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**Fifth periodic report submitted by Uzbekistan
under article 40 of the Covenant, due in 2018***


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Introduction

1. The present report is the fifth periodic report of the Republic of Uzbekistan to the United Nations Committee on Human Rights on the implementation of the provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, submitted in accordance with article 40 of the Covenant.
2. The report has been drawn up in accordance with the general guidelines regarding the form and content of periodic reports and covers the period from 2015 to 2018.
3. The report is structured in the form of responses to the concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the fourth periodic report of Uzbekistan, adopted by the Committee at its 3192th meeting (CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4), dated 17 August 2015.
4. The report has been prepared on the basis of an analysis of the implementation of the national action plan for the implementation of the recommendations of the United Nations Human Rights Committee following consideration of the fourth national report of Uzbekistan (for the period 2016–2019) dated 26 August 2016, and the submissions of 24 government agencies, 17 civil society organizations and academic and other institutions of Uzbekistan.
5. The report contains information on legislative, administrative and other measures taken in Uzbekistan as part of the implementation of the strategy of action in five priority areas for the development of Uzbekistan over the period 2017–2021. The report reflects the progress made in efforts to safeguard the rights and freedoms enshrined in the Covenant.
6. Information on the observance by Uzbekistan of specific categories of human rights is presented in detail in the periodic reports submitted to other human rights treaty bodies and in the third national report submitted under the universal periodic review:
 - Common core document (HRI/CORE/UZB/2017)
 - Third national report of Uzbekistan under the universal periodic review (A/HRC/WG.6/30/UZB/1)
 - Fifth periodic report on the implementation of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

I. General information on the national human rights situation, including new measures and developments relating to implementation of the Covenant

Article 1

7. In 2017, Uzbekistan entered a critical stage in its democratic and legal development, in which it embarked on the further reform of all aspects of public life. The strategy of action in five priority areas for the development of Uzbekistan over the period 2017–2021, approved by the President of Uzbekistan on 7 February 2017, serves as the strategic programme guiding political and economic reform in the country and marked a new stage in the process of democratizing and modernizing the country and improving the system of protection of human rights and freedoms and the legitimate interests of individual persons.
8. The strategy of action served as the road map for the implementation by Uzbekistan of the Sustainable Development Goals and is being implemented in five phases. Each phase includes the adoption of a separate annual State programme for its implementation, in line with the declared name of that particular year.
9. In Uzbekistan, the year 2017 was declared the Year of Dialogue with the People and of Human Interests, and the State programme approved in that year provided for the conduct of a range of legislative, institutional, monitoring and awareness-raising measures aimed at upholding the rule of law and strengthening safeguards of the rights, freedoms and

legitimate interests of citizens. In all, 37.7 trillion sum, or \$8.3 billion, was set aside for the implementation of this State programme.

10. The judicial and legal system has been thoroughly overhauled. Judicial authority has been consolidated in a single overarching body – the Supreme Court of the Republic of Uzbekistan – and a system of administrative courts set in place with the power to adjudicate administrative disputes arising from situations governed by public law and cases involving administrative offences.

11. A system of economic courts have been created, with the aim of ensuring that the economic reforms under way in the country are fully effective and that there is reliable judicial protection for private property and for business activities.

12. A new constitutional institution has been introduced in the court system – the Supreme Judicial Council of Uzbekistan, which is responsible for the development of the country’s judiciary and for the professional and in-service training of judges. The creation of this institute has made it possible to improve the system for the selection and appointment of judges.

13. Judges now enjoy indefinite tenure upon completion of their first five and ten-year terms. These standards are intended to strengthen guarantees of the independence of judges.

14. As part of these judicial and legal reforms, particular attention is being given to rolling out a system of digital recordings for court hearings.

15. As part of the country’s legal and judicial reform process, the powers of the Constitutional Court have been widened, to include:

- Determining whether constitutional laws and laws on the ratification of international agreements entered into by Uzbekistan are consistent with the Constitution before they are signed into law
- Reviewing appeals brought before the Supreme Court of Uzbekistan by the courts involving the constitutionality of laws and regulations that are to be enforced in specific cases
- Submitting annual reports to the chambers of the Oliy Majlis – the parliament of Uzbekistan – and to the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan on the constitutional rule of law in the country

16. At the present time, a range of measures are being carried out in Uzbekistan with a view to radically upgrading the work of the internal affairs authorities and heightening their responsibility for protection of the rights, freedoms and legitimate interests of citizens, on the basis of the principle that the people’s interests must be served.

17. An investigations department has been set up under the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan as an independent unit which reports directly to the Minister of Internal Affairs.

18. In order to ensure a rapid response to offences and their prevention and to expand the involvement of local self-governing bodies, civil society institutions and local communities in prevention efforts, a national interministerial commission on the prevention of crime and criminal offences has been established and specific criteria gazetted for evaluating the effectiveness of preventive measures. In addition, a system of incentive measures has been set in place to motivate crime prevention inspectors, recognizing the high achievers among them. Thursday of every week has been declared “Crime Prevention Day”.

19. Steps have been taken to strengthen the role of the procuratorial offices in the country’s social and economic reform and modernization process and in ensuring the protection of human rights and freedoms, including through closer monitoring of the work of those offices. Where previously the procurators were required to report to local government bodies, in the person of the kengashes (councils of people’s deputies), on the status of the rule of law and efforts to combat crime in their respective territory, they are now required to submit an annual report on their activities.

