



International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

Distr.: General
18 February 2026

Original: English

Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination 116th session

Summary record of the 3173rd meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Thursday, 20 November 2025, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Mr. Balcerzak

Contents

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

Combined twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth periodic reports of Sweden

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent within one week of the date of the present record to the Documents Management Section (DMS-DCM@un.org).

Any corrected records of the public meetings of the Committee at this session will be reissued for technical reasons after the end of the session.



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 twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth periodic reports of Sweden (CERD/C/SWE/24-25; CERD/C/SWE/Q/24-25)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Sweden joined the meeting.*
2. **A representative of Sweden**, introducing her country's combined twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth periodic reports (CERD/C/SWE/24-25), said that the document had been prepared in consultation with civil society organizations. While international monitoring and independent evaluation indicated that the overall human rights situation in Sweden was good, the country faced a number of challenges that it was determined to address. The Swedish Institute for Human Rights, established in 2022, was an independent institution that played a key role in ensuring full compliance with the country's international human rights obligations.
3. One of the Government's key human rights objectives was to combat all forms of discrimination. In December 2024, the Government had adopted its Action Plan to Combat Racism and Hate Crime, which addressed racism in general and anti-black racism, anti-Muslim racism, anti-Gypsyism, antisemitism and racism against Sami persons in particular. In the previous year, the Government had strengthened the criminal law protection against hate speech. Victims of the offence of agitation against a population group could now be afforded the status of injured parties and be entitled to damages.
4. The Government was determined to uphold the rights of national minorities, namely Jews, Roma, Sami, Sweden Finns and Tornedalians, in full compliance with its international human rights obligations. The Sami people, who were recognized both as an Indigenous People and a national minority, enjoyed the exclusive right to practise reindeer husbandry in approximately one third of Swedish territory and were protected under the Constitution and other laws. The Act on Consultation in Matters of Special Importance to the Sami People provided that government agencies and regional and municipal authorities must consult the Sami Parliament and, in some cases, reindeer herding communities and Sami organizations, before making decisions that could significantly affect the Sami people. It was imperative to ensure that Sami culture and languages thrived for generations to come.
5. In November 2023, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission for Tornedalians, Kvens and Lantalaiset had delivered its final report, which was an important first step in the reconciliation process. The Government acknowledged responsibility for the violations against individual Tornedalians, Kvens and Lantalaiset that had resulted from the State's assimilation policy and the fact that those violations continued to have negative consequences in the present day. It was committed to ensuring that the reconciliation process proceeded in close dialogue with the minority group. In May 2025, the Government had adopted the country's first national strategy to strengthen Jewish life and combat antisemitism, for the period 2025–2034. Under the long-term Strategy for Roma Inclusion, the Government continued its efforts in the priority areas of employment, education and gender equality, with the assistance of a Roma reference group.
6. **A representative of the Swedish Institute for Human Rights** said that the Institute's alternative report, which had been prepared with the participation of representatives of racialized communities, national minorities and the Sami people, indicated that racism had become a part of everyday life in Sweden and that the situation had deteriorated since the country's previous review. Although the submission of the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission for Tornedalians, Kvens and Lantalaiset and the establishment of the Truth Commission for the Sami People were welcome developments, it was essential that the Commissions' findings were acted upon. During its four years of operation, the Institute had seen clear signs that willingness to protect human rights was fading at a time of competing priorities; one observer had noted that racism had become normalized and that, as a result of growing polarization and political rhetoric, racism as a structural issue was increasingly overlooked. The alternative report set out three areas in which Sweden needed to improve. First, the Government needed to ensure that victims of racism and hate crimes

could obtain effective legal redress. It had been reported that more than half of hate crimes were motivated by racism or xenophobia, that it was difficult to obtain redress after reporting such crimes, even when clear evidence had been presented to the police, and that the system for reporting such crimes was neither accessible nor trustworthy. Second, in the light of reports that there had been a negative shift in the political discourse, the Government needed to ensure that the problems of polarization and racism were not exacerbated by political rhetoric. Recent changes to the laws on policing, surveillance and immigration, including the extension of police powers in so-called security zones, raised serious concerns about the increased risk of ethnic and racial profiling. Third, the State should do much more to prevent racism from affecting children and young people, as there had been reports that children were being subjected to racial slurs, bullying and social exclusion in schools and that racism was becoming part of their lives from a very young age.

7. **Ms. Esseneme** (Country Rapporteur) said that she would appreciate up-to-date information on the implementation of the National Plan to Combat Racism, Similar Forms of Hostility and Hate Crime and the five specific action programmes that had been adopted in 2022. She would also appreciate information on the monitoring mechanism, the consultation process and the resources allocated for the implementation of the Action Plan to Combat Racism and Hate Crime. She would like to know which laws the State Party used to punish hate crimes, including the applicable offences and associated penalties. She wished to know whether the legal guidance issued by the Development Centre of the Swedish Prosecution Authority contained a definition of hate crime that was in accordance with article 4 of the Convention. She wondered whether efforts since 2015 to build police capacity to investigate and combat hate crime had been successful and how many police officers had received training. It would be useful to hear about the results of the evaluation of the Swedish Police Authority's system for flagging hate crime in investigations. She would be interested to know how many prosecutions had been initiated and how many judgments had been delivered in hate crime cases during the reporting period. She wondered what measures the State Party had taken to improve its system for collecting data on structural racial discrimination.

