

TOPIC: HUMAN RIGHTS, HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE ARMED FORCES, CIVIC ACTIVISM

Duration: 90 minutes

Materials:

Laptops, links to appropriate websites and sources, printed materials, visual aids (projector, screen), markers, sheets of paper

Age: 15+

Abstract/Information:

In this learning activity, students will gain a broader understanding of democratic processes in Armenia through analyzing human rights issues in the army as well as civic activism/initiatives aimed at raising awareness around and addressing these issues. Students will discuss the transition to democracy, activism and human rights, as well as evaluate how the war affected and continues to affect Armenian society today.

Key question:

Why is it important to have an active civic stance in a democratic society?

Learning outcomes:

Students will be able to:

- Work with witness accounts and other primary sources.
- Use different types of sources to justify their opinions and positions regarding different issues.
- Discuss the fundamental values that make people active citizens.

ACTIVITIES

Step 1: Brainstorming (10 minutes)

The purpose of the activity is to evoke an interest in the topic. The teacher shows the students the data/chart on the number of fatalities in the Armenian army in non-combat situations since 1994 (see Appendix 1). She explains the chart and the numbers. Students should then answer the following questions:

- What does this chart tell us?
- What is the largest percentage of fatalities?
- Why, and what do you think of this?

Step 2: Introducing the Witness (5 minutes)

The teacher introduces the witness based on information provided in the interview, as well as the text accompanying it. The teacher can also print Appendix 3 and give it to students.

Step 3: Watching and discussing an excerpt (0:28–6:13) from the video (10 min.)

After watching the excerpt, the teacher stops the video and discusses the following questions one by one (each question is printed on a different paper and papers are shown one by one, not together):

- Why did Lala get involved in civic activism?
- How is it related to democratic transition?
- How does Lala define activism?

Step 4: Watching and discussing an excerpt (8:18–11:14) from the video
(5 minutes)

After watching the excerpts, the teacher stops the video and discusses the following question:

- Why is civic activism important?

Step 5: Watching and discussing an excerpt (11:15–25:13) from the video
(20 minutes)

After watching the excerpt, the teacher asks the following questions:

- Who was involved in the initiative/movement?
- What were the issues raised by the initiative?
- Did they succeed in solving those?
- If yes, how?
- What were some of the tools they used?
- What were they able to change? What is still unresolved?

Step 6: Brainstorming (10 minutes)

The purpose of the activity is to provide some background information and basic facts and link the topic to our 3Ds. The teacher one by one asks the following questions to students, and after collecting their answers to each question, shows the respective slide in the Appendix 2 and explains it.

Question for Slide 1: What does the army have to do with decolonization?

Question for Slide 2: What is the link between demography and the army?

Question for Slide 3: How does democracy relate to the army?

Step 7: Analysis and Interpretation (30 minutes)

The purpose of this activity is for students to analyze and interpret the interview after they have read additional sources. Students are split into 3 groups.

Group 1 reads the following calls and/or statements by the “Army in Reality” in 2013.

1. [The Army in Reality asks the Candidates for Presidency](#)
2. [The Army in Reality Initiative's Call on the Day of Army](#)
3. [The Army in Reality Initiative's Statement on Mataghis](#)

Group 2 reads the following articles on Mataghis Case:

1. <https://hetq.am/hy/article/22078>
2. <https://hetq.am/hy/article/8839>

Group 3 reads the following sources:

1. <https://www.7or.am/am/news/view/46291/>
2. <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/25246897.html>
3. <https://safesoldiers.am/595.html>

Then each group answers the following questions based on the additional material they have read:

