

# Organization for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV)

## UPR Submission

32th session of UPR Working Group (Jan. 2019)

### Cyprus



سازمان دفاع از قربانیان خشونت  
Organization for Defending Victims  
of Violence

[www.odvv.org](http://www.odvv.org)

## About ODVV

1. The Organization for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV) is a non-governmental, non-profit, non-partisan organization in Special Consultative Status to ECOSOC. ODVV was established in 1988 in Tehran and has been active in the field of human rights and humanitarian activities.

2. ODVV is also associated to the United Nations Department of Public Information (UNDPI), a member of the UN Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations (CONGO), AMAN Network of Rehabilitation Centers in the Middle East and North Africa and International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT). ODVV has cooperated with international organizations in a variety of issues and has working relations with many NGOs in Iran and around the globe.

3. ODVV is focused on promoting human rights, supporting victims of violence, empowering Iranian civil society, and offering human rights consultations to the Iranian institutions and organizations. ODVV is actively involved in running various human rights education courses, workshops, seminars, and conferences. Other activities include:

- Participation in UN Commission on Human Rights and the Human Rights Council sessions in Geneva;
- Publication of different books and booklets on human rights such as Rights of the Child, Unilateral Coercive Measures (Economic Sanctions), Racism, Racial Discrimination, Islamophobia and Xenophobia;
- Publishing *Defenders Quarterly* (in English), human rights news and developments *Weekly* (in Farsi), updating ODVV websites in English, Farsi and Arabic;
- Internship for Iranian and international students.

4. ODVV is submitting the following report on the human rights situation of Cyprus, in order to contribute to the improvement of the human rights situation.

## **Implementation of international human rights obligations**

### **A) Migrants, refugees and asylum seekers**

5. Cyprus has joined the UN Refugees Convention and its protocol, however, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) expressed concerns on the limited employment options for asylum-seekers living in Cyprus, the insufficient amount of social assistance they receive and the limited reception facilities. The Committee also raised concerns on the insufficient access to services for the asylum-seekers staying at the Kofinou Reception and Accommodation Center for Applicants for International Protection, the only official centre hosting asylum-seekers on the island.

6. According to Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, concerns remain about the widespread use of lengthy detention of failed asylum seekers and of other migrants and the practice of re-arresting and re-detaining them.

### **B) Persons with disabilities**

7. According to article 7 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, all people are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. Cyprus seems to be in breach of these commitments. The UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities expressed concerns on the insufficient access of people with disabilities to health care, the high level of unemployment among them and the inadequate measures to promote their access to employment in an open labour market.

8. Also the Committee is concerned that Women and girls with disabilities are not equally and systematically mainstreamed in the gender equality agenda.

### **C) Minorities, Hate crimes**

9. According to the committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), racially motivated verbal abuse and physical attacks by right wing extremists and neo-Nazi groups against persons of foreign origin, as well as against human rights defenders and Turkish Cypriots have been reported. The Committee is also concerned at the use of racist stereotypes and hate speech in the public sphere, sometimes promulgated by the media against members of certain minority groups, including the Roma community, and against ethnic minorities who are Muslims.

## **D) Recommendations**

Organization for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV) calls on Cyprus to:

10. End the practice of detaining migrants and to maximize its efforts to manage migration in a fair manner, addressing the legitimate concerns of citizens and guaranteeing respect for people's rights.

11. Invest more in social cohesion and integration of migrants by enhancing their access to education, employment, health services and political participation.

12. Consider ratifying the international human rights instruments not yet ratified such as the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

13. Ensure an adequate standard of living, including access to disability support schemes and allowances in law and in practice for all non-nationals with disabilities residing in the country on an equal basis with Cypriot citizens.

14. Consider immediate ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

15. Take immediate measures to protect the safety and security of ethnic and religious minorities and human rights defenders and to enforce legislative provisions to prosecute perpetrators of hate crimes and hate speech.

16. Adopt effective measures to combat any form of racism and discrimination discriminatory attitudes against migrants and minorities.

17. Adopt legislative and practical measures towards ensuring equality and equal opportunity in the fields of employment, education, health care and housing for all ethnic groups.