



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

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Summary record of the 2221st meeting*

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Wednesday, 19 November 2025, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Mr. Heller

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* No summary record was issued for the 2220th meeting.

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

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

Third periodic report of Albania (CAT/C/ALB/3; CAT/C/ALB/Q/3; CAT/C/ALB/RQ/3)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Albania joined the meeting.*
2. **A representative of Albania**, introducing her country's third periodic report (CAT/C/ALB/3), said that, over the previous decade, comprehensive reforms had been implemented to strengthen democratic institutions and consolidate respect for human rights. Reforming the justice sector, strengthening the independence of oversight bodies and modernizing public administration were central to those efforts. In the context of negotiations for the accession of Albania to the European Union, the remaining negotiating chapters had recently been opened, and human rights constituted an essential part of that process. Albania had consistently taken targeted steps to prevent and eliminate any form of torture or ill-treatment, guided by the principle that every person must be treated with dignity and respect, in accordance with the values enshrined in the Convention.
3. Over the previous five years, the applicable legislative framework had been improved through the adoption of various laws, and many others had been amended to align more closely with international and European standards. Cooperation with civil society and international partners and the role of independent institutions had been strengthened. Albania continued to develop inter-institutional cooperation to ensure that all allegations of ill-treatment were promptly, independently and effectively investigated, cultivating a culture of accountability.
4. In order to ensure that the People's Advocate and the national preventive mechanism could fulfil their mandates, it was crucial to provide them with adequate human and financial resources and improve the implementation of their recommendations. Between 2020 and 2024, the budget allocated to the People's Advocate had increased by 64 per cent and its workforce had grown by 17 per cent. Under the amended Constitution, the People's Advocate could institute proceedings before the Constitutional Court for human rights violations and act as *amicus curiae*. The national preventive mechanism played a vital monitoring role and had identified challenges and issued recommendations, leading to tangible improvements. All recommendations formulated by the People's Advocate had been accepted by the relevant institution, and most of them had been fully or partially implemented. Plans had been drawn up for the future implementation of recommendations in cases where current resources were insufficient.
5. In a 2025 report, the European Commission had noted that Albania provided adequate legal guarantees for the prevention of torture and ill-treatment, ensured adequate follow-up to cases and generally complied with its obligations relating to the prohibition of torture and ill-treatment. As documented by monitoring bodies following recent visits to Albania, there had been no recent cases in which prisoners had made allegations of torture. The official data compiled by the National Institute of Statistics and related institutions concerned the offence of arbitrary acts under article 250 of the Criminal Code.
6. With regard to combating sexual and gender-based violence, significant progress had been made during the reporting period. In 2022, Albania had ratified the International Labour Organization Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190), and a law had been adopted to prevent harassment, violence, abuse and sexual exploitation. A strategic goal of the National Strategy for Gender Equality for 2021–2030 was to reduce the prevalence of all forms of harmful practices, gender-based violence and domestic violence. A register of sexual offenders had been created, and the Observatory of Femicide had been established. The Cross-Sector Strategy for the Protection of Victims of Crime for 2024–2030 was aimed at empowering victims, in particular women and girls, by ensuring equal access to justice and specialized support services. Albania had a one-stop, round-the-clock crisis management centre to provide primary services on an emergency or short-term basis to victims and survivors of sexual violence and members of their families.

7. A new version of the Criminal Code had been drafted, taking into account the recommendations of regional and international bodies, and submitted for public consultation. It included a definition of rape aligned with the recommendation of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. Albania had recently adopted a new law on gender equality, which, thanks to support from national and international partners, including the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), was fully in line with international and European Union standards.

8. As reinforced by the national anti-trafficking strategy for 2024–2030, Albania remained committed to combating trafficking in persons. The national referral mechanism had been strengthened, investigative capacities enhanced and specialized training provided to prosecutors and police officers. Shelters received public funding to provide services to meet the needs of victims. In June 2023, several institutions, the National Reception Centre for Victims of Trafficking and various non-governmental organizations (NGOs) had signed a cooperation agreement on the functioning of the national referral mechanism. In March 2025, three ministers had signed a memorandum of cooperation on the identification of cases of forced labour and trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation.

9. Concerning the protection of foreign nationals and migrants, a law on asylum and 27 relevant by-laws had been approved. Law No. 79/2021 on Foreigners was fully aligned with the Convention and the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (European Convention on Human Rights), ensuring that all administrative actions were guided by proportionality, humanity and respect for private and family life. The National Strategy for Migration for 2024–2030 and the accompanying action plan for 2024–2026 were aimed at strengthening the protection system, guaranteeing the rights of asylum-seekers and refugees and offering durable solutions. With the support of relevant agencies, the infrastructure for receiving, accommodating and interviewing migrants and asylum-seekers had been upgraded to meet international standards. In partnership with the International Organization for Migration, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other entities, Albania had implemented programmes to promote social inclusion, protection from discrimination and access to essential services for migrants and asylum-seekers. Under Government Decision No. 111 of 6 March 2019, Albania had introduced standards for the return and reintegration of unaccompanied minors, respecting both the principle of non-refoulement and the best interests of the child.

10. In accordance with article 11 of the Convention, Albania had continued to improve conditions in prisons and police stations. New facilities had been constructed, healthcare services strengthened and rehabilitation programmes expanded. In 2024, a road map for the rehabilitation and reintegration of prisoners had been approved. Prison overcrowding had been eliminated through targeted measures, including investments in infrastructure, such as the opening of a new prison. As the European Commission had noted, the occupancy rate had shown a steady annual decline, indicating gradual progress towards easing capacity pressures, and the probation service was operational.

11. The protection of children, child-friendly justice systems and access to justice for minors remained priorities, with the Criminal Justice Code for Minors having been adopted in 2017. The Law on the Rights and Protection of the Child provided for the establishment of an integrated protection system to ensure coordination among institutions at all levels. The National Agenda for Children’s Rights for 2021–2026 set out measures for comprehensive and child-friendly services for children, and progress had been made in ensuring that juvenile justice was child-friendly. There were 11 special sections in prosecution offices of general jurisdiction, and dedicated prosecutors had been assigned to two prosecution offices. Training programmes and manuals had been developed for relevant professionals. The application of alternatives to detention had allowed some minors to avoid prison sentences. Between 2020 and 2024, the proportion of children in conflict with the law in respect of whom measures of diversion had been applied had increased significantly. Albania had a crime prevention centre for minors and young people, established in 2019, and a cross-sector justice strategy for children for 2022–2026, with a corresponding action plan.

12. With regard to human resources, Albania had made significant progress in strengthening its capacities. Training was provided for the police, the judicial police, prosecutors, judges, prison staff, lawyers and legal aid providers, medical staff and other

professionals on various articles of the Convention and the Optional Protocol thereto, European Union directives and other international and regional provisions. Introductory and in-service training on torture and all forms of ill-treatment was obligatory for all relevant professionals and included modules on international standards. In the introductory programme at the School of Magistrates, the prohibition of torture, domestic violence, non-discrimination and victims' rights were addressed as part of the subjects of criminal law, criminal procedure law and family law and a new subject focused on minors and victims. The Security Academy had updated its criminal justice courses on minors and gender-based violence, in collaboration with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and many NGOs. Training sessions were held on various topics, including human rights, non-discrimination and gender-based violence.

13. In the context of combating terrorism and violent extremism, Albania remained firmly committed to maintaining a balance between national security and the protection of fundamental rights. Operations to repatriate Albanian nationals from conflict zones had been conducted in a humane and coordinated manner, followed by comprehensive rehabilitation and reintegration measures, in particular for women and children.

14. Albania continued to face challenges, including a need for ongoing improvements to infrastructure and living conditions in prisons and pretrial detention facilities, improved data collection and strengthened monitoring mechanisms. Enhancing the preparation of action plans for the implementation of the recommendations of national and international mechanisms was a priority. Those challenges represented opportunities for Albania to advance reforms, deepen cooperation with national and international partners and ensure full alignment with international human rights standards.

15. **Mr. Tuzmukhamedov** (Country Rapporteur) said that he would be grateful if the delegation could respond to the points raised in the Committee's list of issues ([CAT/C/ALB/Q/3](#)) that had not been addressed in the State Party's replies thereto ([CAT/C/ALB/RQ/3](#)). For example, although civil society entities, including those representing ethnic and cultural minorities, had presumably contributed to the preparation of the report and the replies, and despite the Committee's specific request for information on ethnic minorities, in particular the Roma population, no such information had been provided. Some of the information contained in the report was not up to date. For example, in paragraph 152 (b), the State Party mentioned the interpretation by the European Court of Human Rights of a provision of the European Convention on Human Rights without referring to the Court's judgment of 25 September 2012 in *Rrapo v. Albania*. In addition, the State Party had not included specific details of activities carried out under article 10 of the Convention in either the report or the replies. Some of the statistics provided in the replies, such as those relating to gender-based violence and asylum applications, should also be updated.

16. Under article 25 of the Constitution, no one could be subjected to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment or treatment. It was unclear whether the list of categories of "normative acts" contained in article 116 (1) (b) of the Constitution reflected the precise order of the hierarchy of norms, although article 122 (2) stated that ratified international agreements had superiority over laws that were not compatible with them. In that context, he would be grateful if the delegation could clarify the status of international law in general, and of the Convention in particular, in the domestic legal order and provide specific examples of cases in which the Convention had been found to take precedence over or be superior to national law, including information on the circumstances in which incompatibility had been discovered and on how it had been resolved.

17. He wished to know whether the Convention was wholly or partially self-executing within the meaning of article 122 (1) of the Constitution and, if it was, by what mechanism self-execution was achieved. Examples, in particular recent ones, would be welcome. In addition, he wondered whether the non-retroactivity clause contained in article 29 (1) of the Constitution was applicable to acts prohibited under the Convention. With regard to discrimination, article 18 (2) of the Constitution set out a list of grounds on which no one could be unjustly subjected to discrimination, yet it followed from article 18 (3) that discrimination for one of the reasons included in that list was possible if there was a "reasonable and objective justification". It would be useful if the delegation could explain

the interplay between those two provisions and provide examples of the application of article 18 (3).

18. The definition of torture contained in article 86 of the Criminal Code was not fully in line with article 4 (1) of the Convention, as it did not include attempts to commit torture or complicity or participation in torture. He would be grateful if the delegation could explain, with reference to specific and recent practice, how chapters III and IV of the Criminal Code were applied in conjunction with the offence of torture. As the definition of torture contained in the Criminal Code lacked any reference to confessions obtained through torture, he wondered whether any other provision under Albanian law established the inadmissibility of such confessions as evidence in court. Examples would be useful. The relationship between the non-discrimination provision in article 86 of the Criminal Code and the apparent exception to the prohibition of discrimination contained in article 18 (3) of the Constitution was unclear.

19. The maximum sentences for torture seemed to be lighter than those implied by article 4 (2) of the Convention, and judges had a wide margin of discretion when sentencing under articles 86 and 87 of the Criminal Code. In the light of its practice and the standards that it had developed, the Committee did not consider the penalties established in the State Party's legislation to be commensurate with the gravity of the crime of torture. Any applicable statute of limitations should be abolished or, at the very least, made more stringent. It would be helpful if the delegation could indicate, with reference to sources and recent cases, whether elements of the offence of torture, including with regard to extracting evidence and self-incrimination, and the penalties applicable thereto could be found in any other laws.

20. It would be useful to learn whether the Convention had been reviewed by the Constitutional Court prior to its ratification, as required under article 131 (1) (b) of the Constitution. Information on any such review would be welcome. He wondered whether references to the Convention could be found in the jurisprudence of the Constitutional Court, the High Court or any courts of general jurisdiction. He wished to know, with reference to recent practice, whether the Committee's opinions held relevance for the State Party's courts and, in particular, whether the opinions expressed by the treaty bodies constituted "norms issued by other international organizations" within the meaning of article 122 (3) of the Constitution. The delegation might clarify whether the European Union international monitoring operation had any involvement in verifying the implementation of international obligations and compliance with international standards for the judiciary, even though such functions were not expressly provided for in its mandate.

21. While the State Party had ratified all but one of the core universal human rights treaties and the optional protocols thereto, he would appreciate an explanation, with a focus on the Convention, of the fact that the State Party had accepted only some of the complaint and inquiry procedures established thereunder. With regard to individual complaints, the State Party had not made the declarations for the acceptance for such procedures under the relevant articles of certain instruments, including article 22 of the Convention, and was not a Party to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Concerning inter-State disputes, the State Party had not made the declaration under article 21 of the Convention against Torture and had also not accepted other such procedures, and with respect to inquiries, had not made a declaration under article 28 (1) of the Convention against Torture, meaning that it accepted the procedure under article 20, but had not accepted other inquiry procedures.

22. Since the consideration of the State Party's second periodic report (CAT/C/ALB/2), the European Court of Human Rights had rendered judgments in six cases against Albania concerning allegations of torture, finding violations in five of them. He wondered what the impact of those five cases had been on the Albanian legal system. In addition, he would be grateful if the delegation could comment on the Court's judgment of 2012 in *El-Masri v. the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*. Although Albania had not been the respondent State in that case, there were indications of the involvement of the Albanian authorities in the so-called rendition of suspected terrorists through its territory and airspace.

23. He would be interested to learn about the reasoning followed by the Constitutional Court and the State in general when reviewing the constitutionality of the 2023 protocol

between the State Party and Italy on migrant detention facilities. The protocol made clear that the State Party had restricted or constrained jurisdiction over the facilities, which were located in its territory. It was unclear how the State Party ensured compliance with article 16 (1) of the Convention at those facilities.

24. **Ms. Maeda** (Country Rapporteur) said that it would be useful if the State Party could clarify whether the national preventive mechanism had the right to enter any place of deprivation of liberty at any time, without having to obtain authorization or notify the director of the facility, in line with article 4 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention, and whether it had full and unrestricted access to all migrant reception centres, including those established under the protocol agreed between the State Party and Italy. Information on the number of visits conducted, places visited and recommendations made would be welcome.

25. She wished to know whether the national preventive mechanism had the power to comment on legislation, as required by article 19 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention, and whether its role in receiving and considering complaints from prisoners was compatible with the purely preventive nature of the mandate foreseen under the Optional Protocol. She would welcome information on the steps taken to allocate the human and financial resources necessary to strengthen the capacity of the People's Advocate to effectively and independently discharge its mandate in full compliance with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles). She wondered whether the position of head of the institution had been filled and what measures had been taken to raise awareness of the preventive nature of its work and increase its visibility.

26. In the light of reports that many women and girls in detention, in particular those not represented by a private lawyer, were not provided with a copy of the statement of their rights, and that detainees were at risk of abuse during transfers between facilities, information on measures taken to ensure that detainees were informed of their rights without delay and that transfers were recorded would be useful.

27. While acknowledging the efforts made by the State Party to improve conditions of detention, and the generally satisfactory work of medical and custodial staff, the prison and detention system reportedly remained beset by various long-standing problems, and monitoring bodies and civil society organizations had detailed various specific issues. It would be helpful if the delegation could provide information on the measures taken to improve the infrastructure of the prison and detention system to reduce overcrowding and ensure access by detainees to adequate healthcare, legal counsel and family contact.

28. She wished to know what additional efforts had been made to reduce the duration of pretrial detention and what measures had been taken to promote the use of alternatives to pretrial detention and imprisonment, adopting a restorative approach and taking into account the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for Non-custodial Measures (the Tokyo Rules). Updated statistical data on the capacity and occupancy rates of all places of detention and an indication of the numbers of pretrial and convicted detainees would be instructive.

29. She would be grateful if the State Party could provide data on incidents of inter-prisoner violence and deaths in custody, indicating whether those cases had been investigated and prosecuted and the persons responsible punished accordingly. She would appreciate information on measures taken to ensure prompt, impartial, thorough and effective investigations by an independent institution into all allegations of excessive use of force, including torture and ill-treatment, by law enforcement officials, and on any independent investigations that had been undertaken in that regard. It was unclear how many prosecutions and convictions had been handed down and in how many cases criminal charges had been dismissed. She invited the State Party to provide information on measures taken to protect journalists and human rights defenders and disaggregated statistical data on violence against them during the reporting period.

30. She wondered what training programmes were in place for judges, prosecutors and forensic doctors and other medical professionals who worked with persons deprived of their liberty on detecting the physical and psychological consequences of torture, ensuring the effective documentation of torture and verifying the admissibility of confessions and whether

they covered the Manual on the Effective Investigation and Documentation of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Istanbul Protocol), as revised.

31. She wished to know whether an independent and effective mechanism for handling complaints of torture and ill-treatment, including excessive use of force by law enforcement officers, had been established and, if it had, how its independence was ensured and whether there was any institutional or hierarchical relationship between its investigators and the suspected perpetrators of such acts. It would be helpful to receive disaggregated data on complaints of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and on investigations and prosecutions of such complaints and to learn which agencies conducted the investigations, whether the prosecutions had led to convictions and, if they had, what kind of punishments had been imposed.

32. She wished to know to what extent compensation was provided to victims of torture or ill-treatment, including victims of excessive use of force by law enforcement officers, through civil claims filed in the context of criminal proceedings. Data on claims for compensation filed during the criminal justice process that had been referred to civil courts for further proceedings would be helpful. She welcomed the creation of a special fund to promote the rehabilitation and integration of victims of crime and wished to know how many victims of violent crime, including torture, ill-treatment, sexual or gender-based violence and trafficking in persons, had obtained compensation from the fund in the previous five years.

33. With regard to juvenile justice, pretrial detention reportedly remained the main reason for the deprivation of liberty of children and was unduly prolonged, with a negative impact on the children affected and their prospects for rehabilitation and reintegration into the community. It would be interesting to learn what measures had been taken to develop community-based programmes for children in conflict with the law, ensure access to education and promote reintegration into society, and to receive information on the juvenile justice reform strategy and its alignment with the Convention and the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (the Beijing Rules).

34. The Committee was concerned at reports that victims of gender-based violence faced many obstacles in filing complaints, including a fear of re-victimization, a precarious financial situation and a lack of effective access to legal aid, and that the definition of rape in article 102 of the Criminal Code was based on the use of violence rather than the absence of consent. She wished to know what measures had been taken to ensure that all acts of gender-based and domestic violence were thoroughly investigated, including through ex officio investigations, that the alleged perpetrators were prosecuted and, if convicted, punished appropriately, and that the survivors or their families received redress, including adequate compensation and rehabilitation. She wondered what measures had been taken to prevent all forms of violence against women and improve the provision of mandatory training on sexual and gender-based violence for law enforcement officials, social workers, medical personnel, lawyers, prosecutors and judges.

35. With regard to conditions in the Karreç immigration centre, the Committee would like to know what measures had been taken to improve the situation with regard to budget, staffing, infrastructure, and food and hygiene standards. She would be grateful if the delegation could respond to reports that, despite the relevant law providing for detention for a maximum of one year, asylum-seekers faced a risk of indefinite detention, including a report that three Iraqi nationals had been detained at the Karreç immigration centre for over two years. In the light of reports that the State Party had been a focus of “border outsourcing” efforts by the European Union, and claims of denials of the right to apply for international protection and arbitrary pushbacks at the border, she would be grateful for information on the measures taken to strengthen the State Party’s asylum and migration systems in accordance with international and European Union standards.

36. The Committee would be grateful for additional data on unaccompanied children who had reached the Albanian border and applied for international protection, including the number of successful applications and the number of expulsion or deportation decisions, and information on children’s access to legal counsel, education and social care, with due regard to their specific needs. She would be grateful for information on any investigations conducted by the State Party into the disappearance and whereabouts of the 502 Roma street children

from Albania who had gone missing from a children's institution in Greece between 1998 and 2002, as well as on measures taken to ensure access to refugee application procedures with suspensive effect, the provision of adequate access to free legal aid, the detention of children, and challenges in the effective implementation of the principle of non-refoulement.

37. She would welcome information on the laws adopted and measures taken to prohibit and prevent involuntary commitment or hospitalization and forced medical treatment, in particular forced psychiatric treatment. She would also appreciate information on the establishment of the independent mechanism for monitoring residential centres for persons with disabilities, including centres for children with disabilities. She wondered whether persons living in residential centres whose rights had been violated had access to independent complaint mechanisms and remedies, including compensation and rehabilitation.

38. It would be useful to hear about any progress made in setting up a permanent forensic psychiatric facility that offered a therapeutic environment and multidisciplinary treatment programmes. She would appreciate information on any steps taken to address concerns about the placement of male forensic psychiatric patients in a prison owing to the lack of specialized medical institutions. She would like to know what was being done to improve the living conditions of persons subjected to forced treatment. What steps were being taken to increase the number of staff in psychiatric forensic institutions and to bring the material conditions in such institutions into line with international standards?

39. **Mr. Kessing** said that he wished to know whether the Governments of Albania and Italy intended to enter into a new agreement on the transfer of migrants from Italy to Albania. He wondered whether camps for migrants transferred from Italy were staffed by Albanian nationals, which country was responsible for the treatment of those migrants under international law and whether migrants who wished to complain about their treatment in the camps should submit their complaints to Italy or to Albania. He would appreciate information on any measures taken to improve the conditions in the prison hospital in Tirana, which had been found to be inadequate by the European Court of Human Rights and the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture.

40. **Mr. Liu** said that he would welcome the delegation's comments on the low number of convictions secured for trafficking in persons and the leniency of the penalties handed down to the perpetrators. He wished to know what steps had been taken to strengthen birth registration procedures, particularly for children born to Roma or Egyptian parents, and to address statelessness. He would be grateful to hear about any measures being implemented to prevent and tackle child poverty and child labour.

41. He would like to know what was being done to prohibit forced marriage and eliminate any legal provisions providing for exceptions to the minimum age for marriage. He would appreciate information on any steps taken to ban the performance of non-consensual and non-therapeutic surgery on intersex persons, especially children, and to ensure their right to bodily autonomy and integrity.

The meeting was suspended at 11.35 a.m. and resumed at 11.55 a.m.

42. **A representative of Albania** said that, as the Subcommittee had found during its visit to Albania in 2024, no prisoners had made complaints about being subjected to torture by prison staff or other prisoners. The General Directorate of Prisons had implemented preventive measures and an internal classification system to protect vulnerable groups in prison. The number of incidents of inter-prisoner violence had fallen. Between 2022 and October 2025, 675 cases of inter-prisoner violence had been identified and handled in accordance with disciplinary or criminal procedures.

