



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

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Summary record of the 2114th meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Wednesday, 10 July 2024, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Mr. Heller

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 19 of the Convention *(continued)*

Eighth periodic report of Ecuador (continued) (CAT/C/ECU/8; CAT/C/ECU/QPR/8)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Ecuador joined the meeting.*
2. **A representative of Ecuador**, resuming his delegation's replies to the questions raised at the previous meeting (CAT/C/SR.2111), said that crimes against humanity were defined in article 89 of the Comprehensive Organic Criminal Code. Such crimes included acts of torture when committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against a civilian population by the State or by a political organization with the State's authorization, support or acquiescence. That article had been invoked primarily in cases of mass and systematic human rights violations in prisons. Article 119 of the Code, on acts of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment during armed conflict, had not been applied in the prison context because persons deprived of their liberty were not considered either combatants or persons protected by international humanitarian law. As the broad definition of torture under article 151 of the Comprehensive Organic Criminal Code did not cover only acts committed by public officials, all acts of torture committed in the private as well as the public sphere were punishable. Harsher penalties were imposed when the perpetrator was a public official or a private individual acting with the acquiescence of a public official, and those who failed to act to prevent a crime of torture were liable to between 5 and 7 years' imprisonment. The Attorney General's Office had issued guidelines for the application of international human rights standards in criminal investigations related to torture offences. Pursuant to article 11 of the Constitution, all international human rights instruments, including the Convention, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the American Convention on Human Rights, were directly and immediately applicable by the courts and took precedence in the event of a conflict with any provision of national law. Accordingly, there was no statute of limitations for crimes of torture.
3. A specialized unit had been established under the Attorney General's Office to investigate the illegitimate use of force. It was competent to examine cases that had occurred after October 2022; offences that had been committed before that time were investigated by other prosecutors' offices.
4. Attacks on and threats against judges and lawyers were duly and promptly investigated, and security had been tightened. The Council of the Judiciary had adopted a resolution regulating the process by which employees of the judiciary and the Attorney General's Office could obtain individual security services. Those at imminent risk could apply to the Ministry of the Interior for protective measures. Currently, nearly 300 prosecutors were under the protection of the Ministry of the Interior and a further 57 had requested protection. A criminal investigation was under way into the murder of prosecutor César Suárez. Several individuals had been summoned for trial.
5. Judicial officers at courts specialized in combating corruption and organized crime, including judges, court clerks and assistants, were able to work remotely in order to ensure their safety. Digital tools provided and authorized by the Council were used during hearings concerning such crimes. A project had been set up in collaboration with the United States Drug Enforcement Administration to ensure the safety of court officials in the most dangerous provinces, with a budget of US\$ 500,000. Under article 101 of the Code of the Judiciary and other provisions, judges and other administrative officials could be transferred, inter alia, in order to combat corruption. Almost 170 officials had been dismissed for corruption and several criminal cases were ongoing.
6. In order to uphold the principle of judicial independence, the Council of the Judiciary had introduced policies that helped to ensure the provision of quality services to users of the justice system. The judiciary was independent even from other bodies of the judicial branch, and no State body or authority could interfere in the exercise of the judiciary's duties. Administrative, civil and criminal penalties could be imposed for violating that principle. The Council, as the judiciary's governing, administrative, oversight and disciplinary body, could not intervene in court proceedings since it lacked the power to review court decisions. To

ensure transparency, complaints regarding corruption could be lodged through a free hotline or by completing an online form available on the judiciary's website. The Council of the Judiciary was currently in the process of selecting and appointing judges to fill vacancies in the National Court of Justice.

7. Ecuador had signed 4 multilateral and 15 bilateral extradition treaties for the reciprocal surrender of persons accused or convicted of crimes punishable in the States parties to the treaties by a prison sentence of no less than 1 year, including offences under article 4 of the Convention. In the absence of a multilateral or bilateral treaty covering torture offences, a State could request extradition on the basis of its national law and the principle of reciprocity.

8. Ecuador was a plurinational and multicultural State, as expressly recognized in article 1 of the Constitution. The Council of the Judiciary had established inter-institutional cooperation networks with Indigenous Peoples' organizations to implement coordination and cooperation mechanisms between the ordinary and Indigenous justice systems. A protocol setting out guidelines for justice officials on intercultural dialogue during criminal proceedings had been approved, and a guide on coordination and cooperation mechanisms between authorities within the ordinary and Indigenous justice systems had been prepared to promote collective rights and strengthen the intercultural settlement of disputes. The rights to self-determination, autonomy and self-governance of Indigenous Peoples, as enshrined in the Constitution and various United Nations human rights treaties, were guaranteed with respect to justice pursuant to resolution No. 053-2023 of the Council of the Judiciary.

9. Between 2020 and mid-2024, training on topics such as the prevention of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment and gender violence and femicide, and on international human rights instruments and guidelines including the Manual on the Effective Investigation and Documentation of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Istanbul Protocol), the Minnesota Protocol on the Investigation of Potentially Unlawful Death and the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules), had been provided to staff at the Attorney General's Office, the Comprehensive Care Service for Adults Deprived of Liberty and Juvenile Offenders, the national police, the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Health, the judiciary and the National Service of Legal Medicine and Forensic Sciences. The Judicial Training College offered training and capacity-building programmes on the prohibition and prevention of torture. Between 2020 and 2024, more than 30,000 judges, prosecutors, public defenders, police officers, lawyers, forensic experts and law students had received training on the Istanbul Protocol and the Minnesota Protocol on the Investigation of Potentially Unlawful Death. The Council of the Judiciary had provided training to judiciary officials on extreme forms of gender-based violence, femicide and trafficking in persons, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility trained embassy and consular staff abroad on providing support, with a gender perspective, for victims of trafficking in persons. In March 2024, the Ministry of Defence had published a training programme on human rights, gender and international humanitarian law for all military personnel. The programme covered topics including equality and non-discrimination, legitimate use of force, the rights of children and adolescents, and the rights of persons deprived of their liberty.

10. Following the deployment of the armed forces throughout the national territory and in prisons, the Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces Joint Command had entered into arrangements with other State and private institutions to provide specialized training on the competences and powers of the Ombudsman's Office as the national human rights institution and national preventive mechanism, the rights of persons deprived of their liberty, the rights of transgender persons in the prison context and the legitimate use of force. Military personnel were also continuously informed of the administrative and criminal penalties in place for violating national or international law.

11. **A representative of Ecuador** said that a report by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights in 2022 had revealed that life in the country's prisons was run by organized criminal groups and prisoners themselves. Drug and alcohol trafficking, extortion of prisoners and corruption had been rife. As a result, in January 2024, the armed forces had been deployed, pursuant to a series of executive decrees, to work alongside the Comprehensive Care Service for Adults Deprived of Liberty and Juvenile Offenders and the

national police in prisons throughout the country as a temporary measure to counteract threats to the life and safety of prisoners, visitors, prison staff and all persons involved in the National Social Rehabilitation System.

12. The intervention of the armed forces had allowed the Government to regain control of prisons and thereby ensure internal security, prevent violence among prisoners, seize weapons, drugs and other prohibited items, disrupt the operations of organized armed groups, and ensure that food products could be safely and securely transported to prisons and food distribution processes established to protect the integrity of food rations and prevent incidents. It had also enabled other State institutions to exercise their functions; for instance, judges and representatives of the Ombudsman's Office had recently been able to conduct visits to prisons that had been inaccessible in 2022.

13. The armed forces had been alerted to allegations regarding ill-treatment of persons deprived of their liberty involving military personnel. The Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces Joint Command had provided the necessary facilities for the conduct of investigations deemed pertinent by the Attorney General's Office. In addition, the Joint Command had reminded military personnel of their duty to respect the rights of persons deprived of their liberty. Three alleged violations of the sexual integrity of persons deprived of their liberty had been followed up; however, medical examinations had revealed no evidence that their physical or sexual integrity had been violated. The Joint Command had formed a multidisciplinary commission to monitor and follow up on reports of human rights violations by members of the armed forces, which might be received from the media or from other State institutions, including the Ombudsman's Office; complaints lodged with the courts were investigated by the competent authorities.

