What does it matter what percentage of an action has been completed if people do not see its positive impact on their well-being? This is why public and civil monitoring is important. That is what the JUREMONIA Programme was aimed at, and I believe that in this sense the findings, the dialogue developed, and the results obtained are visible and useful.”

According to him:

“At the core of the Programme's success was close cooperation among international partners (the Netherlands Helsinki Committee, Penal Reform International), Armenian NGOs (including regional organisations), media organisations, and individual journalists working in the field. It also included the engagement of academic institutions, whose involvement was coordinated by another consortium member, the Social Justice NGO.”

Conclusion

The “**Monitoring Justice Sector Reforms in Armenia**” (**JUREMONIA**) Programme aims to promote the **meaningful engagement of civil society** in justice sector reforms.

Within the framework of the Programme, notable success has been achieved in ensuring the **active involvement of non-governmental organisations**, providing comprehensive mechanisms for **public monitoring and civic oversight** throughout the entire process of implementing justice system reforms. The **sub-grant mechanism** has demonstrated its practical effectiveness by establishing a structured and consistent approach to monitoring and evaluation.

The Programme’s **sustainability** has been ensured through a number of interrelated factors, including the creation of a solid **evidence base**, the development of **professional capacities**, the strengthening of **network-based cooperation**, and the establishment of a dedicated **platform facilitating the integration of persons displaced from Artsakh**. Particularly noteworthy is the **CSO network working on the protection of the rights of displaced persons from Artsakh**, which serves as a concrete example of how CSOs can combine their efforts to deliver a coordinated and long-term response grounded in cooperation and the exchange of expertise.

The Programme’s **forward-looking value** lies in the creation of an effective toolkit for building **trust-based bridges between civil society and state institutions**. The monitoring mechanisms implemented by CSOs, media organisations, and individual journalists have demonstrated that civil society actors can act as **constructive partners** in the implementation of reforms—rather than merely as observers or critics.

Annexes

Annex 1. List of Interviewed Stakeholders

1. **Representative of the sub-grant programmes “My Voice Is Heard” and “I Have the Right to Health”** – Journalist Armenak Davtyan
2. **Representative of the sub-grant programme “Monitoring the Impact of Judicial and Anti-Corruption Reforms in the Courts of Lori, Tavush, and Shirak Regions”** – Narine Matevosyan, President of *Media Club* Civil Society Development NGO
3. **Representative of the sub-grant programmes “Supporting the Protection of Citizens’ Right to a Fair Trial” and “Improving the Health Status of Displaced Persons from Artsakh through Increased State Support”** – Sara Petrosyan, Representative of *Investigative Journalists* NGO
4. **Representative of the sub-grant programme “For the Effective Application of Criminal and Administrative Proceedings and Judicial Acts”** – Genya Petrosyan, Director of the Law Development and Protection Foundation
5. **Representatives of the sub-grant programme “For the Effective Application of Criminal and Administrative Proceedings and Judicial Acts”** – Tatevik Gharibyan and Anna Maralyan, Representatives of *Rights Center* NGO
6. **Representative of the sub-grant programme “From Training to Results: Capacity Building of CSOs on Report Submission”** – Tatevik Gharibyan, Representative of *Rights Center* NGO
7. **Representative of the sub-grant programme “Media for Reforms: Promoting Public Dialogue on the Penitentiary and Probation Systems”** – Seda Muradyan, President of *Public Journalism Club* NGO

* **Note:** Summaries of the interviews were provided to the *JUREMONIA* team for internal use only. The summaries are **not subject to publication**.

Annex 2. Summary Table of Reviewed Sub-Grants

No.	Sub-Grant Title	Implementing Organisation
1	For the Effective Application of Criminal and Administrative Proceedings and Judicial Acts	Law Protection and Development Foundation
2	Monitoring the Impact of Judicial and Anti-Corruption Reforms	<i>Media Club</i> Civil Society Development NGO
3	Analysing Armenia’s Anti-Corruption Strategy (2019–2022)	<i>Civitas</i> Foundation
4	Supporting the Protection of Citizens’ Right to a Fair Trial	<i>Investigative Journalists</i> NGO
5	Improving the Health Status of Displaced Persons from Artsakh through Increased State Support	<i>Investigative Journalists</i> NGO
6	My Voice Is Heard	Armenak Davtyan, Journalist
7	I Have the Right to Health	Armenak Davtyan, Journalist
8	Interpreting Reforms	Astghik Karapetyan, Journalist
9	From Training to Results: Capacity Building of CSOs on Report Submission	<i>Rights Center</i> NGO
10	Strengthening Mechanisms for the Protection of the Rights of Persons Forcibly Displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh	<i>Armenian Lawyers’ Association</i> NGO
11	Media for Reforms: Promoting Public Dialogue on the Penitentiary and Probation Systems	<i>Public Journalism Club</i> NGO