43. The Ombudsman, the Albanian Helsinki Committee and many other domestic and international organizations regularly inspected prisons. The Internal Prison Monitoring Service investigated violations of prisoners' rights and independently handled complaints made by prisoners. An inspection directorate, established within the General Directorate of Prisons, carried out ongoing inspections. Prisons could also be inspected by a number of parliamentary committees. In all prisons, inmates were entitled to make free phone calls to the Ombudsman, the Albanian Helsinki Committee and the Internal Prison Monitoring Service.

44. In addition to conducting scheduled visits, the national preventive mechanism had the right to enter any place of deprivation of liberty without preliminary authorization and without informing the director of the institution, in line with article 4 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention. The General Directorate of Prisons drew up action plans for the follow-up and implementation of recommendations made by the Ombudsman and submitted status reports thereon. The majority of the recommendations made by the Ombudsman between 2024 and September 2025 had been fully or partially implemented, including those relating to the allocation of ambulances to all institutions and the adoption of internal regulations for all facilities.

45. The Minister of Justice had approved the Prison System Development Plan for 2024–2030. The Plan provided for an increase in the capacity of prisons and improvements in conditions, rehabilitation programmes and security, taking into account all the recommendations made by the Ombudsman, the Subcommittee and other independent organizations. The recommendations made by the People’s Advocate had been incorporated into internal regulations, including those relating to prisoners’ phone calls and the criteria governing transfers from higher security to lower security facilities.

46. Healthcare staff received specific training in the treatment of prisoners, including the application of the Istanbul Protocol. The training, which was organized by the General Directorate of Prisons in cooperation with partners such as the Council of Europe, covered the prevention of violence, the use of force, the use of means of restraint, the prevention of suicide and the treatment of persons with mental health problems, among other areas. A multidisciplinary treatment plan for prisoners with mental health problems had been established in 2023 and the protocol for the management of incidents involving such prisoners had been optimized in July 2024. Information-sharing sessions on prisoners’ rights had been conducted in 2024.

47. The training of prison staff was a priority for the General Directorate of Prisons. The number of staff employed by its training centre had increased from 5 to 12 since 2021. The curricula and modules used for training, which had been updated with the support of the Council of Europe and other partners, covered the Convention, the European Convention on Human Rights and the Istanbul Protocol, among other matters. The curricula formed an obligatory part of basic and in-service training. Over 9,000 staff had been trained between 2021 and June 2025. In 2023, in cooperation with the Albanian Helsinki Committee, a practical guide to the prevention of torture in places of detention and prisons had been prepared. The prevention of torture was also covered in tests taken by police officers.

48. The number of remand prisoners was disproportionate to the number of convicted prisoners. Remand prisoners accounted for between 56 and 60 per cent of the prison population and the average duration of pretrial detention was 253 days. The Ministry of Justice had taken steps to reduce the use of pretrial detention. With the support of the Council of Europe, guidelines on pretrial detention measures had been prepared. Over 12,000 persons had been released from pretrial detention between 2021 and 2025.

49. Currently, a total of 466 persons were being held in the Lezhë penitentiary institution. Of those, 305 were subject to a compulsory treatment measure and 161 were subject to a security measure involving temporary placement in a psychiatric hospital. The placement of citizens with healthcare requirements in Lezhë had been adopted as a provisional solution until a special forensic institution could be established under Law No. 44/2012 on Mental Health. The Lezhë institution currently had a full complement of staff. Inmates there benefited from individualized multidisciplinary treatment plans developed in cooperation with healthcare services, social services, security staff and supporting agencies. Regular multidisciplinary meetings of healthcare staff, psychologists, social workers, psychiatrists and, if necessary, security staff were held in the institution. A cooperation agreement on the transfer of prisoners to the Lezhë institution had been signed between the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Health and Social Protection and a joint action plan for improving the conditions and treatment of persons with mental health disorders had been developed in accordance with the judgment issued by the European Court of Human Rights in the case of *Strazimiri v. Albania*.

50. The General Directorate of Prisons had taken measures to improve conditions for prisoners. Five institutions had been closed between 2021 and 2025 because they had failed to comply with standards. Plans were in place to construct a new prison at a cost of 640 million lek. The number of healthcare staff in prisons had increased from 230 in 2021 to 315 in 2025. The proportion of prisoners who participated in a range of enriching educational, vocational, religious and therapeutic activities outside their cells had increased significantly. The number of vehicles for transporting prisoners had been increased.

51. Prisoners underwent comprehensive health checks when first admitted to prison. If new prisoners were found to have been subjected to violence, a record was made in the relevant register and the competent authorities were informed. Between 2021 and 2025, the courts had awarded compensation to three convicted prisoners whose rights had been violated. Two compensation cases were pending before the Appeals Court and four cases were under review.

52. Following the reform of the juvenile criminal justice system, the number of imprisoned minors had fallen significantly between 2010 and 2025. The average duration of pretrial detention for minors was 189 days in 2025. The special institution for juveniles in Kavaja had capacity for 40 persons. The rehabilitation programmes implemented at the institution were aimed at tackling antisocial attitudes and behaviour and helping young offenders to increase their social skills, manage their emotions, improve their life skills and acquire a sense of solidarity and responsibility. Assessments conducted at the institution had found that relations between the inmates were good. Before taking up their posts, the staff employed at the institution underwent three months of basic training that covered a range of subjects, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

53. **A representative of Albania** said that, in 2024, the General Prosecutor had issued a general instruction that addressed the monitoring of acts of violence committed against persons in detention by State officials. The heads of prosecution offices and prosecutors were instructed to verify any claim of ill-treatment or violence, to register it as a criminal offence and to notify the authority to which the suspected perpetrator reported. The general instruction emphasized that pretrial detention orders should be issued only as a measure of last resort in order to ensure the continuation of proceedings or the safety of the public. The instruction encouraged prosecutors to make use of alternative measures to pretrial detention and to prioritize the investigation of cases involving defendants held in pretrial detention.

54. The General Prosecutor's Office had established a mechanism for tracking cases involving torture and ill-treatment, which were registered and investigated by prosecutor's offices with general jurisdiction. During the reporting period, two criminal proceedings for the offence of torture under article 86 of the Criminal Code had been registered. After conducting the necessary investigations, the prosecutors had reclassified the alleged acts of torture as arbitrary acts under article 250 of the Criminal Code and requested the court to dismiss the cases. Decisions taken by prosecutors were subject to judicial review and the work of the public prosecution service was monitored by the High Inspector of Justice on the basis of complaints made by citizens.

55. Before being questioned, persons under investigation were given a letter stating their rights, including the right to a defence, and asked whether they understood them. If the rights were not respected, the prosecutor or judge could declare the person's statement invalid.

56. In 2020, the General Prosecutor had approved a general instruction on the effective investigation and prosecution of cases involving violence against women, domestic violence and hate-based violence. Training on the handling of cases of violence against women had been provided by the School of Magistrates and other bodies to 116 prosecutors, 89 judicial police officers and other officials.

57. There had been 159 registered criminal cases involving the commission of arbitrary actions, with the cases of 71 defendants having been referred for trial and 84 cases having been dismissed. There had been 741 registered cases involving sexual offences, of which 361 had gone to court, with 293 defendants having been convicted. During the reporting period, about 70 per cent of the cases of domestic violence that had been registered had gone to trial. Prosecutors, judicial police officers and other officials helped to refer victims to the appropriate services.

58. In 2024, the General Prosecutor had issued a general instruction on the effective investigation and prosecution of cases of trafficking in persons, which had increased protections for victims of trafficking, particularly minors. To encourage reporting, information about the offence had been made available through brochures, the website of the General Prosecutor's Office and other means. During the reporting period, 57 criminal cases involving trafficking in persons had been registered.

59. In October 2024, the General Prosecutor had issued a circular instructing prosecutors to treat attacks on journalists and the media as a priority. Focal points had been designated in prosecutors' offices to report cases of such attacks. Training programmes offered by the School of Magistrates and other bodies improved the handling of cases affecting journalists' safety. Seven cases involving criminal offences against journalists and media workers were currently being either verified or investigated, and four cases had been sent for trial.

60. **A representative of Albania** said that the State Police regularly instructed its staff on the absolute prohibition of torture on police premises. Periodic checks were carried out on police premises to identify any objects that could serve to intimidate or mistreat citizens, such as sticks, cables, belts and rods. As at September 2025, there had been no evidence that any act of torture, as defined under article 86 of the Criminal Code, had been committed.

61. With respect to the information provided to persons taken into custody by the police, he wished to draw the Committee's attention to paragraphs 7 to 11 of the State Party's replies to the list of issues. In 2024, the letter of rights provided to persons taken into custody had been translated into English, Italian, Greek, German, French, Russian, Serbo-Croatian, Arabic and Polish.

62. **A representative of Albania** said that the National Agenda for the Rights of the Child provided for the identification, evaluation and provision of services to children at risk of violence, abuse, exploitation or neglect. The amendments made to the country's anti-discrimination legislation in 2020 addressed multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, hate speech, segregation, sexual harassment and structural discrimination.

