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*Note: This document was originally written in  
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# POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING COMPREHENSIVE SECURITY AS A MODEL OF GOVERNANCE IN THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA

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# 1 | CONTEXT

The once unipolar or bipolar world order, characterized by relative stability and predictability, is undergoing a transition. Its path to a multipolar system is marked by uncertainty and unpredictability. The previously established rules and principles governing international relations have lost their viability, and an uncompromising struggle is being waged for the establishment and consolidation of new ones both at regional and global levels. In this context of global uncertainty, those small states lacking enough inherent resilience, embracing democratic values, and existing outside the European system are particularly vulnerable.

Hybrid threats, which blend traditional and non-traditional tactics (disinformation, cyberattacks, economic coercion, etc.) blur the lines between war and peace, presenting significant challenges to traditional security measures. Democracies, while acknowledging the importance of military capabilities as a key security tool, strive to expand the scope of security measures to address modern, multi-layered threats, adapt to the evolving security environment, and safeguard the viability of democracy.

Following the 44-day Nagorno Karabakh (Artsakh) war unleashed by Azerbaijan in 2020, Armenia's security system, in place since independence, has consistently proven outdated and incapable of effectively addressing, confronting, and countering internal and external conventional and hybrid threats to the country's national security interests. Armenia's democratic reform process is unfolding under conditions where "anti-Western regionalization" policies are strengthening, and formats are expanding in the region. Azerbaijan's ongoing aggressive policies toward Armenia, combined with the deepening crisis in Armenia-Russia relations, are further exacerbated by increasingly close strategic cooperation between Russia and Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan's maximalist approach to the Armenia-Azerbaijan normalization process reflects its intent to perpetuate the conflict. The potential failure of peace treaty negotiations between the two countries undermines prospects for normalizing Armenia - Türkiye relations, implementing the Armenian government's "Crossroads of Peace" initiative, reducing Armenia's economic dependence on Russia, diversifying the Armenia's economy, and, in the long term, strengthening resilience against authoritarian regimes.

Therefore, to ensure the stable, secure, and democratic development of the Republic of Armenia, it is essential to approach security comprehensively, develop a Comprehensive Security Strategy for Armenia simultaneously with the adoption of Comprehensive Security as a model of governance. In the long term, this approach will foster an Armenian society that is not only protected from diverse threats but is also resilient and united in the face of both traditional and hybrid challenges.

## 2 | BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF COMPREHENSIVE SECURITY

Comprehensive security, as a holistic approach, encompasses a wide range of security dimensions, including military, economic, political, societal, environmental, energy, and human, etc. Its philosophy is rooted in the understanding that vulnerabilities in one area can compromise national security as a whole. Therefore, it is necessary to establish an interconnected security network capable of effectively addressing both internal and external threats.

Comprehensive security integrates elements of societal security and resilience as national security relies on strong social cohesion and resilient systems. In the face of challenges and threats societal security focuses on maintaining the stability and unity of society, while resilience ensures the system's ability to anticipate, withstand, recover quickly, and adapt flexibly.

## 3 | COMPREHENSIVE SECURITY IN POLITICAL DISCOURSE & COMPREHENSIVE SECURITY AS A MODEL OF GOVERNANCE: A COMPERATIVE DESCRIPTION

Comprehensive security in political discourse can be described using several indicators, namely:

1. Broad Security implying a holistic perception and approach can serve as the foundation for strategic documents, such as the Armenia's National Security Strategy, Cybersecurity Strategy, etc.
2. Human Security can serve as a basis for fostering a stable and peaceful society (i.e. human security dimension included in the Regulation on the joint activities of the Commissions on Demarcation of the State Border between Armenia and Azerbaijan).
3. Comprehensive Defense can become a starting point and driving force for Armenia's defense/ military strategies.
4. Preparedness of security actors can be grounded in the principles of comprehensive security.
5. Cooperation between state bodies can involve comprehensive security as an operational aspect, etc.

Meanwhile, by adopting Comprehensive Security as a Model of Governance, the State can move above-mentioned into an operational realm. **Figuratively speaking, these 5 (or more) points are put into effect using a governing approach, which implies cooperation between security actors (authorities, the business community, organizations and citizens) involved in planning and conducting preparedness.** In other words, while the adoption of a holistic approach to security may lead to the adoption of the Comprehensive Security Concept of the Republic of Armenia (hereafter the Concept), and/or its full inclusion or some of its elements in documents of strategic importance, Comprehensive Security as a Model of Governance will:

- operationalize this concept turning it into practical activities and expertise,
- include a wide range of threats and necessary responses (prevention, crisis management and recovery),
- ensure implementation of the necessary responses through coordination across and between various levels of governance,
- take a phenomenon – led approach (**the driving force behind the development of security cooperation is not so much administrative decisions as practical needs. This approach motivates security actors to work in the most appropriate, timely and proportionate manner**),
- be solidly built on the rule of law, and,
- prioritize preparedness.

If Armenia decides to adopt Comprehensive Security as a Model of Governance, merely developing and endorsing the Concept or Action Plan and integrating its principles into sectoral documents of strategic importance may not suffice. It, with emphasis on the principles of the Concept and the vital functions of the Armenian society (leadership, international activities, defense capabilities, internal security, economy, infrastructure and security of supply, psychological resilience, functionality of the population and service capabilities, etc.), should be based on a core strategic document<sup>1</sup>. **The latter, in turn, should outline the general principles governing society's preparedness and be subject to periodic review so that the general principles remain relevant across government terms.**

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1 | This document is called in Finland as the Security Strategy for Society

## 4 | WHAT IS PREPAREDNESS

In the context of Comprehensive Security as a Model of Governance, preparedness refers to activities that ensure the security actors of the Republic of Armenia can continue fulfilling their tasks with minimal interruptions during both disruptions occurring in normal conditions and emergencies.

Preparedness measures should encompass contingency planning, continuity management, as well as training and preparedness exercises. **The vital functions for Armenian society, as defined by the Concept, must serve as the foundation for preparedness planning at all operational levels.** Practical tasks and responsibilities, informed by risk assessments, should be designed to ensure the uninterrupted provision of these vital functions.

When preparedness is guided by the principle of comprehensive security, the vital functions of society are under the joint management of authorities, business operators, organizations (including educational institutions and think tanks), and citizens. All-above-mentioned actors form a collaborative network of comprehensive security, enabling the flexible sharing of information, setting of common objectives and commitments. All participants involved in coordinated security efforts—or activities that closely support such efforts—are considered security actors, along with playing a central role in drafting preparedness legislation, steering and developing preparedness strategies, and implementing preparedness measures.

## 5 | RECOMMENDATIONS

**1** Adopt a Political Position: Establish a political stance on implementing Comprehensive Security as a Model of Governance.

**2** Initiate Operational Work: Begin implementing the Comprehensive Security as a Model of Governance by developing and adopting the Comprehensive Security Concept of the Republic of Armenia and an accompanying Action Plan. Ensure the Concept includes, among other components, the principles of comprehensive security and a list of vital functions for Armenian society.

**3** Engage Security Actors: Involve all security actors, including government authorities, the business community, organizations (universities, think tanks, etc.), and citizens, in the development of the Concept and Action Plan.

**4** Carry out a Legislative Inventory: In parallel with developing the Concept and Action plan task the Office of the Security Council and relevant departments of the Prime Minister's Office with reviewing the entire legislative framework of the Republic of Armenia to identify documents (fully or partially) that contradict the principles of comprehensive security.

**5** Conduct Field Research: In parallel with developing the Concept and Action plan deploy staff from the Office of the Security Council to all government bodies to conduct fieldwork and research, examine internal legislative acts, and identify any inconsistencies with the principles of the Comprehensive Security Concept.

**6** Analyze & Address Issues: Based on the findings from points 4 and 5, conduct a comprehensive analysis to identify challenges and propose recommendations. Discuss these findings in working sessions with relevant agencies, then include them in the agenda of Government and Security Council meeting/meetings.

**7** Engage International Partners: Combine the legislative review and field research efforts (points 4 and 5) with consultations involving relevant international partners.

**8** Develop a Core Strategic Document: Based on the outcomes of the analysis (point 6), initiate the drafting of a core strategic document, incorporating input from relevant international partners.

**9** Legislative Review: Concurrently with the drafting of the core strategic document (point 8), begin a comprehensive review of the entire legislative framework to align it with the principles of comprehensive security.