Annex 3. Evaluation Tools Used and Materials Reviewed

A. Studies, Reports, and Policy Briefs Developed under the Sub-Grants

No.	Title of the Document	Sub-Grant Title	Implementing Organisation / Author
1	Study: “Monitoring the Impact of Judicial and Anti-Corruption Reforms in the Courts of Lori, Tavush, and Shirak Regions”	Monitoring the Impact of Judicial and Anti-Corruption Reforms	<i>Media Club</i> Civil Society Development NGO
2	Study on the Law Enforcement Practice of House Arrest and Administrative Supervision	For the Effective Application of Criminal and Administrative Proceedings and Judicial Acts	Law Protection and Development Foundation; <i>Rights Center</i> NGO
3	Policy Brief: “On Certain Issues in the Field of Administrative Proceedings and Enforcement of Judicial Acts” ³¹	For the Effective Application of Criminal and Administrative Proceedings and Judicial Acts	Law Protection and Development Foundation
4	Report: “Supporting the Protection of Citizens’ Right to a Fair Trial” ³²	Supporting the Protection of Citizens’ Right to a Fair Trial	<i>Investigative Journalists</i> NGO
5	Proposals to Improve the Process of Conditional Early Release from Punishment, Submitted by Convicted Persons ³³	My Voice Is Heard	Armenak Davtyan, Journalist
6	Public Policy Paper on the Legal Protection of Persons Forcibly Displaced from Artsakh ³⁴	Strengthening Mechanisms for the Protection of the Rights of Persons Forcibly Displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh	<i>Armenian Lawyers’ Association</i> NGO

³¹ <https://ldpf.am/uploads/files/bf875b9d7e3bb39ddc6c9f057eb5cc72.pdf>

³² <https://hetq.am/static/datakan%20gorcer/%D4%B4%D5%A1%D5%BF%D5%A1%D5%AF%E2%80%A4%20%D5%B4%D5%B7%D5%BF%D5%A1%D5%A4%D5%AB%D5%BF%D5%A1%D6%80%D5%AF%E2%80%A4%20%D5%A6%D5%A5%D5%AF%D5%B8%D6%82%D5%B5%D6%81.pdf>

³³ <https://hanunazatutyan.am/library/pva-azatum>

³⁴ <https://armrights.am/uploads/lravakan%20pashtpanutyun.pdf>

B. Media Publications Produced Under the Sub-Grants

For the full list of publications and active links, see: [Մտղիւ - Juremonia](https://juremonia.am/%d5%b4%d5%a5%d5%a4%d5%ab%d5%a1/)
<https://juremonia.am/%d5%b4%d5%a5%d5%a4%d5%ab%d5%a1/>

No.	Number of Media Publications	Sub-Grant Title	Implementing Organisation / Author
1	12	Analysing Armenia's Anti-Corruption Strategy (2019–2022)	<i>Civilitas Foundation</i> Published on: CivilNet (https://civilnet.am)
2	6	Supporting the Protection of Citizens' Right to a Fair Trial	<i>Investigative Journalists</i> NGO Published on: Hetq (https://hetq.am/hy)
3	10	Improving the Health Conditions of Persons Displaced from Artsakh through Increased State Support	<i>Investigative Journalists</i> NGO Published on: Hetq (https://hetq.am/hy)
4	18	My Voice Is Heard	Armenak Davtyan, Journalist Published on: Armenian Public Radio (https://hy.armradio.am); <i>Aravot</i> Daily (https://www.aravot.am); YouTube (https://www.youtube.com)
5	13	I Have the Right to Be Healthy	Armenak Davtyan, Journalist Published on: Armenian Public Radio (https://hy.armradio.am); <i>Aravot</i> Daily (https://www.aravot.am); YouTube (https://www.youtube.com)
6	8	Interpreting Reforms	Astghik Karapetyan, Journalist Published on: EVN Report (https://evnreport.com)
7	12	Media for Reforms: Promoting Public Dialogue on Penitentiary and Probation Systems	<i>Public Journalism Club</i> NGO Live-streamed on: YouTube (https://www.youtube.com)

Annex 4. Reference Documents and Online Resources

A. Legal Acts of the Republic of Armenia

1. Decision No. 1871-L of the Government of the Republic of Armenia of 26 October 2023
On Approving the Anti-Corruption Strategy of the Republic of Armenia and the 2023–2026 Action Plan Derived Therefrom
<https://www.arlis.am/hy/acts/184674/latest>
2. Decision No. 1133-L of the Government of the Republic of Armenia of 21 July 2022
On Approving the Judicial and Legal Reforms Strategy of the Republic of Armenia for 2022–2026 and the Action Plan Derived Therefrom
<https://www.arlis.am/hy/acts/185731/latest>
3. Decision No. 1717-L of the Government of the Republic of Armenia of 28 November 2019
On Approving the 2019–2023 Strategy for the Penitentiary and Probation Sectors of the Republic of Armenia, the 2019–2023 Action Plan for Its Implementation, the Financial Assessment of the Programme, and the Procedure for the Establishment and Operation of the Coordinating Council
<https://www.arlis.am/hy/acts/137161/latest>
4. Decision No. 1674-L of the Government of the Republic of Armenia of 28 September 2023
On Approving the National Human Rights Protection Strategy and the 2023–2025 Action Plan Derived Therefrom
<https://moj.am/page/575>

