



Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

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Committee against Torture Eightieth session

Summary record of the 2135th meeting*

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Friday, 26 July 2024, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Mr. Heller

Contents

Organizational and other matters (*continued*)

Closure of the session

* No summary records were issued for the 2126th to 2129th and 2131st to 2134th meetings.

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Organizational and other matters (*continued*)

1. **The Chair** said that the Committee against Torture had held its eightieth session from 8 to 26 July 2024. The Committee had adopted concluding observations on the initial report of Côte d'Ivoire and the periodic reports of Ecuador, the Republic of Korea and Türkiye.

2. With regard to Côte d'Ivoire, the Committee had welcomed the submission of the country's initial report, which had been overdue since 1997. The Committee had expressed its deep concern about reports of very high levels of prison overcrowding – almost 3 times total capacity – in particular at the Abidjan Prison, and poor material conditions of detention in many places of deprivation of liberty, including the lack of adequate sanitation and poor hygiene standards, the lack of ventilation, the inadequate quality of food and water, which were provided in insufficient quantities, and the lack of recreational or educational activities conducive to rehabilitation. It was also concerned about the limited access to quality health care, including mental health care, and the lack of trained and qualified prison staff, including medical personnel, in the penal system. The Committee had recommended that the State party reduce the prison population by making greater use of alternatives to detention and continue to implement projects to develop prison infrastructure and improve conditions of detention. It had also recommended that access to recreational and cultural activities in places of detention be provided as well as vocational training and education with a view to promoting the reintegration of prisoners into the community.

3. The Committee had expressed its deep concern at the lack of accountability for acts of torture and ill-treatment attributable to State agents, including police, defence and security forces, the National Surveillance Directorate and the Armed Forces of Côte d'Ivoire, as reflected in the limited number of reported disciplinary measures and criminal prosecutions, which contributed to a climate of impunity. The Committee had recommended that the State party take the necessary measures to ensure that all allegations of torture or ill-treatment were promptly, effectively and impartially investigated by an independent body, that there was no institutional or hierarchical link between the investigators and the alleged perpetrators, that suspects, including those in positions of command, were duly brought to justice and, if found guilty, sentenced to penalties commensurate with the gravity of their acts, and that victims received adequate reparation.

4. With regard to Ecuador, while recognizing the security challenges faced by the country involving organized crime-related violence, the Committee had expressed concern about the militarization of public security and the reports of possible violations of the Convention due to excessive actions by the armed forces in policing. It had called on the State party to comply with its international human rights obligations, including the Convention. The Committee had also expressed concern about serious shortcomings in the prison system of Ecuador, both in the treatment of persons deprived of their liberty and in the management of prisons. It was particularly concerned about reports received describing situations of self-government and extortion in prisons, the lack of prison and security staff, corruption, the entry of firearms and drugs, as well as frequent riots and other violent incidents, which reportedly had led to the deaths of more than 680 persons between 2018 and 2023. The Committee was further concerned that declarations of states of emergency to respond to the prison crisis had continued to be adopted since 2019 and that the armed forces had been mobilized to ensure the maintenance of security in prisons on 13 January 2024. It had taken note of the position of Ecuador that that had been a temporary and extraordinary measure. The Committee had requested the State party to redouble its efforts to promote and implement a comprehensive plan to address the prison crisis and its systemic causes with a human rights approach, prioritizing policies of rehabilitation, re-education and social reintegration, the demilitarization of prison supervision and the prevention of violence. It had also called on Ecuador to ensure that all cases of violence and death in custody were investigated promptly and impartially by an independent body.

5. The Committee had expressed concern about the criminalization of abortion on grounds other than rape or threat to the life of a mother as well as the limited application of the relevant law, which forced women and girls to resort to clandestine abortions and exposed them and medical professionals alike to criminal sanctions. It had encouraged the State party

to revise its legislation to decriminalize abortion and to include legal exceptions to the prohibition of abortion other than those provided for in the Organic Act on the Voluntary Interruption of Pregnancy for Girls, Adolescents and Women in Cases of Rape. Furthermore, it had requested that Ecuador ensure access to safe abortions for rape victims and access to post-abortion care, counselling and information on reproductive health services.

6. With regard to the Republic of Korea, while taking note of recent measures that sought to ensure access to legal counsel, the Committee had expressed concern that that right could be limited on grounds that were not clearly defined, including for reasons of “good cause”, leaving excessively broad discretion to the prosecution and police to exclude legal counsel. The Committee had recommended that the State party ensure that all persons deprived of their liberty were afforded all fundamental legal safeguards from the very outset of their detention, in particular the rights to be assisted without delay by a lawyer.

7. While acknowledging the measures taken by the State party to address human rights abuses in the military, the Committee was concerned about the reported increase in cases of violence in the military, including sexual and gender-based violence, which had resulted in deaths, including suicides. The Committee was also concerned about the criminalization of sexual relations between consenting adults of the same sex and the corresponding punishment provided for in article 92-6 of the Military Criminal Act, which could give rise to violations of the Convention. The Committee had requested the State Party to continue its efforts to address sexual and gender-based violence and prevent suicides in the military. The State party should also ensure that allegations of torture and ill-treatment and all cases of death, including suicides, were thoroughly investigated by an independent mechanism, that those responsible were brought to justice and that reparation was provided to victims. The Committee had also invited the State party to consider repealing article 92-6 of the Military Criminal Act.