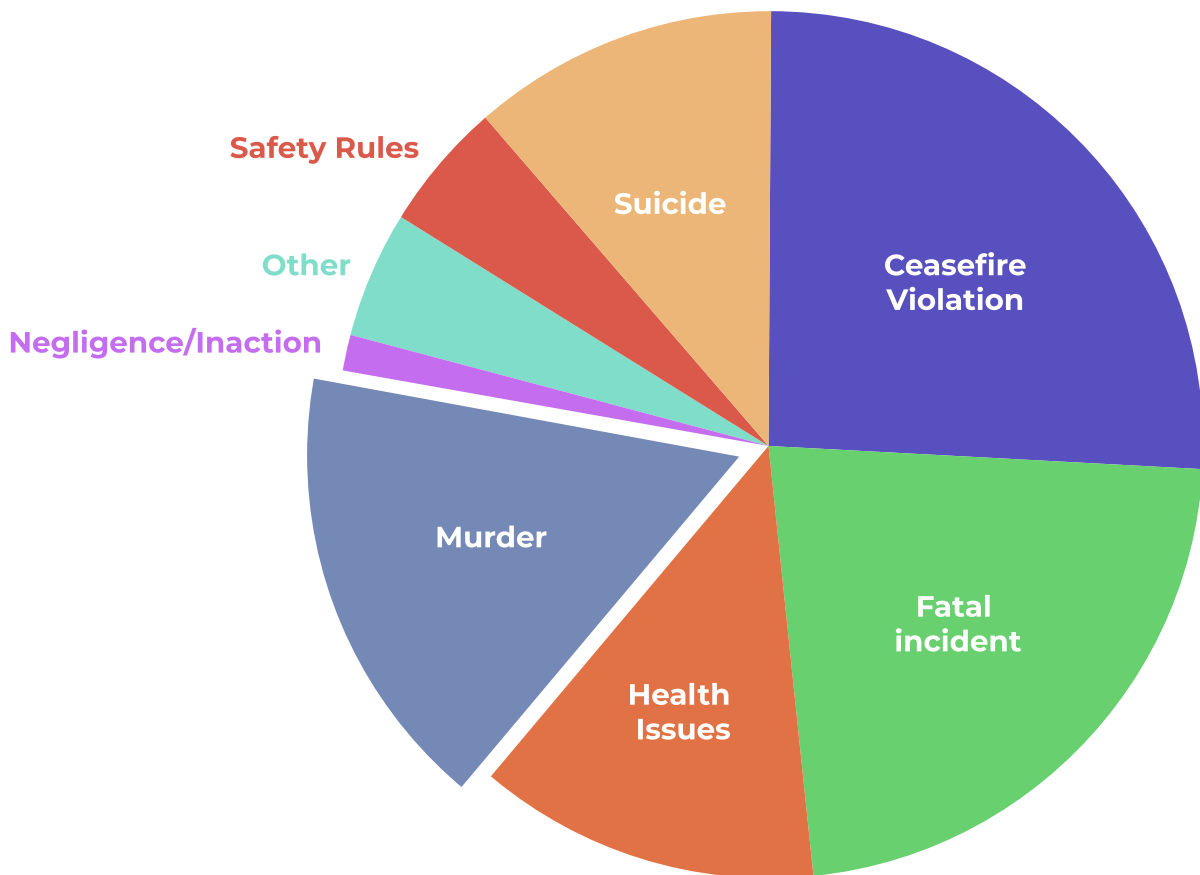
- What were the main issues raised by the “Army in Reality” initiative?
- What were the tools used by the initiative?
- Where did they succeed?

TASK 1: PLEASE, VISIT THE WEBSITE [SAFESOLDIERS.AM](https://safesoldiers.am) TO ANALYZE/COMPARE THE DATA FOR 2020–2024

The Number of Armenian Army Fatalities in Non-Combat Situations

1994 (*the end of first Karabakh War*) – 2025

1521 fatalities



THE ARMY & DEMOCRACY, DECOLONIZATION & DEMOGRAPHY

1. Decolonization?

- Armenia did not have its own army for centuries, apart from a short period during the First Republic (1918-1920).
- One of the first decrees adopted by the first freely elected parliament (then still called Supreme Council) of Armenia was the decree on not sending Armenian conscripts to the Soviet Army.
- On January 28, 1992, the government of Armenia adopted the resolution “On the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Armenia,” legally announcing the creation of the Armenian National Army.

2. Demography?

- Soldier deaths due to the Nagorno-Karabakh wars and ceasefire violations (1992-1994; 2016; 2020, etc.).
- Decreasing numbers of army conscripts due to lower birth rate.
- Higher emigration rates among younger males so as not to serve in the army.

3. Democracy?

- Human rights violations and non-regulated relationships in the army.
- An alarming number of fatalities and other incidents in non-combat situations.
- Civic initiatives and groups monitoring human rights in the Army.