B. Government Reports on the Implementation of National Strategies

5. Monitoring Report for the First Half of 2025
Monitoring of the Implementation of the Anti-Corruption Strategy of the Republic of Armenia and the 2023–2026 Action Plan
Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Armenia
[https://moj.am/storage/uploads/AC_Monitoring_Report_2025_1st_half%20\(1\).pdf](https://moj.am/storage/uploads/AC_Monitoring_Report_2025_1st_half%20(1).pdf)
6. Implementation Report of the Action Plan Derived from the Judicial and Legal Reforms Strategy (2022–2026)
Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Armenia
<https://moj.am/storage/uploads/16a34ce0be-1982-4247-9200-118d31b996ab.pdf>
7. Annual Report for 2020
Four-Year Strategy for the Penitentiary and Probation Sectors
Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Armenia
https://www.moj.am/storage/uploads/prob210216_Strategy_2020.pdf
8. Annual Report for 2021
Four-Year Strategy for the Penitentiary and Probation Sectors
Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Armenia
https://www.moj.am/storage/uploads/22_n_PEN_PROB_STRATEGY.pdf
9. Annual Report for 2022
Four-Year Strategy for the Penitentiary and Probation Sectors
Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Armenia
[https://moj.am/storage/uploads/Կատարողական%202022%20թվականի%20\(1\).pdf](https://moj.am/storage/uploads/Կատարողական%202022%20թվականի%20(1).pdf)
10. Annual Report for 2023
Four-Year Strategy for the Penitentiary and Probation Sectors
Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Armenia
<https://moj.am/storage/uploads/Hashvetvutyun%202023.pdf>

11. Annual Reports on the Implementation of the National Human Rights Protection Strategy and Action Plan
Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Armenia
<http://e-rights.am/?app=AppSiteDocument&companyDocumentCategoryID=5>

C. Reports, Analyses, and Studies by Civil Society Organisations, Media Outlets, and Journalists

12. Monitoring the Impact of Judicial and Anti-Corruption Reforms in the Courts of Lori, Tavush, and Shirak Regions
Research Study, *Media Club* NGO for Civil Society Development
13. Report on the Results of Public Monitoring of Actions Implemented in 2023–2024 under the 2023–2026 Anti-Corruption Strategy Action Plan
Armenian Lawyers' Association
<https://armla.am/55039.html>
14. Report on the Results of Public Monitoring of Actions Implemented in 2023–2024 under the 2023–2026 Anti-Corruption Strategy Action Plan
Armenian Lawyers' Association
15. Policy Brief: Certain Issues in Administrative Proceedings and the Enforcement of Judicial Acts
Law Protection and Development Foundation
<https://ldpf.am/uploads/files/bf875b9d7e3bb39ddc6c9f057eb5cc72.pdf>
16. Report: Supporting the Protection of Citizens' Right to a Fair Trial
Investigative Journalists NGO
<https://hetq.am/static/datakan%20gorcer/%D4%B4%D5%A1%D5%BF%D5%A1%D5%AF%E2%80%A4%20%D5%B4%D5%B7%D5%BF%D5%A1%D5%A4%D5%AB%D5%BF%D5%A1%D6%80%D5%AF%E2%80%A4%20%D5%A6%D5%A5%D5%AF%D5%B8%D6%82%D5%B5%D6%81.pdf>
17. Report on the Results of Public Monitoring of Actions Implemented in 2022–2024 under the Judicial and Legal Reforms Strategy (2022–2026)
Armenian Lawyers' Association
<https://armla.am/55140.html>
18. Proposals for Improving the Process of Conditional Early Release from Punishment
Armenak Davtyan
<https://hanunazatutyan.am/library/pva-azatum>
19. Study on the Law Enforcement Practice of House Arrest and Administrative Supervision
Law Protection and Development Foundation, in cooperation with *Rights Centre* NGO
20. Public Policy Paper on the Legal Protection of Persons Forcibly Displaced from Artsakh
Armenian Lawyers' Association
<https://armrights.am/uploads/Iravakan%20pashtpanutyun.pdf>

D. Online Resources

21. “Monitoring Justice Sector Reforms in Armenia (JUREMONIA)” Programme Platform
<https://juremonia.am>
22. Online Platform Supporting the Integration of Persons Forcibly Displaced from Artsakh
<https://armrights.am/am>
23. National Human Rights Strategy Platform
<http://e-rights.am/?app=AppHome&page=default>