14. In May 2024, a commission had been established under the auspices of the armed forces to monitor the enjoyment of rights among persons deprived of their liberty. The commission was formed of representatives from the Ministry of Defence, the Joint Command and the army, navy and air force and was tasked with conducting ad hoc visits to prisons to monitor compliance with human rights standards and ensure that prisoners were able to exercise their rights. A range of oversight measures had been put in place to protect the rights of persons deprived of their liberty, such as daily inspections of a prison in Cotopaxi by military personnel. Since assuming their responsibilities in the prison system, members of the armed forces had fulfilled their obligation as State agents to respect the rights of persons deprived of their liberty, refrain from acts that would violate those rights, including acts of omission, and adhere to legal provisions on the exceptional use of force.

15. **A representative of Ecuador** said that the prison system had faced significant challenges such as the weakness of its institutional framework, a situation that had been exacerbated by the transfer of responsibility for the prison system in 2018 from the then Ministry of Justice, Human Rights and Religious Affairs to the Comprehensive Care Service for Adults Deprived of Liberty and Juvenile Offenders. To address that situation, pursuant to article 675 of the Comprehensive Organic Criminal Code, the Technical Department for the National Social Rehabilitation System had been established. It had the status of a ministry and enjoyed technical, administrative and operational autonomy.

16. Another challenge facing the prison system had been the failure of prison staff to comply with their duties and responsibilities and the impunity with which such non-compliance had been met. The Government had therefore enabled the dismissal of prison staff for a wide range of actions, some of which could lead, directly or indirectly, to acts of torture or ill-treatment or excessive use of force by State agents or technical, administrative and security personnel.

17. Article 38 of the Regulations governing the National Social Rehabilitation System provided for the right of persons deprived of their liberty to file complaints of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, inadequate conditions of deprivation of liberty and violations of their constitutional rights, as well as claims relating to treatment in social rehabilitation institutions. Resolution 0056-R of 27 June 2002 had been issued to set out the regulations for the submission and processing of such complaints. In 2023 and 2024, 124 applications for writs of habeas corpus had been lodged in relation to treatment at prisons; 10 per cent of complainants had been men and 90 per cent women. Some 12 per cent of applications had

been accepted in full or in part and the remainder had been withdrawn, dismissed, closed or archived. Applications for writs of habeas corpus had been filed in relation to violations of the rights to health, integrity of the person, life, liberty, communication, defence, family life and the right not to be subjected to isolation.

18. The Comprehensive Care Service had taken several measures aimed at ensuring that the basic needs of persons deprived of their liberty were met, including eliminating prison-level self-governance structures so that prisoners enjoyed equal access to all services. Pursuant to Resolution 013-R of 29 March 2021, a ward for older persons had been established at Tungurahua No. 1 Prison. Resolution 0089-R of 25 September 2023 had provided for the creation of women-only prisons and stipulated that Chimborazo No. 2 Prison would exclusively accommodate older women. Articles 71–85 of the Regulations governing the National Social Rehabilitation System set out the conditions under which women deprived of their liberty could live with their children aged up to 36 months and the procedures to be followed, in coordination with the Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion, to ensure that those children received comprehensive care. Pichincha No. 3 Prison had an early years centre through which a foundation, in partnership with the Ministry, cared for children and provided them with five meals a day, seven days a week. On 4 July 2016, the Ministry of Justice, Human Rights and Religious Affairs had issued guidelines on the treatment of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons deprived of their liberty. New guidance on LGBTI+ persons deprived of their liberty was being developed as part of the Government's efforts to create an inclusive country free of discrimination against persons deprived of their liberty, regardless of their sexual orientation and gender identity.

19. A range of programmes had been developed to provide specialized rehabilitation services to persons deprived of their liberty. The education programme had been launched in 2018 and was currently being updated. A key achievement was the creation of technical courses enabling persons deprived of their liberty to train in clothes manufacture, furniture-making and agroecology, which allowed them to build specialist skills thus creating opportunities for their social reintegration. Through the health-care programme, launched in October 2018, resources such as medicines were distributed in a decentralized manner according to the needs of local areas and prison-level demand. Health-care teams were assigned to prisons and institutions for juvenile offenders in accordance with the size of the prison population. Prison health centres were included in the budget of the Ministry of Public Health and were given the same priority in resource allocation as other health facilities. Since 2022, the Ministry of Culture and Heritage had allocated a budget to the implementation of a culture programme, through which persons deprived of their liberty could engage in activities such as producing and writing for magazines about their experiences.