8. She would be grateful if the delegation could describe the elements of the offence of agitation against a population group, what the associated penalties were and whether a hate motive was an aggravating circumstance that could be applied to all offences. In the light of reports that most hate crimes went unpunished, she wished to know what steps the State Party had taken to strengthen the ability of the criminal investigation police to detect racist motives when investigating offences and that of the courts to apply such motives as an aggravating factor. Given the need for improved collection of data on investigations, prosecutions and sentences in hate crime and racial discrimination cases, she would appreciate more details about the ongoing project to ensure that cases could be monitored throughout the legal system. She would be glad to receive statistics, compiled in accordance with the new methods introduced in 2020, on the number of hate crime cases reported to the police, investigated and prosecuted. In view of the statistics provided on racist and xenophobic hate crimes, she wondered what measures had been taken to protect people of African descent and Roma and prosecute those responsible. It would be interesting to know what action had been taken in response to the finding that persons of Middle Eastern and North African origin and Muslims were particularly exposed to prejudice and racist stereotyping online.

9. The Committee would welcome up-to-date, disaggregated data on the ethnic origin of persons who complained of discrimination, together with information on the administrative or judicial follow-up to such complaints. In addition, it would like to know how many complaints of discrimination had been received in the areas of education, employment and healthcare. The Committee would be interested to know how many victims of discrimination had been provided with reparation and what kind of reparation they had received. It would like to know what measures had been taken to curb discrimination based on ethnic origin and skin colour in the fields of healthcare, education and employment and to punish those responsible.

10. The Swedish Institute for Human Rights had been accredited with A status in October 2024. It would be useful to receive an update on the implementation of the recommendations issued by the Subcommittee on Accreditation of the Global Alliance of National Human

Rights Institutions at the time of accreditation, namely, that the Institute should argue for the inclusion in its enabling statute of an explicit mandate to promote and protect human rights and for its funding to be progressively increased so that it could fully carry out its mandate. She wondered what steps the Institute had taken to improve the living conditions of racialized persons and groups, what recommendations it had issued to the State Party on addressing racial discrimination in society and the growing number of cases of threats, hatred and harassment, and to what extent those recommendations had been implemented. Given that the Institute did not examine individual complaints of human rights violations, she wished to know how it contributed to the protection of individual rights and freedoms.

11. It would be interesting to know how the State Party had incorporated the Convention into domestic law and what steps had been taken to improve knowledge of the Convention among judicial and law enforcement personnel and to ensure that it was effectively invoked before the courts. The delegation might comment on Judgment No. 71/23 of 13 December 2023 of the Swedish Labour Court, in which the Court had found in favour of an employer that had fired a Muslim woman for wearing the hijab, thereby legitimizing an ostensibly neutral policy towards employers that prohibit the wearing of religious symbols or clothing in the workplace – a policy that disproportionately affected Muslim wearers of the hijab and potentially opened the door to religious discrimination against employees. It would be helpful to know whether the Swedish Labour Court ruled in sole instance and, if so, what other remedies were available to victims of discrimination whose cases were dismissed by the Court.

12. She would welcome clarification of the nature of the Swedish National Courts Administration and of whether it was a distinct institution in the judicial system. As the Act on National Minorities and Minority Languages provided that, in certain courts, parties had the right to use Sami, Finnish and Meänkieli, she wished to know how that provision worked in practice and whether it extended to the use of other minority languages.

13. In the light of reports that schoolchildren had been subjected to racist insults, bullying and even violence, she wondered what measures had been taken to prevent racial discrimination in schools, protect schoolchildren belonging to racialized communities and punish racist teachers and bullies. She would like to know how many complaints of discrimination against children had been received by the Equality Ombudsman and what action it had taken in response; who was entitled to file complaints in such cases; and how cases of racial discrimination in schools were handled by the educational authorities. She would welcome details of the legal basis and scope of legal assistance and the conditions under which beneficiaries could obtain it.

14. In the light of reports that the perpetrators and victims of anti-black hate crimes were predominantly young people, she wondered what measures had been taken to instil the values of human dignity, equality and non-discrimination among young people; whether minors who committed racially motivated crimes were prosecuted under a specialized juvenile justice system; and by what mechanism victims of racial discrimination could obtain redress when the perpetrator was a minor. It would be helpful to know how many victims of racist hate crime or racial discrimination had received compensation through the Crime Victim Compensation and Support Authority.

15. **A representative of Sweden** said that the various measures taken under the National Plan to Combat Racism, Similar Forms of Hostility and Hate Crime had improved the Government's understanding of racism and the challenges it posed in many sectors of Swedish society. The Plan had also strengthened cooperation between the Government, local authorities and organizations and helped to improve relevant resources, including educational tools.

16. Swedish criminal law provided strong protection against racist hate speech primarily through the offence of agitation against a population group, established under the Freedom of the Press Act and the Criminal Code, which explicitly prohibited incitement to violence against population groups or individuals in such groups. Current legislation prohibiting racist organizations was in line with the Convention.

17. Statistics published by the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention showed that, of the approximately 2,800 hate crimes reported to the police in 2022, xenophobic and

racist hate crimes, accounted for just over half, while hate crimes against religious groups accounted for about 16%. The statistics for 2023 would be published in December 2025. The Government had taken steps to support victims in reporting hate crimes, some of which went unreported for various reasons, including fear of not being believed and distrust of the justice system. Although the police and society at large were committed to identifying hate crimes and bringing those responsible to justice, there were challenges in doing so, particularly in the case of online hate. Police personnel received continuous training on identifying and investigating hate crime motives.

18. **A representative of Sweden** said that final reports on the outcomes of the specific action programmes complementary to the National Plan to Combat Racism, Similar Forms of Hostility and Hate Crime had been submitted to the Government in March 2025. The Living History Forum had produced a consolidated report on the work undertaken, and had found that the action programmes had helped to clarify how the Plan should be implemented in relation to different forms of racism. The action programmes had been helpful particularly for authorities working in areas such as national minorities and human rights and had provided civil society representatives with an overview of the efforts being carried out in relation to each form of racism.

19. The Action Plan to Combat Racism and Hate Crime had been adopted in view of the continuing need for awareness-raising and other measures to combat different forms of racism, while also adopting a holistic approach to such work. It had been developed on the basis of an analysis of the National Plan to Combat Racism, Similar Forms of Hostility and Hate Crime published by the Swedish Agency for Public Management in June 2023 and on other knowledge and experience drawn from previous work. In addition to the overarching goal of achieving a society free from racism, the new Action Plan included a number of clear sub-goals intended to provide direction for national authorities and other actors while also creating better conditions for evaluating the work. Special emphasis was placed on four areas: schools, the judicial system, welfare and working life. The Living History Forum had been tasked with coordinating and monitoring the Action Plan's implementation, including by developing a system of indicators to measure the results achieved, and with submitting an annual progress report to the Government. Dialogue with civil society organizations was also central to monitoring progress. In the 2026 budget bill, the Government had announced an increase of 10 million Swedish kronor (SKr) for the period 2027–2029 to fund efforts under the Action Plan. In addition, it intended to allocate additional funding from 2026 onwards to strengthen efforts to combat antisemitism. In 2025, approximately SKr 43 million had been made available for initiatives in that area.

20. **A representative of Sweden** said that the legislation on hate crime had been strengthened on 1 July 2024 with amendments to the provisions on agitation against a population group.

21. **A representative of Sweden** said that the Swedish Police Authority prioritized the investigation of hate crimes. All seven police regions had specialized hate crime investigators, while the three metropolitan police regions were organizing units for combating crimes that threatened democracy, which included hate crimes, crimes against journalists and elected officials and crimes related to violent extremism.

22. Hate crime statistics were based on police reports, which included reports of acts that did not amount to crimes. To mitigate the effects of all hateful acts, the Swedish Police Authority worked with victims' organizations to ensure that victims received the support to which they were entitled. Many reported hate crimes were quality-of-life crimes with no known offender; they had a clearance rate comparable to that of similar crimes without a hate motive. Violent hate crimes had a higher clearance rate than quality-of-life crimes. The investigation of online hate crime was complicated by the fact that many of the social media platforms involved were based in the United States, which had stricter laws protecting freedom of expression, and the Swedish authorities could only obtain the IP addresses of perpetrators of acts that were unlawful in both countries. Hate crimes were punished under the offence of agitation against a population group or by applying the hate motive to another offence as an aggravating factor during sentencing, which made it difficult to track hate crime cases.

23. **A representative of Sweden** said that the project to ensure the monitoring of cases throughout the entire legal system involved an extensive effort to enhance information-sharing between judicial agencies. It would be completed in 2028, following which the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention would consider how to utilize the newly available information. Given that many hate crimes were not reported to the police, the available statistics did not reveal much about the prevalence of hate crimes in society; however, they did provide information on how such crimes were recorded in police reports and the nature of the reported incidents. Among the racist and xenophobic hate crimes recorded in 2022, 31% were Afrophobic, 2% were anti-Gypsy, 1% were hate crimes against the Sami and 65% were categorized as having other racist and xenophobic motives. Over half of reported hate crimes committed against religious groups were Islamophobic, followed by antisemitic crimes and then crimes against other religious groups. Of the 3,400 offences involving hate crimes that had been recorded in 2020 and processed as of May 2023, 6% had been resolved through prosecution, a decision not to prosecute or the imposition of a fine. Assaults and threats accounted for the highest proportion of the crimes processed and unlawful discrimination and damage to property for the lowest. In 2024, 996 cases of agitation against a population group had been reported, 428 had been investigated and 7% had ended in prosecution, a decision not to prosecute or a fine, which was similar to the figures for 2022 and 2023.

24. **A representative of Sweden** said that the annual report of the Equality Ombudsman on the state of discrimination in Sweden provided important insights into the forms of discrimination that people faced. The Action Plan to Combat Racism and Hate Crime included several important measures aimed at addressing discrimination and racism, including Islamophobia.

25. **A representative of Sweden** said that the Swedish Crime Victim Authority had been tasked with developing and disseminating information resources for persons at risk of being subjected to hate crimes and was working with relevant government agencies and civil society organizations to increase the reporting of hate crime.

26. **A representative of Sweden** said that the police was working to increase resilience in vulnerable communities through dialogue and support and had been mandated to further develop methods to increase reporting and improve its investigation of hate crimes.

27. **Ms. Esseneme** said that she would be grateful if the delegation could provide a specific example of an activity that had been carried out under the National Plan to Combat Racism, Similar Forms of Hostility and Hate Crime or the Action Plan to Combat Racism and Hate Crime, together with information on the results achieved. As the State Party had not provided any examples of judgments in cases in which racist motive had been an aggravating factor, she wondered what steps had been taken to assist police in identifying that motive in their investigations, so that judges could apply the aggravating factor in sentencing. She would like to receive more information on the prosecutions that had been initiated following complaints of hate crimes.

28. Noting that the Office of the Parliamentary Ombudsmen could act in the role of extraordinary prosecutor and initiate legal proceedings against officials who committed criminal offences, she said she would be interested to know how many prosecutions had been brought against politicians and government officials who had engaged in hate speech and incited ethnic hatred.

29. **Ms. Stavrinaki** said that she would be interested to know what kind of hate crimes affected communities. In particular, she would welcome clarification as to the nature of acts that were hateful but did not amount to hate crimes. She would like to hear how the police balanced their responsibility for protecting individuals against hate crimes with their extended stop-and-search powers in security zones, which raised concerns about racial profiling.

30. **Ms. Boker-Wilson** said that the Committee had received reports that the Action Plan to Combat Racism and Hate Crime had been developed without sufficient consultation with civil society and other rights holders and that it predominantly framed racism as a matter of individual attitudes or interactions, thus limiting the effectiveness of the proposed measures

in addressing structural racism. She wished to know how the State Party planned to involve civil society and other rights holders in the implementation of the Plan.

31. **Ms. Tlakula** (Follow-up Rapporteur) said that, in its previous concluding observations (CERD/C/SWE/CO/22-23), the Committee had requested the State Party to provide information on its implementation of the recommendations contained in paragraphs 9, relating to the national human rights institution; paragraph 17 (d), relating to the rights of Sami; and paragraph 19 (b), relating to anti-Muslim racism. In relation to the recommendations contained in paragraph 9, she would be grateful if the delegation could address the Country Rapporteur's questions concerning the Swedish Institute for Human Rights.

32. **Mr. Diaby** said that he wished to know whether the State Party envisaged steps to enable the Swedish Institute for Human Rights to receive individual complaints. He wondered whether any measures would be taken to reduce the financial risks associated with bringing a racial discrimination complaint before the courts, which reportedly discouraged victims from seeking justice. He would be interested to know whether the State Party intended to introduce more effective, proportionate and dissuasive punishments for discrimination, to improve the legal assistance provided to complainants and to ensure that victims received appropriate compensation for harm suffered. In the light of the racist insults and death threats that had been directed at Jimmy Durmaz, a Swedish professional footballer, he would like to know whether an investigation had been conducted and what other measures the Government envisaged to prevent racism in sport.

33. **Mr. Guissé** said that he would appreciate confirmation that the Sami were considered both an Indigenous People and a national minority. He wondered what concrete measures had been taken as a result of the recognition of Roma as a national minority in 1999.

34. **Mr. Amir** said that reports of racial discrimination in Sweden against Muslim children and others were a new and troubling development. In the light of reports of increasing support for far-right political positions in Sweden, he wondered why a country long characterized by the protection of human rights was now influenced by such positions on issues of racial discrimination.

35. **A representative of Sweden** said that consultations had been held with civil society in the context of the Action Plan to Combat Racism and Hate Crime. Civil society was regarded as a key source of input, and its views had significantly shaped the measures being implemented under the Plan. Racism was not viewed solely as a matter of individual attitudes, and its structural dimensions were fully acknowledged. The priority areas identified in the Plan had been selected precisely because of the structural challenges they entailed. Dialogue with civil society in that regard would continue.

36. The Government attached great importance to human rights and combating racism, but Sweden was not immune to global trends towards polarization in public debate. Those trends had multiple causes, including the role of social media platforms in reinforcing prejudice, which posed a complex challenge for any single country. Measures in that regard were being pursued at both the national and European levels. The Government was also undertaking initiatives to strengthen citizens' critical thinking skills and information literacy, with a view to immunizing the public against disinformation and racist narratives.

37. **A representative of Sweden** said that disinformation, hate speech and violent extremism were widespread in digital environments. Much of the content in question fell below the threshold of illegality and was classified instead as harmful content. Many individuals posting such material were aware that explicitly racist content was prohibited and adapted the content they published accordingly, which meant that the national authorities were not always able to take legal action. The Digital Services Act of the European Union provided a useful framework, enabling authorities to contact online platforms and request the removal of illegal material. Harmful content, however, remained far more difficult to address in the absence of effective moderation by the platforms themselves.

38. **A representative of Sweden** said that the police were both guardians of fundamental rights and holders of special powers that could potentially infringe those rights. Racial or ethnic profiling was strictly prohibited; internal guidelines made clear that racial

characteristics or ethnicity could not be used, either solely or predominantly, as a basis for profiling. Procedural justice required the provision of clear reasons and explanations for police action. Incidents of racial profiling, when they occurred, were deeply regrettable.

39. Criminal law generally targeted only the most serious forms of hate speech, which went beyond the limit of what was legally permissible. At the same time, there existed material that was deeply offensive yet lawful, underscoring the need for shared responsibility in shaping the tone and quality of public dialogue.

40. **A representative of Sweden** said that the Discrimination Act applied to employment, education, healthcare, access to goods and services and several other areas of society. The prohibition of discrimination was largely uniform across all grounds, subject to a limited number of exceptions. Individuals who considered themselves to have been subjected to discrimination could submit a complaint to the Equality Ombudsman, and complaints could also be lodged on behalf of another person, for example, by a parent on behalf of a child. In 2024, the Equality Ombudsman had received 5,182 complaints, of which 1,570 had related to discrimination on the ground of ethnicity. Chapter 2, section 17, of the Discrimination Act addressed the manner in which public officials must treat members of the public. That provision did not, however, extend to actions or omissions by public officials in relation to individuals. As a result, individuals' protection against discrimination was weaker in their dealings with some public authorities than it was with others. A 2021 report on strengthening protection against discrimination had proposed amendments to the Discrimination Act to broaden the scope of the prohibition in certain areas of public sector activity to include actions taken and failures to act. The Government had acknowledged the need to prepare legislative proposals to strengthen protection against discrimination in public sector activities.

41. **A representative of Sweden** said that, in accordance with the curricula for primary and secondary education in Sweden, schools were required to work actively to prevent and address antisemitism, racism, intolerance, oppression and violence, to promote understanding of others and respect for diversity and to ensure that no one was subjected to discrimination or degrading treatment. One of the specific objectives of the Action Plan to Combat Racism and Hate Crime was to ensure that teachers and other school staff acquired better knowledge and tools to prevent and counter racism. Within that framework, a number of measures had been implemented. For example, the Living History Forum had developed updated support material for teachers and trainers, which had been launched in March 2025. The material addressed five thematic areas: anti-Muslim racism, racism against the Sami, antisemitism, anti-Gypsyism and anti-black racism. In addition, the Living History Forum, in cooperation with the Swedish National Agency for Education, had been tasked with strengthening democratic values within the education system. In that context, a tool known as the Democracy Ladder had been developed to enable schools to identify challenges and assess their needs. The initiative's aim was to combat contemporary manifestations of antisemitism and other forms of racism. Funding for the Democracy Ladder had been provided since 2021 and the initiative had been extended in 2023, accompanied by additional funding.

42. **A representative of Sweden** said that, according to the 2021 public health survey conducted by the Public Health Agency, just over 2% of women and nearly 3% of men had reported experiencing abusive treatment or treatment linked to ethnicity and/or skin colour during the three months preceding the survey. Updated statistics for 2024 were broadly consistent with those findings. The Health and Medical Services Act set out the obligations of the competent authorities to provide healthcare to the population on a non-discriminatory basis.

43. Sports in Sweden operated independently of the Government, although the Swedish Sports Confederation received an annual public grant. The Confederation had made a clear commitment to combating racism and maintained a zero-tolerance policy grounded in its core values of respect, inclusion and fair play, as set out in its governing document.

44. **A representative of Sweden** said that the mandate of the Swedish Institute for Human Rights was established in the Institute for Human Rights Act. Regarding the wording of the Act on the Institute's mandate, the expression "promote the safeguarding of human rights" was to be understood as comparable to "promote and protect human rights". The Institute's

budget was determined within the framework of the Government's ordinary budgetary process. It had been proposed that the Institute should be allocated approximately SKr 55 million for 2026. There were currently no plans to amend the Institute's mandate to allow it to examine individual complaints. Its work was based on the Swedish constitutional laws, the European Convention on Human Rights, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and other human rights instruments binding on Sweden, including the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. Within that framework, the Institute independently determined its priorities and activities, and the authorities therefore exercised restraint in commenting on its work.

45. **A representative of Sweden** said that, as an example of an activity carried out under the National Plan to Combat Racism, Similar Forms of Hostility and Hate Crime, the Living History Forum had in 2024 conducted training initiatives on various forms of racism and intolerance, both historical and contemporary, for social workers, municipal officials and other professionals working with children and young people outside the school environment. The training had placed particular emphasis on methodological approaches to combating racism and had strengthened the participants' capacity to integrate measures against racism and hate crime into their work.

46. **A representative of Sweden** said that the Equality Ombudsman monitored compliance with the Discrimination Act and was empowered to initiate court proceedings on behalf of individuals. In such cases, the proceedings were free of charge for the persons concerned. Local anti-discrimination agencies located throughout Sweden provided individuals with free advice and information on how to exercise their rights. Those agencies received public funding. For 2025, a government grant of SKr 28 million had been earmarked for activities aimed at preventing and combating discrimination at the local and regional levels.

47. **A representative of Sweden** said that, under the Act on National Minorities and Minority Languages, the State recognized five national minorities: Jews, Roma, Sami, Tornedalians and Sweden Finns. The Sami enjoyed dual status, both as a national minority in Sweden and as an Indigenous People with specific rights.

48. Sweden protected freedom of expression and the State did not interfere with media content, ownership or editorial decisions. Nevertheless, media content containing hate speech or racist material could be subject to post-publication review by the relevant oversight bodies, namely the Media Ombudsman and the Swedish Agency for the Media.

49. **Ms. Tlakula** asked whether the Swedish Institute for Human Rights did not examine individual complaints because that mandate rested with the Equality Ombudsman.

The meeting was suspended at 4.55 p.m. and resumed at 5.10 p.m.

50. **A representative of Sweden** said that, during the preparatory work for the Institute for Human Rights Act, several reasons had been identified for not entrusting the Institute with the handling of individual complaints. First, such a function would duplicate mandates already assigned to other authorities. Second, while the Institute would be given the overarching task of promoting the safeguarding of human rights, it would not have a supervisory role or be empowered to take decisions or order measures aimed at providing redress. Furthermore, supervisory functions in specific fields were already exercised by authorities with specialized expertise, such as the Equality Ombudsman, whereas the Institute's role was to contribute knowledge, analysis and expertise that could be drawn upon by supervisory bodies. Lastly, it had been considered that assigning responsibility for individual complaints to the Institute would likely generate a large volume of submissions, which, in the Government's view, would constrain the Institute's ability to allocate its resources effectively and undermine its capacity to set independent priorities.

51. **Mr. Guan** (Country Task Force) said that, despite the progress achieved in supporting the integration of new immigrants and in creating opportunities for their development, it was clear that problems persisted, both for newly arrived and long-settled immigrants. As the report stated, individuals with a non-European background often faced poorer socioeconomic prospects and continued to face heightened risks of unemployment, segregation,

discrimination and poverty. Against that background, he would welcome further information in five areas.

52. First, he would appreciate an indication of whether the State's migration policy was designed to restrict immigration. The delegation might comment, for example, on the Tidö Agreement, which required institutions to proactively provide information on undocumented migrants to the competent authorities, and on the tightening of conditions for obtaining residence permits. He wondered whether the Government envisaged any steps to address concerns about the increasingly restrictive nature of its immigration policies.

53. Second, he wished to know why immigrants, particularly newly arrived and young immigrants, experienced significantly lower employment rates than persons born in Sweden. Available data indicated that the unemployment rate among non-European immigrants stood at 46%, compared with 4.7% among Swedish-born individuals. While the State had undertaken numerous efforts to address the situation, overall improvement appeared limited. He wished to know why that was so and whether further measures were under consideration.

54. Third, he would be interested to know whether measures had been taken or were being considered to reduce the income gap between employed immigrants and Swedish nationals, including through targeted assistance in areas such as taxation, housing, healthcare, social security and public services. He would also like to know what measures had been taken to alleviate and eliminate the discriminatory impact of housing segregation policies and the establishment of security zones, to which non-European and young immigrants were particularly exposed.

55. Fourth, he would be grateful for an explanation of the measures adopted to protect asylum-seekers, refugees and stateless persons, who faced particularly difficult living conditions. According to available information, Swedish asylum legislation had shifted from a system of permanent residence permits to one of temporary permits, additional conditions and restrictions had been introduced in relation to family reunification and the daily allowance for asylum-seekers had remained unchanged since 1994. The delegation might comment on reports that the absence of a dedicated statelessness determination procedure had resulted in inconsistent registration practices, with many individuals recorded as having an "unknown" nationality.

56. Fifth, he would welcome detailed information on residence permits and proposed or adopted amendments to the national legislative framework governing citizenship. In that regard, the Committee had been informed that recent policy proposals included stricter requirements for obtaining permanent residence permits, such as passing tests in the Swedish language, while proposed changes to citizenship legislation included extending the required period of residence from five to eight years, introducing an income requirement and tightening standards of "orderly and honourable conduct". Such proposals could give rise to arbitrary decision-making and risked further entrenching social exclusion.

57. **A representative of Sweden** said that extensive immigration, combined with integration challenges, had placed considerable strain on Swedish society in recent years. In response, the Government was implementing a responsible and sustainable shift in migration policy, alongside a revised focus for integration policy. Legislative reforms were under way in two main areas: citizenship and the reception of asylum-seekers. The Government sought to enhance the status of citizenship through clearer and more robust criteria, including longer periods of residence, self-sufficiency and language proficiency. Those proposals remained under consideration and subject to continued dialogue. In parallel, reforms were under way to improve the coherence and efficiency of the asylum system, while safeguarding access to essential services in accordance with the State's international obligations.

58. The Riksdag (the Swedish parliament) had established objectives for a responsible and restrictive migration policy, including the provision of temporary protection at the minimum level required under European Union law and binding international instruments to which Sweden was a party. The principle of non-refoulement remained fully respected, and Swedish migration policy would continue to uphold the rule of law and the protection of human rights. Asylum-seeking children were entitled to education on an equal basis with other children. Healthcare that could not be postponed was guaranteed for all, with full medical services provided to all children, regardless of their migration status. Maternal

healthcare, abortion services and contraceptive counselling were also available. In addition, asylum-seekers could be granted the right to work in some situations.

59. Measures had also been taken to improve integration and counter social exclusion, considering that foreign-born women and men residing in Sweden should be self-sufficient, learn the Swedish language, understand how Swedish society functioned and participate on equal terms, with the same rights, obligations and opportunities as the rest of the population. Under the revised policy framework to counter social exclusion, the Government aimed to improve conditions in geographical areas facing significant challenges, with a focus on schools, social services and employment, as well as on improving safety and reducing crime. Those reforms were not based on ethnicity. However, the majority of residents in the areas targeted were foreign-born. It was essential to improve living conditions for all residents, young and old, in order to achieve integration objectives.

60. **A representative of Sweden** said that, between 2022 and 2024, Sweden had received 39,636 first-time asylum applications from nationals of more than 100 countries. The main countries of origin were Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria and Angola; 1,178 applicants were stateless and classified as having an “unknown” nationality. About 63% of applicants were men and 37% were women. The annual number of applications had fallen from 17,000 applications in 2022 to fewer than 10,000 in 2024. Asylum-seekers were entitled to support in the form of accommodation, a daily allowance covering basic subsistence and, where urgent needs arose, a special grant to cover the cost of, for example, winter clothing, glasses, dietary supplements and assistive devices. At certain reception centres, meals were provided. Taken together, those measures were considered sufficient to provide an adequate standard of living for asylum-seekers.

61. **A representative of Sweden** said that, in 2024, the employment rate had been 70% for native-born persons and 65.8% for foreign-born persons – a gap that had widened from 3.1 percentage points in 2023 to 4.2 percentage points in 2024 amid a sharp decline in employment among the foreign-born population. In 2010, the Government had introduced a major integration initiative, known as the introduction programme, for newly arrived immigrants with residence permits. It established labour market integration as the central objective of national integration policy and sought to strengthen incentives and opportunities for newly arrived immigrants to achieve self-sufficiency, while promoting gender equality. The programme was administered by the Public Employment Service, while municipalities were responsible for language training, civic orientation, housing arrangements and education.

62. **A representative of Sweden** said that the Discrimination Act established seven prohibited grounds of discrimination in employment and working life. Upon becoming aware of an allegation of unfair treatment or harassment in the workplace, employers were required to investigate the circumstances of the alleged conduct and take such measures as could reasonably be required to prevent its recurrence. Working life remained the area of society in which the Equality Ombudsman received the largest number of complaints concerning discrimination, with 534 complaints of discrimination on the basis of ethnicity received in 2024. In the same year, the Ombudsman had been mandated to implement initiatives to strengthen employers’ efforts to prevent discrimination at work and, more broadly, to promote equal rights and opportunities irrespective of ethnicity and religion. The results of that work were to be reported to the Government Offices by 1 March 2027.

63. **A representative of Sweden** said that the legislative amendments introducing stricter requirements for the acquisition of citizenship were due to enter into force in the summer of 2026. The proposed requirements were intended to be applied uniformly and objectively, irrespective of the applicant’s ethnic origin or background, and had been assessed as consistent with the State’s international obligations. However, exemptions would continue to apply to Nordic citizens under existing agreements between the Nordic countries, which provided for simplified procedures and the waiver of certain requirements. A government inquiry presented in 2025 had concluded that stateless persons would be subject to the proposed stricter requirements for the acquisition of citizenship. At the same time, the inquiry had recommended more favourable rules for stateless persons born in Sweden, in particular a reduced residence requirement of five years rather than the general eight years proposed for other applicants.

64. **A representative of Sweden** said that the establishment of a security zone was a measure that the police could use where there was a high risk of serious and violent crime. The law required the police to balance the anticipated preventive effect of such a zone against its potential negative impact on the population concerned. Security zones could be established for a maximum period of two weeks, although the legislation allowed for their extension. To date, the measure had been applied on five occasions, and no security zone had remained in force for longer than two weeks. It was regarded as an exceptional tool, to be used only in limited circumstances, and the authorities were mindful of potential adverse effects, including the perception of ethnic or racial profiling.

65. **A representative of Sweden** said that, in order to address insufficient Swedish language proficiency among some children, an inquiry had been tasked with examining how language preschools could be introduced. Such preschools would be mandatory for children who demonstrated significant deficiencies in Swedish language development due to limited exposure to Swedish in their home environment. The inquiry was to report by the end of 2025, after which its proposals would be considered by the Government Offices.

66. **Mr. Guan** said that he wished to know how many undocumented migrants were currently in Sweden, what the Government's policy was for addressing their situation and what measures had been adopted to guarantee their fundamental rights. In the light of reports of incidents in which patients had died as a result of delayed medical assistance caused by inadequate communication in hospitals, he wondered whether Sweden had a system for the provision of free interpretation services within the public sector.

67. **Ms. Esseneme** said that she would like to know how many asylum applications had been approved during the reporting period. Similarly, she wished to know how complaints received by the Equality Ombudsman concerning discrimination against migrants, and racial discrimination more broadly, were processed to ensure accountability, justice and effective remedies. She would welcome examples of cases that had resulted in redress or other forms of reparation, whether through judicial proceedings or action by the Ombudsman.

68. There was a perception that the Tidö Agreement had in practice legitimized racial profiling, since body searches and house searches could be carried out without prior cause and appeared to disproportionately affect migrants and black people. She therefore wondered whether the State Party intended to review the Agreement to ensure respect for the rights of all persons to privacy and freedom of movement.

69. **Ms. Boker-Wilson** said that she, too, was concerned that broad powers had been granted to law enforcement under the Police Act to stop and search individuals without reasonable suspicion, and would appreciate further information on the Government's efforts to prevent racial profiling.

70. **Ms. Tebie** said she wished to know whether programmes aimed at supporting non-nationals, including labour market integration initiatives, Swedish language instruction for newly arrived persons and measures to promote the employment of migrant women, were subject to regular evaluation in order to assess their impact, identify gaps and improve outcomes.

71. **Mr. Diaby** said that he wondered whether the Government planned to review elements of the Tidö Agreement that gave cause for alarm, including provisions that would require asylum-seekers to bear the costs of their own reception, tighten the conditions for obtaining residence permits and reduce socioeconomic support for migrants. In the light of reports of discrimination on the grounds of ethnic origin in the healthcare sector, he wished to know whether the Government had taken measures to strengthen guarantees of equal access to healthcare for foreign nationals. As the Committee had learned of one case of preventable death in which the courts had found that the patient's ethnic origin had been a contributing factor to the inadequate treatment he had received, he wondered whether the medical staff in that case had been held accountable and whether the victim's family had received adequate compensation.

72. **A representative of Sweden** said that no figures on undocumented migrants were available, as they were not registered by any public authority. Studies on the matter were ongoing.

73. **A representative of Sweden** said that police powers within security zones included body searches and searches of vehicles, but did not extend to searches of private homes. The police were not authorized to stop and search individuals arbitrarily. While the threshold of suspicion was lower than that required for searches conducted in the context of a criminal investigation, police action still had to be based on intelligence, observed behaviour or professional experience, and the basis had to be documented. No stop-and-search measure could be based solely or primarily on a person's ethnicity or race.

74. **A representative of Sweden** said that in 2024, the Equality Ombudsman had continued to work on individual cases with the aim of ensuring that more individuals received redress and that duty bearers had greater clarity regarding their legal obligations under the Discrimination Act. Should the Ombudsman conclude, after conducting an investigation, that discrimination had occurred, it could initiate legal proceedings to seek compensation. In 2024, the Ombudsman had initiated 32 legal proceedings. Of the 437 supervisory cases concluded that year, the Ombudsman had found violations of the Discrimination Act in 75 cases, representing an increase of 9% compared with 2023. In 32 of those cases, the Ombudsman had intervened as a party to seek compensation. Overall, 17% of investigations had resulted in a finding of discrimination, compared with just under 14% in 2023. Twenty-nine cases had been resolved through voluntary settlements, including conceded claims and negotiated settlements with the Ombudsman, and SKr 1.8 million had been paid out in discrimination compensation. The Ombudsman's report for the 2024 budget year highlighted a number of significant cases, including six relating to discrimination on the grounds of religion and ethnicity in the areas of healthcare, education, public transport and employment.

75. **A representative of Sweden** said that the results of two key initiatives to promote the labour market participation of foreign-born women would become available in 2026. The Government had entered into a three-year agreement with the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions on the use of open preschools as a tool to support the labour market integration of foreign-born women. Under that agreement, the Association provided targeted process support to selected municipalities and local actors and would subsequently disseminate the lessons learned to other municipalities. In addition, the Government had ordered the development of a joint inter-agency action plan to increase the labour market participation of foreign-born women, with the final report due in March 2026.

76. **A representative of Sweden** said that interpretation services in healthcare settings were provided free of charge. The Government had instructed the National Board of Health and Welfare to produce, further develop and disseminate knowledge and support materials aimed at combating racism and promoting equal rights and opportunities within the healthcare system.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.