63. The Ministry of Health and Social Protection and the Ministry of Justice had been working closely to improve the treatment of forensic psychiatric patients under compulsory treatment and had signed a cooperation agreement in that regard and developed a joint action plan. The agreement addressed matters such as the provision of healthcare services, including diagnostic services, to forensic psychiatric patients at the Lezhë institution. Psychiatrists from the Lezhë regional hospital had been engaged to provide support upon request from staff at the institution.

64. An intersectoral working group comprising representatives of the Ministry of Health and Social Protection and the Ministry of Justice, the psychiatry department of the university hospital in Tirana and the General Directorate of Prisons had developed a protocol for the use of injectable medicines for the safe and effective management of violent behaviour in individuals with mental health disorders. Efforts were under way to transform an existing inpatient mental health facility into a special medical institution for female forensic psychiatric patients with some 35 beds, to which such patients who were currently at the prison hospital in Tirana would be transferred. An intersectoral working group had assessed the infrastructure in view of the transformation.

65. The authorities took a multisectoral approach to addressing child marriage that focused on social services and awareness-raising. Local interdisciplinary groups that were coordinated by the child protection units that were in place in 61 municipalities and that comprised specialists from all sectors, including health and education, protected children's rights at the community level, in cooperation with civil society.

66. **A representative of Albania** said that clothing packages for victims and potential victims of trafficking in persons had been provided to children's centres. The Anti-Trafficking Investigation Units had received training on effectively implementing measures for the protection of victims, and an inter-institutional group had been formed to draft a new national anti-trafficking strategy and action plan.

67. Vulnerability screening procedures had been improved, and staff training had been enhanced under the road map for cooperation between the European Union Agency for

Asylum and Albania, which provided for training on, for example, gender identity and unaccompanied children. A national contingency plan on migration flows was being finalized and would provide for temporary accommodation measures in the event of sudden inflows, the rapid identification of vulnerable persons, and referral pathways for unaccompanied children and potential victims of trafficking. It would also reinforce the operational capacity of, and protection standards at, the closed reception centre for migrants.

68. The country's first national reception centre for unaccompanied foreign children was expected to be operational by December 2026. Sixty-eight unaccompanied children had been identified in 2020, 11 in 2021, 63 in 2022, 80 in 2024 and 34 in the first half of 2025. Albania had invested no funds under the protocol it had agreed with Italy. Management and operational responsibility for the project under that agreement lay entirely with Italy, which had financed it.

69. **A representative of Albania** said that domestic violence-related arrests made under article 130 (a) of the Criminal Code had increased significantly. Requests for protection orders had peaked in 2021 and then declined before increasing slightly in 2024. Overall, the data highlighted a continued rise in domestic violence cases and a more active police response, while also pointing to the need for improved victim support and protection services.

70. **A representative of Albania** said that all penitentiary institutions had dedicated spaces for family meetings. Interested prisoners could participate in group sessions with a psychologist and social worker and in meetings with professors, from a university with which the General Prison Directorate had a memorandum of understanding, on topics such as parenting and childcare. Prison authorities had noticed that children were visiting their parents in prison more frequently. The gender-sensitive approach that had been applied at the women's prison in Pojskë had played an important role in prisoners' rehabilitation there.

71. **A representative of Albania** said that 66 applications for international protection had been received in 2021, 106 had been received in 2025, and the number had fluctuated in the intervening years. Refugee status had rarely been granted during that period. The first person to have been recognized as a refugee had been a male applicant from China, in 2024. He had been followed by three Chinese asylum-seekers and four Palestinian nationals in 2025. Complementary protection continued to be the main form of international protection granted. The beneficiaries of such protection had primarily been from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, Palestine, Egypt and other countries facing conflict or instability. Complementary protection had been granted to 7 persons in 2021, 24 in 2022, 14 in 2023, 16 in 2024 and 7 in 2025. In all of those years, the beneficiaries had included both adults and minors.

72. **A representative of Albania** said that Albania had not entered any reservations to the Convention but had made declarations regarding specific articles. With respect to article 6, Albania defined "nationals" to include persons with dual nationality if one of the nationalities was Albanian. With respect to article 7 (1), Albania did not allow the extradition of persons who had committed offences that had harmed the interests of the Albanian State or its nationals unless otherwise agreed with the interested party. With respect to article 7 (2), the original text or an authenticated copy of the applicable law was required when extradition was requested in connection with an offence committed by or against an Albanian national. Lastly, persons serving a sentence for another offence could be allowed to serve their full sentence in the requesting country in the event of extradition.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.