20. Public policy on social rehabilitation was focused on 12 key areas – health, work, education, social integration, rehabilitation, sport, culture, information, infrastructure, human resources, partnerships and cooperation, and adolescents in conflict with the law – and involved 30 government ministries. By the end of the first quarter of 2024, the Comprehensive Care Service had completed 39 per cent of the activities in its annual programme. Another 57 per cent of its activities were in process and 4 per cent of activities had not yet been initiated. In 2022, it had signed a cooperation agreement with the International Committee of the Red Cross containing provisions on technical support, visits to prisons and the issuance of recommendations for action by the Comprehensive Care Service. The budget allocated to the Comprehensive Care Service had more than doubled between 2019 and 2024.

21. The national mechanism for the prevention of torture worked to promote the rights of persons deprived of their liberty and ensure protection against torture. Between 2013 and April 2014, the mechanism had visited 271 places of deprivation of liberty, including prisons accommodating adults and adolescents, immigration detention centres, police and military training schools, shelters, addiction recovery centres, residential centres for older persons and psychiatric hospitals. Most visits had been carried out with no restrictions imposed by the authorities of those institutions, and the Constitutional Court had authorized the recording of audio and video footage during visits in ruling No. 14-12-AN/21.

22. **A representative of Ecuador** said that the Public Defender Service provided free advice and support, ensuring the right to legal defence from the outset of detention for

individuals without the resources to instruct a defence lawyer. In 2022, a resolution had been issued regulating the shift patterns and working hours of public defenders to ensure that relevant services could be provided 24 hours a day, seven days, a week across the country. In September 2019, the Public Defender Service had signed a four-year framework cooperation agreement with the Comprehensive Care Service for Adults Deprived of Liberty and Juvenile Offenders to ensure prompt access to justice for persons deprived of their liberty. On 21 February 2024, the two bodies had signed a second agreement to enhance their coordination and cooperation, including with regard to the provision of free legal aid at all stages of legal proceedings and appeals. The latter agreement also envisaged the promotion of workshops and events to raise awareness of human rights among persons deprived of their liberty, juvenile offenders and officials of the National Social Rehabilitation System and the Public Defender Service. Article 14 of the Organic Act on the Public Defender Service, promulgated on 14 May 2021, set out conditions for the provision of mandatory free legal support to defendants and adolescents in conflict with the law and to individuals applying for prison privileges. Thus far in 2024, around 240 persons deprived of their liberty had received support from the Public Defender Service.

23. The Public Defender Service complied with guidelines on gender issued by the National Court of Justice. The Service was responsible for addressing inequalities and discrimination faced by women in access to justice and provided clear and accessible information on the legal options available to service users regarding their defence. In cases of gender-based violence, it followed a three-stage process in which it held interviews with victims, filed requests for evidence and acted on behalf of victims at hearings. The Service complied with guidelines on preventing and addressing discrimination, workplace harassment and all forms of violence against women in the workplace.

24. The mission of the College of Public Defenders, established pursuant to the Organic Act on the Public Defender Service, was to plan and administer specialization programmes, continuing professional development and training for public defenders and relevant officials. In 2022, its 47 academic events and 9 training events had been attended by 1,663 delegates, including public defenders, relevant officials and law students. The Service had filed a number of applications for habeas corpus in connection with alleged human rights violations and had given talks at prisons to persons deprived of their liberty.

25. **A representative of Ecuador** said that internal armed conflict was among the grounds for declaring states of emergency. The declaration of a state of emergency on 8 January 2024 on grounds of serious internal disturbance had been followed the next day by an executive decree recognizing that an internal armed conflict was under way in which the actions of armed groups were threatening the civilian population, democratic institutions and State security. The declaration of a state of emergency was a measure of last resort. While states of emergency had been declared in 2010 and 2011 in response to crises in the electricity and water sectors, and in 2019, 2020 and 2021 in relation to a crisis in the prison system, the states of emergency declared between January and July 2024 had been triggered by events across the country of which the problems in prisons were only a part.

26. The declaration of a nationwide state of emergency on grounds of internal armed conflict in January 2024 had been deemed constitutional by the Constitutional Court, which had ruled that the President had provided sufficient factual evidence of the events, which remained ongoing, affecting the population throughout the country, including in all places of detention. The Court had also found that the intervention of the armed forces to protect the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity was within the scope of their ordinary competences and could continue after the state of emergency had expired. On 2 July 2024 a new state of emergency had been declared in specific areas of the country owing to the continued internal armed conflict and threats to the State. The Government's actions and the Constitutional Court interpretation adhered to the applicable international legal provisions, under which states of emergency could be declared only in case of a public emergency that threatened the life of the nation. The existence of such a situation in Ecuador had received wide coverage in both the national and international media.

27. In its ruling on the January 2024 declaration, the Constitutional Court had noted that, since international instruments formed part of the constitutional body of law and must therefore be observed when internal armed conflict was cited as grounds for a state of

emergency, there was no need for specific legislation to enable their application. The ruling of the Court constituted judicial oversight. The ruling had also acknowledged that it was for the President, rather than the Court, to verify the existence of internal armed conflict and that he or she exercised supreme authority over the armed forces and the police and was responsible for protecting State sovereignty and independence, public order and security, and for the political leadership of national defence efforts.

28. International instruments also underpinned the Government's categorization of risks and threats, particularly the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which provided that rights could be restricted when necessary to protect national security, public order, public health or morals or the rights and freedoms of others. It should, moreover, be noted that the International Law Commission had stated that a State had the right to expel an alien from its territory and that such expulsions were an inherent sovereign right in cases of emergency or armed conflict, such as the ongoing conflict in Ecuador.

29. **Mr. Contesse** (Country Rapporteur) said that he wondered why the definition of torture contained in article 151 of the Comprehensive Organic Criminal Code had been amended through judicial interpretation, rather than through legislation to bring it into line with article 1 of the Convention, as had been recommended by the Committee in its concluding observations on the seventh periodic report of Ecuador (CAT/C/ECU/CO/7, para. 12). He would welcome confirmation that the crime of torture was not subject to any statute of limitations, given that it was not included in the list of imprescriptible offences, as well as a response to the questions on universal jurisdiction that he had posed at the previous meeting. It would be useful to know what percentage of proceedings launched against prison officers had resulted in dismissal, what other sanctions could be imposed and how many proceedings had concluded without sanction.

30. On the matter of the state of emergency, he wondered why the delegation had quoted extensively from Constitutional Court rulings from early 2024 that held the January 2024 state of emergency to be constitutional but had not mentioned the Court's ruling of 9 May 2024 that had found another state of emergency to be unconstitutional. While the situation regarding prisons and crime was extremely serious, the State party's position seemed to be that it was at war. He wished to know whether the Committee was truly expected to believe that the armed conflict in Ecuador, which had begun just months previously, was comparable to other, decades-long conflicts elsewhere in the world. He would also like to know why the state of emergency declared more recently persisted, even after being found unconstitutional and how the rights protected by international law, particularly those set out in the Convention, were effectively guaranteed.

31. He would welcome information regarding any comprehensive plan to bring an end to the prison crisis, along with details of how specifically the conversion of the Ministry of Justice, Human Rights and Religious Affairs into a secretariat and the transfer of responsibility for prisons to the Comprehensive Care Service for Adults Deprived of Liberty and Juvenile Offenders had affected the budget and status of the prison administration. He would like to hear the delegation's comments on reports that the legal safeguards enshrined in article 2 of the Convention were not respected rigorously in practice, particularly in the first few hours of detention. Lastly, he would welcome information relating to violence against women and sexual violence in education facilities.

32. **Mr. Iscan** (Country Rapporteur) said that he welcomed the information provided on the broader situation in the State party. With respect to article 14 of the Convention, he wondered whether the State party intended to contribute to the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture or join the group of friends of the Fund. He would appreciate an update on the situation, in law and in practice, regarding solitary confinement, including whether it had been abolished for juveniles. It would also be useful to receive details of the regime for incommunicado detention and to learn whether it was applicable to juveniles, which body was competent to authorize incommunicado detention and whether the State party was considering its abolition.

33. Concerning article 15 of the Convention, he wished to know whether, since the submission of the State party's report in 2020, there had been any cases of the use in legal proceedings of statements made as a result of torture, whether any defendants had alleged

that their confessions had been extracted under torture and, if so, whether such allegations had been investigated and what the outcomes of the investigations had been. Information would be welcome on the measures taken to protect journalists, human rights defenders and other representatives of civil society from torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment and to deter and prevent intimidation and reprisals. He would appreciate details of the implementation of the so-called civil society organizations' integrity strategy (Agreement PR-SGIP-2024-0002-A). He wondered whether civil society had been consulted in advance on the text and what the position of the State party was regarding claims that the agreement provided grounds for State intervention.

34. **Mr. Kessing** said that he wished to gain a better understanding of the Government's position on the consequences of the state of non-international armed conflict in the State party. He would like to know whether the military was considered to be operating under international human rights law or international humanitarian law; in particular, he wondered which of those international rules were applicable to members of armed groups who were detained, since they differed in their requirements for the treatment of detainees.

35. **Mr. Buchwald** said that, in addition, it would be useful to know whether detainees from armed groups could be held only until the end of the conflict.

The meeting was suspended at 5 p.m. and resumed at 5.25 p.m.

36. **A representative of Ecuador** said that, while no legal reforms had been introduced to amend article 401 of the Comprehensive Organic Criminal Code, the Government had committed to holding a round-table discussion with representatives of the justice system, the Council of the Judiciary, the National Court of Justice and the Attorney General's Office in order to draft a bill specifying that there was no statute of limitations for torture and to clarify the scope of universal jurisdiction over acts of torture. Between 2002 and 2024, disciplinary proceedings had been brought against 687 members of the judiciary – 25 of them against judges of the National Court of Justice. Not all disciplinary proceedings led to removal from office or other specific sanctions. To date, no bill had been prepared on the harmonization of the Indigenous and ordinary justice systems, although related issues had been addressed in certain emblematic cases heard by the Constitutional Court. The National Court of Justice had prepared a document with a view to drafting such a bill with support from international partners.

37. **A representative of Ecuador** said that there was no war in his country, but rather a non-international armed conflict. The triggers for that conflict had been the security situation created by transnational organized crime and a regional spike in violence linked to organized crime. The term "non-international armed conflict" referred to a situation in which the State had had to resort to exceptional measures owing to the level of violence in the country. The 9 May 2024 Constitutional Court ruling referred to by the Committee had stated that the standard of proof to justify the declaration of a state of emergency had not been met; it had not stated that there was no non-international armed conflict. A new decree on the state of emergency had therefore been issued on 2 July 2024 and submitted to the Constitutional Court, which, however, had yet to rule on its constitutionality. While the Constitutional Court had ruled that the applicable system of law in a situation of threat to the State was international humanitarian law, the State's practice, since the declaration of a state of emergency on 8 January 2024, had been to uphold human rights law and the associated guarantees. All safeguards relating to detention were respected.

38. **A representative of Ecuador** said that the human rights and dignity of persons deprived of their liberty were fully respected during social rehabilitation, as were the Nelson Mandela Rules. The budgetary allocation for the Comprehensive Care Service for Adults Deprived of Liberty and Juvenile Offenders had more than doubled between 2019 and 2024, which indicated the importance attached to rehabilitation and security and safety, including for persons with dual vulnerabilities who were deprived of their liberty. There was indeed a comprehensive plan to move beyond the prison crisis. Many of the 35 places of deprivation of liberty and 10 centres for adolescents in conflict with the law were being renovated, particularly those that had been damaged in the riots. A census had been conducted to address the issues with prisoner classification that had contributed to the violence. International experts had been consulted on benchmarking and the development of security and safety

standards. Directives and guidelines had been established to improve the system of prison benefits, and agreements were being concluded with decentralized authorities and State institutions to ensure real social integration, once control had been regained over places of deprivation of liberty. Following the breakdown of the private food supply contract for places of deprivation of liberty in food supply zone 3, the State had stepped in to maintain deliveries. Persons who were placed in incommunicado detention were provided with medical check-ups and access to their lawyer, or to a public defender, in the event that they did not have private counsel.

39. **The Chair** said that he appreciated the frank dialogue with the delegation of Ecuador and the recognition of the problems faced in the country, particularly regarding violence. The State party's efforts to comply with the international obligations set out in the Convention were also appreciated. The Committee, through its work, wished to contribute to the strengthening of the rule of law in the State party, as a prerequisite for implementation of the Convention.

40. **A representative of Ecuador** said that he wished to thank the Committee for the constructive dialogue and to restate his Government's commitment to implementing the Convention. He looked forward to receiving the Committee's concluding observations, which would be considered carefully by the competent national authorities.

The meeting rose at 5.45 p.m.