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### **Armenia: Attack against Right Side’s vigil held in memory of a murdered transgender woman in Yerevan**

On 21 August 2023, a group of assailants attacked the participants of a candlelit vigil organised by the **Right Side NGO** in Yerevan, Armenia. The vigil aimed to commemorate Adriana, a transgender woman who was brutally murdered in her apartment the previous day. Woman human rights defender and head of the Right Side NGO **Lilit Martirosyan** filed a complaint to the police following the attack.

The [Right Side](#) is an NGO founded in 2016 by trans rights defenders, focusing on transgender issues and working with members of the Armenian trans community. The Right Side is the first and only trans rights NGO in the Caucasus which fights for the equal rights of all, regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.

On 21 August 2023, the Right Side NGO held a candlelight vigil in Komitas Park, Yerevan, in memory of Adriana, a transgender woman who was stabbed to death and burned in her own apartment the previous day. More than a hundred people attended the event, including LGBTQ+ rights defenders and allies, community members, and family members of Adriana. The Right Side NGO notified the local authorities in Yerevan about the vigil in advance. Despite this, the law enforcement officers who gathered in the park and monitored the preparation of the vigil remained inactive at the time of the attack. The assailants entered the park and threw eggs, bottles, stones and sand at the people attending the vigil. After the vigil, woman human rights defender [Lilit Martirosyan](#), the president of the Right Side NGO, filed a report to the police about the attack.

Attacks against transgender human rights defenders and their allies are not rare in Armenia. In July 2023, unknown individuals [attacked](#) a trans woman human rights defender who was collaborating with the New Generation Humanitarian NGO at the Shengavit Administrative District of Yerevan. In 2019, Lilit Martirosyan received [death threats](#) after she gave a speech at the National Assembly of Armenia about the issues faced by the LGBTQI+ community in the country. In February 2018, a member of the Right Side NGO, a transgender woman, was physically assaulted by an unidentified man in her apartment in Yerevan. The assailant also set her apartment on fire. Due to the heightened risk faced by transgender human rights defenders, the victims of such attacks often remain anonymous out of fear for their lives.

Front Line Defenders condemns the attack against the Right Side NGO’s vigil and the reported inactivity of the law enforcement officers during the attack. Front Line Defenders stands in solidarity with the Right Side NGO and the Armenian transgender community, and calls for accountability for the attack on the candlelit vigil organised to commemorate a victim of a hate crime. Front Line Defenders believes the attack is directly connected to the Right Side NGO’s human rights work on trans issues and trans visibility.

**Front Line Defenders calls on the authorities of Armenia to:**

1. Immediately carry out a thorough, prompt, and transparent investigation into the attack against the vigil organised by the Right Side NGO with a view to publishing the results and bringing those responsible to justice in accordance with international standards;
2. Address the systemic issue of disproportionate targeting of transgender human rights defenders in Armenia;
3. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in Armenia are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions.