



International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

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Summary record of the 3211th meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Wednesday, 22 April 2026, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Mr. Kut

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

Consideration of reports, comments and information submitted by States Parties under article 9 of the Convention (*continued*)

Combined twentieth to twenty-fourth periodic reports of Burkina Faso
([CERD/C/BFA/20-24](#); [CERD/C/BFA/Q/20-24](#))

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Burkina Faso joined the meeting.*
2. **A representative of Burkina Faso**, introducing her country's combined twentieth to twenty-fourth periodic reports ([CERD/C/BFA/20-24](#)), said that the document had been prepared through an inclusive and participatory process involving all relevant stakeholders. Following the conclusion of the country's previous review before the Committee in August 2013, the Government had widely disseminated the Committee's concluding observations ([CERD/C/BFA/CO/12-19](#)) and gathered proposals for the implementation of the recommendations contained therein. It had subsequently adopted a number of action plans and administrative, legislative and policy measures to give effect to those recommendations, in addition to the recommendations made by other human rights treaty bodies and those received through the universal periodic review.
3. Against the backdrop of the complex security situation in the country, which was marked by terrorist attacks against members of the population and their property, the Government had introduced a number of political, legal and institutional reforms aimed at guaranteeing equal rights for all citizens and combating all forms of discrimination. On 1 April 2025, the Head of State, Captain Ibrahim Traoré, had declared a popular progressive revolution in order to strengthen State sovereignty, combat imperialism and promote patriotism and civic engagement. A new national development plan for the period 2026–2030, which sought to address all forms of discrimination, including racial discrimination, had been adopted in January 2026. The Persons and Family Code of 2025 set the minimum age for marriage at 18 years for both sexes, without distinction, and contained an entire chapter on the prevention of statelessness. Act No. 001-2024/ALT of 22 February 2024 on the conditions of entry, stay and exit for nationals of Burkina Faso and non-nationals had been adopted to help combat insecurity by strengthening border control and migration systems. In February 2023, the Code of Military Justice had been amended to provide for the deployment alongside counter-terrorism forces of military police units responsible for recording human rights violations. Developments at the institutional level had included the establishment, in 2026, of a body responsible for regulating communications and ensuring the protection of personal data; the increase in the human and financial resources allocated to the National Human Rights Commission; the creation of an interministerial working group to detect and follow up on alleged human rights violations committed during counter-terrorism operations; and the development of a framework for the issuance of early warnings of human rights violations.
4. The Government was seeking to improve the human rights situation by stepping up its efforts to secure the national territory, more than 70% of which had been brought under its control. Mechanisms such as the National Observatory for the Prevention and Management of Community Conflicts and community-based monitoring and development committees had been set up to tackle community conflict. Measures aimed at eradicating hate speech and preventing the stigmatization of certain ethnic groups were set out in the fourth pillar of the Action Plan for Stabilization and Development, which was focused on national reconciliation and social cohesion.
5. Between 2019 and 2023, five individuals had been prosecuted and punished for committing hate speech offences. Reforms had been introduced to increase access to justice and enhance the credibility of the justice system. In November 2024, for example, the Government had adopted a law establishing community service as an alternative to detention. An initiative aimed at expediting the processing of judicial cases had been launched in January 2025. The competence of customary courts to settle local disputes had recently been recognized under Act No. 003-2026/ALT of 14 January 2026, the “Faso Bu Kaoré” Act.
6. The Government recognized the key role played by education in preventing racial discrimination in all its forms. It had thus developed several policies and programmes relating

to the delivery of human rights education and the promotion of civic values and tolerance in primary and secondary schools. A language policy and three-year action plan had been put in place to promote the use of national languages as tools for fostering social cohesion.

7. The fight against terrorism remained an absolute priority. Counter-terrorism operations were not directed against specific communities and were conducted in strict compliance with national laws and the country's international human rights obligations. The Government recognized that, despite the significant efforts undertaken, challenges remained in ensuring the implementation of the Convention and the Committee's recommendations across the country. It would continue to strengthen its cooperation with the human rights treaty bodies by submitting and presenting periodic reports. Her delegation invited the Committee to disregard any unfounded information that had been brought to its attention in an attempt to exploit human rights concerns for political purposes and stood ready to engage in a constructive dialogue with its members.

8. **Mr. Guan** (Country Rapporteur) said that the Committee understood that the situation in the State Party had made it difficult to implement the Convention, which was demonstrated by the fact that the report did not fully reflect the progress that had been made in that regard.

9. He would be grateful for comprehensive and up-to-date data on the ethnic composition of the population and the socioeconomic situation of each ethnic group. In view of reports that descent-based slavery continued to be practised in certain regions of the State Party, he wished to know whether the definition of racial discrimination in the Criminal Code encompassed caste-based discrimination. The delegation might also provide information on the number of complaints of racial discrimination that had been filed, the number of investigations that had been conducted and the penalties that had been imposed.

10. The Committee had been informed that a number of conflicts driven by economic or personal interests had been exacerbated by racist propaganda, leading them to become racial in nature. Accordingly, it would be helpful for the delegation to specify how many such conflicts had been recorded by the authorities and what steps had been taken to address them. He wished to know what government bodies were responsible for combating racial discrimination and whether those bodies had developed plans and programmes to that end. He would welcome a description of the institutional measures taken to tackle discrimination, stigmatization and incitement to hatred and violence against certain ethnic groups, including measures to monitor the dissemination of racist hate speech online and in the media. Information on the number of such incidents would be appreciated, as would a description of the measures taken to punish the perpetrators.

11. He was curious to know what had been done to improve knowledge of the Convention among judges, prosecutors, lawyers, law enforcement officials, members of the defence and security forces and the general public. The delegation might provide details of any training programmes that had been developed to ensure the implementation of the Convention by members of the armed forces or paramilitary groups, law enforcement officials, judges, prosecutors and lawyers and specify what bodies were responsible for designing and running such programmes. He wondered whether, as a result of those training programmes, judicial staff and law enforcement officials were aware that racial discrimination constituted an aggravating circumstance.

12. He would appreciate information on the efforts to strengthen the National Human Rights Commission and the human, financial, technical and material resources allocated to it. It would be useful to learn, too, how the amendments made in 2021 to the law establishing the Commission had brought the body into closer alignment with the Paris Principles.

13. **A representative of Burkina Faso** said that, according to the census of 2019, Burkina Faso had a population of just over 20 million inhabitants, of whom 51.7% were women. The population was composed of around 60 ethnic groups, with the largest being the Mossi. The most commonly spoken languages were Mooré, which was spoken by more than 50% of the population, Fulfulde, Gulmancéma and Dioula. While the Government recognized the importance of promoting ethnic and linguistic diversity, its development policy, rather than being based on ethnic considerations, was focused on ensuring the equitable distribution of the fruits of economic growth and equal access to basic social services. Article 1 of the

Constitution provided for the prohibition of discrimination on the basis of race, ethnic origin, religion, colour, sex, language, caste, region, political opinion and wealth.

14. **A representative of Burkina Faso** said that civic education, which included content aimed at fostering peace, tolerance and social cohesion, formed part of the primary and secondary curricula. Annual conferences were held to raise students' awareness of the various forms of discrimination and stigmatization and the threats they posed. Since 2025, training sessions had been run for secondary school students, graduates and workers in the public and private sectors to strengthen patriotism and citizen engagement. A series of events known as national days for patriotic engagement and citizen participation had been organized for the first time in 2023. The activities run had included conferences for students and workers in Burkina Faso and immigrants abroad, intergenerational dialogues and dedicated radio broadcasts. More than 10 million people had participated in the activities organized by the Ministry of Justice during the first part of the event's 2026 edition. In 2025, around 800,000 people in urban and rural areas had participated in events held to commemorate the International Day for Tolerance. Community-based events were also organized to promote social cohesion and peaceful coexistence.

15. Content on human rights had been incorporated into the initial training delivered at academies for members of the armed forces, internal security personnel, members of the Volunteers for the Defence of the Homeland and judicial actors. Such actors also received regular, in-service training on human rights and the international instruments for the promotion and protection of those rights. In 2023, five training sessions had been organized to raise awareness of the Convention among judges, prosecutors, lawyers and law enforcement officials. Training on the invocation of international instruments before the courts had been delivered to more than 100 lawyers, judges and other judicial personnel. A compendium of international human rights instruments had been made available to actors in the criminal justice system. Tens of thousands of copies of training manuals on human rights and international humanitarian law had been disseminated to members of the Volunteers for the Defence of the Homeland. Awareness-raising sessions were regularly organized to enhance the general public's knowledge of international human rights instruments, including the Convention.

16. Acts of racial discrimination were routinely prosecuted and punished; an explanation of the punishments handed down was contained in paragraph 14 of the report. In 2019, a student had been sentenced to 24 months' imprisonment and a fine of 300,000 CFA francs (CFAF) for making remarks constituting hate speech on social media. One year later, another student had been sentenced to 18 months' imprisonment and a fine of CFAF 500,000 for a similar offence. In 2022, similar punishments had been received by a shopkeeper and a traditional chief who had been found guilty of incitement to hatred and violence. In 2023, an individual who had called for the murder of journalists belonging to a specific population group had been handed a 24-month suspended prison sentence and a fine of CFAF 500,000.

17. **A representative of Burkina Faso** said that Act No. 001-2016/AN establishing the National Human Rights Commission had been amended in 2021 to consolidate the Commission's role as an independent institution for the promotion, protection and defence of human rights and the national mechanism for the prevention of torture. The Commission had legal personality and its own headquarters and staff. Between 2024 and 2025, the total number of staff had increased from 69 to 79, including 25 women and 6 persons with disabilities. The financial autonomy of the Commission was guaranteed under Act No. 001-2016/AN, and the budget allocated to it had risen from CFAF 458,112,000 in 2024 to CFAF 484,664,000 in 2025.

18. **A representative of Burkina Faso** said that a number of measures had been adopted to tackle hate speech directed against specific ethnic or religious groups. In response to the proliferation of hate speech on social media, on 8 January 2023, the Government had issued a communiqué in which it had condemned all acts promoting hatred, called on the population to reject any attitudes that were detrimental to peaceful coexistence and social cohesion, issued a warning to individuals who were likely to attempt to incite hatred and violence and invited victims to promptly bring cases before the competent courts. A similar communiqué had been issued in May 2025 following the dissemination of messages of hatred and division online in connection with the national day for the celebration of different customs and

traditions. Both communiqués had been supplemented by the diffusion of awareness-raising messages through various communication channels. The mandate of the Higher Council for Communication had been expanded to enable it to monitor content published by any blogger, activist or influencer who had at least 10,000 online followers. The Council had developed a code of conduct and run a national awareness-raising campaign on fake news, hate speech and violence on social media.

19. A number of measures had been introduced to address racist attacks and hate crimes targeting the Fulani. Capacity-building initiatives had been run for journalists, women, young people, religious leaders, internally displaced persons and community actors to tackle radicalization, hate speech and extremist discourse. In August 2022, for example, more than 700 imams had received training designed to help them promote reconciliation, social cohesion, peace and security across the country. Efforts had also been made to raise awareness of the fight against hate speech, stigmatization and discrimination among members of the armed forces, internal security personnel and members of the Volunteers for the Defence of the Homeland involved in counter-terrorism operations. On 19 March 2026, the Government had approved a bill on religious freedom, which, once it became law, would help strengthen efforts to combat religious hate speech.

20. **Mr. Guan** said that he would like to know what bodies were responsible for coordinating data collection efforts. It would be helpful to receive information on the cases of racial discrimination handled by the National Human Rights Commission and the partners with which it worked.

21. **Mr. Diaby** (Country Task Force) said that he wished to know whether the authorities had received complaints concerning human rights abuses committed by members of the defence and security forces and the Volunteers for the Defence of the Homeland and, if so, what action had been taken to address them.

22. **Ms. Tlakula** said that she would welcome an update on efforts to secure the reaccreditation of the National Human Rights Commission by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions.

23. **Ms. Ali Al-Misnad** asked whether reports that a large number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and political parties had recently been dissolved were accurate.

24. **Ms. Esseneme** said that she wished to know whether the authorities were aware that members of the Volunteers for the Defence of the Homeland had made statements inciting hatred against the Fulani, including calls for their extermination and claims that they posed a threat to the State Party, and, if so, what measures had been taken to address that situation. The delegation might also comment on reports that a number of judges who had handed down decisions that were not aligned with the Government's position had been sent to the front line of the armed conflict as a form of reprisal and that a lawyer had been disappeared simply for supporting a client. She would be grateful for information on the status of the investigations opened into the massacre of members of the Fulani community in February 2024. It would be useful to learn what training was provided to the judges of customary courts and whether mechanisms were in place to review the decisions they made.

25. **Ms. Tebie** said that she would appreciate an explanation of the reasons for which, at the time of publication of the State Party's report, no complaints of racial discrimination had been brought before the courts despite the fact that such discrimination was established as a criminal offence under the Criminal Code. It would be helpful to learn, too, whether that situation had evolved since the submission of the document.

26. **Mr. Guissé** said that the Committee had not received a response to two confidential letters it had sent to the State Party in December 2023 and August 2024 in order to express concerns regarding the violent clashes between the security forces and non-State armed groups and the serious violations allegedly faced by the Fulani. Any information the delegation could provide in that regard would be appreciated, as would an explanation of the comments in paragraph 21 of the report concerning the applicability of laws prohibiting descent-based discrimination to cases involving forced marriage and inheritance issues.

27. **Mr. Vicente Vázquez** said that he would be grateful for comprehensive and up-to-date statistics on the situation of the Fulani, the Tuareg and other groups that self-identified

as Indigenous Peoples and wished to know whether the State Party intended to introduce a methodology for the collection of data disaggregated by ethnicity in future censuses.

28. **A representative of Burkina Faso** said that the Government was working to support the National Human Rights Commission in reobtaining accreditation by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions and that an application had already been submitted. The Chair of the Commission had recently travelled to Geneva and had received support from the Permanent Mission of Burkina Faso to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva in pursuing the accreditation process.

29. With regard to allegations of hate speech and other reported violations, the authorities attached particular importance to the reliability of sources. Information concerning alleged incidents could be provided when the State was formally requested to do so and when the relevant facts had been verified. Responses to allegations therefore required careful consideration in order to avoid communicating information that was not accurate.

30. Investigations into matters as sensitive as the alleged massacre of 2024 required a significant amount of time and resources, which could explain delays in communicating outcomes. The authorities sought to respond to all requests from the human rights treaty bodies as a matter of principle. With regard to the Committee's unanswered correspondence, clarification would be sought from the relevant authorities in order to determine where the process had been blocked.

31. **A representative of Burkina Faso** said that the State Party did not recognize the term "non-State armed groups"; such groups were simply known as "terrorists". On 15 April 2026, 118 NGOs had been dissolved owing to their failure to comply with legal provisions governing the registration and operation of associations. The members of the Volunteers for the Defence of the Homeland had been recruited from all communities. The allegations that individuals from certain communities had been excluded from the force or subjected to hate speech by its members did not, therefore, correspond to reality. Any violations committed during security operations were recorded by the military police unit before being referred to the courts to ensure that the perpetrators were held accountable for their actions.

32. **A representative of Burkina Faso** said that each ministry was responsible for collecting statistics pertaining to its specific area of competence. Those efforts were coordinated by the National Institute of Statistics and Demography, which also collected a wide range of data on economic, social and cultural matters. The Government had no plans to incorporate indicators relating to ethnicity in its data collection tools since individuals' ethnicity had no bearing on their right to enjoy their human rights. In fact, all references to ethnicity had been removed from administrative records more than 20 years previously. Steps would continue to be taken, however, to ensure that members of different ethnic groups were treated on an equal footing.

33. **A representative of Burkina Faso** said that NGOs had been asked to bring their activities into line with the regulations governing the registration and operation of associations. The Government had subsequently undertaken an assessment of their conformity with the law and had published a list of those that had been dissolved.

34. All of the Government's energies were channelled towards winning the fight against terrorism. Political parties had been suspended because their activities were not a priority and it was important that they did not undermine social cohesion, given the need to mobilize the whole population in order to overcome the scourge of terrorism.

35. **A representative of Burkina Faso** said that article 5 of the decree on general mobilization listed the persons concerned by general mobilization, namely: members of the national armed forces, members of the internal security forces and young persons aged 18 or older who were not members of the national armed forces, who were physically capable and who were called upon to enlist in accordance with the needs of the competent authorities. That provision did not allow for the exemption of any category of persons, including judges, on the basis of their status. Article 13 of the decree provided for the establishment of dispute committees in each region to handle disputes related to enlistment, and persons who believed that they had been wrongfully enlisted could submit an appeal.

36. **A representative of Burkina Faso** said that there were no Indigenous Peoples in Burkina Faso. The National Human Rights Commission worked actively with other national institutions, including the Volunteers for the Defence of the Homeland, to raise awareness and deliver training programmes in the area of human rights.

The meeting was suspended at 4.35 p.m. and resumed at 4.45 p.m.

37. **Mr. Diaby**, recalling that the National Human Rights Commission had formerly been accredited with A status by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions, said that he wished to know why the Government had taken steps to suspend its activities. He would also be grateful if the delegation could give the reasons for the announced closure of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) country office in Burkina Faso.

38. He would be interested to know why the Appeals Committee that had been established to consider applications for international protection had considered only six cases in 2016, and why half of them had been rejected. He would like to know how many refugees had benefited from efforts to improve refugees' access to the labour market, as described in paragraph 43 of the report, and how many had received letters of recommendation issued by the National Commission for Refugees. Given that many employers were unfamiliar with the law on refugees and were sometimes reluctant to employ them, he wondered how many awareness campaigns targeting employers had been conducted and whether any other measures had been taken to support refugees' employment.

39. Noting that the State Party had acceded to the statelessness conventions, he said he would like to know how many persons in Burkina Faso were stateless or at risk of statelessness. He would be interested to receive further details about the action plan for the period 2017–2024 for putting an end to statelessness and to know whether the Government intended to adopt a second action plan.

40. As the security crisis seemed to have hindered the implementation of Act No. 042-2008/AN, the Refugees Act, he wished to know what the Government was doing to ensure that the presence of armed groups and the state of emergency in several regions did not impede humanitarian access or the protection of refugees. He wondered what steps had been taken to increase the delivery of humanitarian aid to a larger number of beneficiaries, considering the lack of resources available to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and its partners. Information on measures to resolve problems with refugees' access to documentation, such as the relatively high cost and short validity periods of identity and travel documents, would also be appreciated.

41. The Committee would be interested to hear about measures to support the socioeconomic integration of refugees, including by removing barriers to education, health and employment, and to ensure their inclusion in local and national development strategies. It would be interested to receive information on proposals to reduce pressure on health, education and housing infrastructure caused by the influx of refugees. It would also like to know how many refugees were currently present in Burkina Faso, and what steps were taken to collect up-to-date and reliable data on the refugee population in order to better inform the planning and response of humanitarian actors. Information might be provided on steps to address the inadequate representation of English-speaking refugees. The delegation might indicate what the Government had done to prevent negative perceptions of and discrimination against refugees and asylum-seekers.

42. Stateless persons and persons at risk of statelessness due to a lack of birth registration and identity documents were subjected to serious violations of their fundamental rights, including denial of access to education, healthcare and employment, especially in border and rural areas. He therefore wished to know what durable solutions were envisaged to improve access to documentation and, especially, to reduce the vulnerability of women, children and nomadic communities in the event of the loss of their documents.

43. He would be grateful if the delegation could describe measures taken to address the situation of internally displaced persons, who lived in precarious conditions with limited access to humanitarian aid, and to mitigate the heightened risk of exploitation and violence that they faced. Noting that the Act on the conditions of entry, stay and exit for nationals of

Burkina Faso and non-nationals had modernized immigration control and introduced tougher penalties for illegal immigration, he said that he wished to know how the authorities ensured that implementation of the Act did not lead to the commission of abuses against groups protected under the Convention.

44. Furthermore, he would be interested to know whether the Government intended to introduce amendments to Act No. 039-2017/AN of 27 June 2017 on the protection of human rights defenders to address certain shortcomings, for example, by including explicit mention of certain rights and recognizing the State's obligation to facilitate the work of human rights defenders. A mechanism for the protection of human rights defenders had been established by an order of the National Human Rights Commission; however, it was unclear whether that legal basis was sufficiently robust and needed to be strengthened through legislation or a presidential decree. He wondered what steps had been taken to prevent the misuse of article 16 of the Act, which provided for the expulsion of human rights defenders on "internal security" grounds.

45. As many human rights defenders remained unaware of the existence and content of the Act, he wished to know whether any awareness campaigns had been undertaken. He would like to know what practical steps had been taken to ensure the protection of human rights defenders, given that the protective mechanisms foreseen under the Act were still under development. How did the Government reconcile the activities of human rights defenders with security imperatives?

46. Furthermore, in the light of reports of arbitrary detentions, abductions and killings of human rights defenders, the Committee wished to know whether any investigations had been opened, or prosecutions brought in such cases and, if so, what the outcomes had been. It would also welcome information on the safeguards in place for the exercise of fundamental rights, in view of reports of restrictions on the freedom of the press and self-censorship.

47. The Committee had received allegations that, in 2023 and 2024, several members of the Fulani community had been removed from public transport by Volunteers for the Defence of the Homeland and then forcibly disappeared or executed. He wished to know whether any investigations had been opened or judgments handed down in relation to such incidents. The Committee had also received reports that members of the defence and security forces and Volunteers for the Defence of the Homeland had plundered livestock and appropriated land belonging to Fulani in reprisal for their suspected collaboration with terrorists. It would welcome any information on the investigation of such cases.

48. **A representative of Burkina Faso** said that, as the Committee had understood, Burkina Faso faced a critical situation that required the adoption of certain measures. It was curious that the Committee had received a wealth of reports of crimes and abuses committed against persons belonging to certain ethnic groups, but few reports about the terrorist attacks that had been committed against the civilian population in general.

49. The Government remained in contact with OHCHR and was willing to engage and cooperate with all human rights mechanisms. Unfortunately, OHCHR had published a press release that failed to consider the Government's observations on the situation in Burkina Faso, particularly with regard to the struggle against terrorism. As a result, it had been decided to suspend – but not shut down – OHCHR operations.

50. The National Human Rights Commission had not been closed down; however, the commissioners had been removed from office and new ones would be appointed. The aim was to strengthen the institution and enhance its credibility by appointing competent individuals.

51. **A representative of Burkina Faso** said that Burkina Faso was a Party to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol thereto, and the Organization of African Unity Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa. The Refugees Act had been adopted in line with those instruments. The National Commission for Refugees had been established to ensure the effective protection of asylum-seekers and refugees by facilitating asylum-seekers' access to the national territory, registering them and issuing them with documents, examining their applications and granting them refugee status, ensuring the international protection of refugees and seeking durable

solutions. The Commission registered asylum-seekers and refugees in Ouagadougou and at its local offices in Dori, Djibo, Ouahigouya and Bobo-Dioulasso and conducted special registration operations elsewhere. The Commission had registered 1,551 refugees and asylum-seekers in 2025. The National Eligibility Committee had held four meetings in 2025, at which it had examined several asylum applications submitted by nationals of neighbouring countries, and the Appeals Committee had held a session on 23 December 2025 at Ouagadougou.

52. The Commission had issued over 6,300 identity documents in 2025. It had also organized six training and awareness workshops for members of the security forces and government officials on their responsibility to respect the right of asylum. Workshops had also been organized for local authorities responsible for receiving asylum-seekers and refugees. Special missions to evaluate the situation and ensure the protection and assistance of refugees and asylum-seekers had been carried out in three regions in 2025. The Commission had established and publicized the toll-free number 80 00 12 81 to facilitate access to reliable information on the right of asylum.

53. The national legal framework on asylum granted refugees the same rights as citizens, with the exception of the rights to vote and to hold public office. Article 11 of the Refugees Act provided that all refugees lawfully residing in Burkina Faso enjoyed the same treatment as nationals. To facilitate refugees' access to employment, advocacy efforts had been undertaken with the private sector. For example, in June 2024, on the occasion of World Refugee Day, the Government had held talks with business representatives on the subject of solidarity with refugees and their problems in accessing employment and vocational training.

54. Two independent bodies within the National Commission for Refugees were responsible for refugee status determination – the Eligibility Committee, which was tasked with deciding upon the asylum applications in the first instance, and the Appeals Committee, which considered appeals in the event of rejection. All asylum-seekers had the right to file an appeal within 60 days of being notified of their non-eligibility for refugee status; the final decision of the Appeals Committee would then be notified to the interested party.

55. Given the shortcomings that had been observed in the implementation of the national legal framework and the evolving security situation in the Sahel, the Government was in the process of reviewing the Refugees Act. It was expected that the review would permit reforms such as the clarification of the civil and humanitarian character of asylum, alignment of the definition of “refugee” with existing treaties, the introduction of prima facie recognition of refugee status and the protection of refugees' personal data.

56. The new Persons and Family Code adopted on 1 September 2025 included a whole chapter on statelessness, with provisions on the recognition of the status of stateless person, the rights and obligations of stateless persons and the prevention of statelessness. Article 152-4 of the Code provided that a child born in Burkina Faso who could not claim another nationality would be a national of Burkina Faso, meaning that all children born in the country to stateless parents would not inherit that status from their parents.

57. At the institutional level, the mandate of the National Commission for Refugees had been extended to cover statelessness. The Commission was therefore responsible for examining applications for the status of stateless person, upholding the rights of stateless persons, seeking and applying durable solutions and taking steps to reduce cases of statelessness. There were currently no known cases of stateless persons in Burkina Faso; however, some persons were at risk of statelessness owing to problems with birth registration and their lack of access to civil status documents attesting to their birth in Burkina Faso. For that reason, the Government had adopted several measures to increase birth registration among communities of refugees and asylum-seekers, including awareness-raising of the importance of civil status documents and mobile court sessions for the issuance of documents. In 2025, 1,866 civil status documents had been issued to refugee children.

58. The Act on the conditions of entry, stay and exit for nationals of Burkina Faso and non-nationals had significantly strengthened control of cross-border movements, while enhancing the security of people and property near the border, strengthening the prevention of child abduction and ensuring the effective application of the principle of non-refoulement.

59. **A representative of Burkina Faso** said that article 12 of the Act on the protection of human rights defenders required the State to protect human rights defenders from extrajudicial executions, acts of torture and similar practices, arbitrary arrest and detention, enforced disappearance, kidnapping, death threats, harassment and defamation. Whenever a threat against a human rights defender was brought to the attention of the authorities, the protection mechanism would be activated. Burkina Faso was one of the few countries in the world to have adopted a specific law on the protection of human rights defenders.

60. Act No. 011-2025/ALT of 17 July 2025 on freedom of association laid down the conditions for the establishment of associations, NGOs and trade unions. The aim of the Act was to strengthen oversight of the NGO sector by tightening controls to address the risk of money-laundering and terrorism financing. The Act required the clear mapping of the sector, restricted the participation of high-ranking officials in the governing bodies of NGOs and limited trade union rights. As of 17 April 2026, Burkina Faso had more than 23,900 associations, with 540 NGOs pending registration.

61. **Mr. Diaby**, observing the recent significant increase in the budget of the National Human Rights Commission, said he hoped that the budget would increase even further. Nevertheless, Act No. 001-2016/AN of 24 March 2016 on the National Human Rights Commission stated that commissioners must serve a non-renewable four-year term, which could only be terminated under certain conditions. He therefore wished to know why the members of the Commission had been suspended and whether that measure undermined its independence and impartiality.

62. **Ms. Esseneme** said that she, too, would be grateful for information on the impact of measures to improve refugees' access to the labour market, including the issuance of letters of recommendation and advocacy efforts undertaken with private employers. In particular, she wished to know how many refugees had found a job as a result of such measures.

63. She remained concerned about a specific report that, in 2024, six judges had been forced to enlist for three months after handing down judgments that displeased the Government. Judges were responsible for delivering justice and could not be treated as ordinary officials. She encouraged the delegation to take note of the allegation and to investigate its truth, rather than dismissing it as an unfounded report.

64. She was particularly interested in receiving information on the training that was provided to the judges of customary courts. It would be useful to know the extent to which customs were codified and applied in Burkina Faso and whether the decisions of customary courts were approved by an appeal judge, as in other African countries, to ensure that justice was properly served.

65. **Ms. Tlakula** (Follow-up Rapporteur) said that she would be grateful if the delegation could justify its claim that there were no Indigenous Peoples in Burkina Faso, considering that the Fulani and the Tuareg had been recognized regionally and internationally as such, and that Burkina Faso had voted in favour of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

66. In its previous concluding observations ([CERD/C/BFA/CO/12-19](#)), the Committee had requested the State Party to provide information in follow-up to its recommendations on the registration of refugee children. Unfortunately, no follow-up report had been submitted, and only very general information on the subject had been provided in the report currently under review. She would therefore be grateful for specific information on the registration of refugee children.

67. **Ms. Tebie** said that, despite free registration and the issuance of birth certificates to children, the Committee had received reports of persistent barriers, such as the lack of civil registry centres in refugee camps; undocumented parents; population mobility; and ignorance of procedures. She would be grateful if the delegation could confirm that all refugee children in Burkina Faso were effectively registered.

68. She would be interested to know why no complaints of acts of racial discrimination had been registered by the competent authorities. She wondered whether victims feared reprisals, lacked confidence in the justice system or simply were unable to have access to justice institutions in rural areas and areas affected by insecurity.

69. **Mr. Diaby** said that he would be glad to receive information on the action plan on statelessness for the period 2017–2024, which included as a priority measure the issuance of civil status documents to people living in Côte d’Ivoire.

70. **Mr. Guissé** said that he would appreciate an update on the situation of *garibou* children who were living in street situations in the light of the current geopolitical context. He would be particularly interested to hear about measures taken at the local level or in conjunction with neighbouring States to address the problem.

71. **A representative of Burkina Faso** said that the reason given by the relevant line ministry for the decision to suspend the members of the National Human Rights Commission was their lack of respect for the principles of impartiality and plurality.

72. **A representative of Burkina Faso** said that, in 2025, 10 refugees had been provided with letters of recommendation that had allowed them to find employment. In 2026, the Government would intensify awareness-raising with the private sector to facilitate the employment of refugees and would endeavour to make statistics on the employment of refugees available.

73. In principle, all children born on the national territory should be registered at the civil registry centre nearest to the place of birth. However, as some centres were currently not functional owing to security issues, the Government had taken steps, such as organizing mobile court sessions, to ensure that refugees and displaced persons could register in the places where they lived. The Government would continue to strive to promote birth registration and access to civil status documents as a matter of priority.

74. Such efforts also helped to mitigate the risk of statelessness. Refugees arriving in Burkina Faso had sometimes been forced to flee without their documents. Children born in Burkina Faso to such refugees were systematically registered and were granted nationality if they were unable to obtain that of another country.

75. The Appeals Committee had considered few cases because the Eligibility Committee accepted most applications, obviating the need for applicants to appeal.

76. **A representative of Burkina Faso** said that traditional dispute resolution mechanisms at the local level were regulated by the “Faso Bu Kaoré” Act. Article 6 of that law enshrined the principle of non-discrimination, stating that anyone, without distinction or exclusion based on sex, nationality, religion, disability, race, ethnic or social origin, caste, language, political opinion or wealth, could bring his or her case before a traditional dispute resolution mechanism. The Act allowed traditional chiefs to rule on local disputes, thus relieving the burden on the ordinary justice system and bringing justice closer to citizens. It also provided for remedies and coordination with the formal justice system with a view to avoiding excesses. Prosecutors maintained oversight of customary justice. The first phase of a training plan for customary judges had already been prepared.

77. **A representative of Burkina Faso** said that article 157 of the Constitution guaranteed the right of appeal, which was exercised in accordance with the laws and regulations in force. Any victim of racial discrimination or any other human rights violation had the right to seek redress before the competent court. The courts investigated all complaints in an impartial and equitable manner. The Government regularly organized information and awareness events to increase public knowledge of the right to seek redress before a competent court. The independence of the judiciary was explicitly enshrined in article 129 of the Constitution, while article 4 established the right of citizens to have their case heard by an independent and impartial tribunal. The institutional independence of the judiciary was guaranteed by Organic Act No. 07-2024/ALT of 26 April 2024 on the powers, composition, organization and functioning of the Higher Council of the Judiciary.

78. The fact that the courts had not registered any cases of racial discrimination did not mean that citizens were afraid to seek remedies, or that justice was beyond their reach. In fact, the authorities strived to bring justice closer to citizens through the traditional dispute resolution mechanisms. No complaints had been submitted because the issue of racial discrimination was not a primary concern of citizens.

79. **A representative of Burkina Faso** said that the Government had taken several measures to improve the situation of *garibou* or *talibé* children. In 2015, it had adopted the Emergency Programme for the Removal of Children in Street Situations, which had enabled the job placement in 2019 of 565 children and young people in street situations. Support had been provided for the schooling of children and young people in street situations, and about 150 children and young people had received support for income-generating activities. In 2024, some 2,700 children, including foreign nationals, had been rescued from begging.

80. As part of the fight against terrorism, in 2022 the Government and the United Nations system in Burkina Faso had signed a memorandum of understanding on the transfer and care of children encountered during security operations, recognizing that they must be treated in accordance with international standards on justice and social reintegration. Under that agreement, the national armed forces or internal security forces must hand the children over to the social services responsible for child protection within 72 hours of initial contact.

81. **A representative of Burkina Faso** said that there was no problem with the Fulani or other ethnic groups in Burkina Faso. The State was working to strengthen national unity and social cohesion, with all citizens of Burkina Faso uniting to defeat terrorism. The allegations that had been made were unfounded. The State did not expect to receive such allegations, as it was working to prevent any such acts by combatants during the course of operations. Accordingly, a module on preventing stigmatization and discrimination had been integrated into the training provided to the armed forces, the internal security forces and the Volunteers for the Defence of the Homeland, and toll-free numbers had been set up for reporting cases of stigmatization or discrimination against particular communities.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.