8. With regard to Türkiye, the Committee had expressed concern over allegations that torture and ill-treatment continued to be pervasive in the State party, including beatings and sexual assault by law enforcement and intelligence officers, and had recommended that all allegations of torture and ill-treatment be promptly, impartially, effectively and independently investigated and prosecuted, and that perpetrators be punished in a manner commensurate with the gravity of their crimes. It had also raised concerns over the backsliding with respect to the independence of judges and lawyers in Türkiye since the failed coup attempt in 2016, including the mass dismissal of judges and prosecutors, the closure of bar associations and the erosion of independence of the Council of Judges and Prosecutors, and the effects that that might have on the investigation and prosecution of torture and ill-treatment. The Committee had recommended that the State party ensure the full independence, impartiality and effectiveness of the judiciary and refrain from interference in the self-governance of professional lawyers’ associations.

9. The Committee was alarmed by the aggravated life imprisonment regime in Türkiye, noting that many prisoners subject to that regime were kept isolated in cells for over 22 hours per day in de facto solitary confinement, and that some had no prospect of release. The Committee was particularly concerned about the situation of prisoners Abdullah Öcalan, Hamili Yıldırım, Ömer Hayri Konar and Veysi Aktaş, currently held in İmralı Prison, who had been unable to contact their families or lawyers since March 2021. The Committee had recommended that the State party consider abolishing the penalty of aggravated life imprisonment and immediately facilitate contact between the prisoners held in İmralı Prison and their families and legal representatives.

10. At its eighty-first session, to be held from 28 October to 22 November 2024, the Committee would consider the reports of Cameroon, Jordan, Kuwait, Mongolia, Namibia and Thailand and would adopt lists of issues for Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, San Marino, Serbia and Sweden. At the eighty-second session, to be held in April and May 2025, it would consider the reports of Armenia, France, Mauritius, Monaco, Turkmenistan and Ukraine.

11. During the eightieth session, the Committee had examined 31 individual complaints and postponed the consideration of another. Of the examined cases, 2 had been deemed inadmissible. Additionally, 10 cases had been decided on the merits: in 9 cases, the Committee had found no violations while, in 1 case, it had determined there had been a

violation by the State party. Furthermore, the Committee had discontinued the consideration of 19 cases.

12. The Committee's work under article 20 of the Convention had continued during the session. The Committee had also undertaken its activities on follow-up under articles 19 and 22 of the Convention and in relation to reprisals.

13. The Rapporteur on follow-up to concluding observations had informed the Committee that, since the last progress report to the Committee during its seventy-ninth session, follow-up replies had been received, in order of submission, from Slovakia, Colombia, Kazakhstan, Australia and El Salvador (its second follow-up report). Since the previous Committee session, the Committee had received alternative follow-up reports from non-governmental organizations or other stakeholders in relation to the follow-up replies submitted by Kazakhstan and the State of Palestine. The Rapporteur had continued assessing the information provided by States parties under the follow-up procedure and had communicated with the States parties concerned once their replies had been examined. Since May 2024, such a communication had been sent to El Salvador. In addition, the follow-up replies submitted by Australia, Colombia, Kazakhstan, Slovakia and the State of Palestine were currently under consideration.

14. The Rapporteur of the working group on communications had reported that, since the previous session, the Committee had not received any information from States parties under the follow-up procedure to decisions made on individual complaints. He had urged the relevant States parties to comply with the decisions of the Committee, in fulfilment of their obligations under the Convention.

15. The Rapporteur on reprisals had reported that no new allegations of reprisals had been received from individuals or organizations by the Committee since the last session. The Petitions Unit had addressed allegations of reprisals in the context of individual communications received under the eight individual complaints procedures currently effective. The Unit had registered those allegations and called on States parties to implement interim protection measures, when necessary. Compliance with protection measures had been assessed in follow-up reports to individual communications, which had been made public.

16. During the intersessional period, the Committee had contributed updated information on reprisals concerning the preventive or protection measures requested of States parties by the Committee for the report for the 36th meeting of the Chairs of the human rights treaty bodies. It had also provided an update on measures to prevent and respond to allegations of intimidation and reprisals for the annual report of the Secretary-General on reprisals.

17. The year 2024 marked the fortieth anniversary of the Convention. To celebrate that auspicious occasion, the Committee was planning a number of events in collaboration with the other anti-torture mechanisms of the United Nations system, including the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture, the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture, in order to reassert the centrality of the prohibition, prevention and prosecution of crimes of torture and other ill-treatment and encourage a torture-free world. Information related to the anniversary of the Convention could be found on a web page dedicated to the occasion, which would be updated throughout the year.

18. On 22 July, the Committee had met in private with representatives of the Convention against Torture Initiative to discuss the status of its activities and potential cooperation with the Committee. On 23 July, the Chair of the Subcommittee had presented its seventeenth annual report to the Committee ([CAT/C/79/2](#)), in accordance with article 16 (3) of the Optional Protocol. The Committee had also held private meetings to discuss ongoing treaty body strengthening efforts.

Closure of the session

19. After the customary exchange of courtesies, **the Chair** declared the Committee's eightieth session closed.

The meeting rose at 10.35 a.m.