20. The criminal penalty in the form of short-term rigorous detention has been abolished and replaced by non-custodial punishments; the permissible period of remand in custody for persons suspected of committing an offence has been reduced from 72 to 48 hours; the application of such preventive measures as detention on remand, house arrest and pretrial investigation has been reduced in duration from one year to seven months; criminal liability has been introduced for the falsification of evidence; and remand centres and temporary detention facilities are now equipped with video surveillance devices.

21. An important development in the reform in this area was the adoption on 30 November 2017 of a presidential decree on additional measures to strengthen guarantees of citizens' rights and freedoms in forensic activities. Under the decree, the application of torture, physical, psychological and other forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment on persons involved in criminal proceedings, or their close relatives, in the course of criminal proceedings is prohibited and the use of any data obtained by illegal means, in particular, audio and video recordings and material evidence, is strictly forbidden.

22. A fundamentally new system has been established in Uzbekistan to monitor the activities of government agencies and officials responsible for receiving and reviewing citizens' communications and providing remedies for persons whose rights and interests have been violated.

23. A policy outline for administrative reform in Uzbekistan has been approved with the aim of improving the system of State governance in line with contemporary global trends and innovative developments.

24. The administrative reform process envisages the fundamental overhaul and upgrading of the existing governance system. As part of the administrative reform process it is planned to review the operations of more than 100 State executive and economic management bodies. The process of upgrading and streamlining the work of government bodies is primarily targeted at enhancing measures to uphold the observance of citizens' rights and freedoms and is guided primarily by the practical implementation of the principle enunciated by the President of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, that it is not the people who are at the service of the State authorities, but the State authorities which are at the service of the people.

25. In 2017, the structure, tasks and functions of 20 ministries, departments and other organizations were reviewed and 20 State executive and economic management bodies and other organizations were revamped in line with modern requirements and priorities, as part of the State-building and social development programme.

26. The public services system in Uzbekistan is being steadily improved and upgraded, with the aim of enhancing the quality of life of the population, the investment climate, the entrepreneurial environment and business development.

27. Following the outline for administrative reform in Uzbekistan, it is planned, over the period 2017–2021, to introduce new approaches to the relationship between government agencies and citizens, underpinned by the adoption of a public service act.

II. Details on the implementation of articles 1–27 of the Covenant, including with regard to the previous recommendations of the Committee

Constitutional and legal framework within which the Covenant is implemented

Paragraph 4 of the concluding observations

Article 2 of the Covenant

28. In the course of implementing the strategy of action in five priority areas for the development of Uzbekistan over the period 2017–2021, dated 7 February 2017, more than 20 acts and pieces of delegated legislation have been adopted. These enactments were intended, among other objectives, to improve the activities of government agencies in the protection of rights and freedoms of citizens, the legal service and the system for processing communications and complaints from individuals and legal entities, to liberalize criminal and criminal procedure legislation, to revamp the judicial system and build trust in the courts, to regulate external labour migration, social rehabilitation and adaptation, and to prevent domestic violence.

29. A fundamentally new system has been established in Uzbekistan to monitor the activities of government agencies and officials responsible for receiving and reviewing citizens' communications and providing remedies for persons whose rights and interests have been violated. Public help desks and an online help desk with direct access to the Office of the President have been set up in all regions of the country, entrusted with such tasks as facilitating direct dialogue with the people, ensuring that the radically new and effective system for handling communications from individuals and legal entities runs smoothly and systematically monitoring and following up on the processing of communications submitted to the appropriate State executive and economic authorities.

30. A service has now been established in the Office of the President, the first of its kind in Uzbekistan, for the protection of citizens' rights, which is responsible for monitoring and coordinating the processing of communications from individuals and legal entities. The service's tasks include carrying out detailed analyses of the safeguards of citizens' rights and freedoms provided by State executive and economic authorities, identifying problems and shortcomings in their work and preparing proposals to improve law enforcement practice and the laws currently in force with a view to eliminating the factors and circumstances conducive to violations of citizens' rights and freedoms, in particular those identified during the processing of communications.

31. Increased importance is attached to parliamentary oversight of the work of State executive and administrative authorities and officials in upholding the Constitution and the laws of Uzbekistan and the decisions of the various chambers of the Oliy Majlis and their subsidiary bodies, in carrying out State programmes and in discharging the responsibilities and functions entrusted to them. In accordance with the Parliamentary Oversight Act of 11 August 2016, parliamentary oversight is to be carried out during the adoption of the State budget of Uzbekistan and in the course of monitoring its implementation, at hearings of reports of the Cabinet of Ministers on issues of crucial importance for the country's economic and social development, reports of the Prime Minister, members of the Government, the Accounts Chamber, the Office of the Procurator-General, the Central Bank and the State Committee on Environmental Science and Protection, during parliamentary and deputies' questions and parliamentary inquiries and on other such occasions.

32. Closer attention is being given by the parliament to the work of law enforcement agencies and, for this purpose, the Senate has set up special commissions to exercise parliamentary oversight of observance by the procuratorial and internal affairs authorities of the rule of the law and human rights.

33. In 2017, amendments and additions were made to the Oliy Majlis Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman) Act, designed to strengthen the legal status of the Office of the Ombudsman and to extend its rights and powers to enable it to work more effectively in providing remedies to citizens whose rights have been violated.

34. In order to improve the system of State governance in line with contemporary global trends and innovative developments, a presidential decree was adopted on 8 September 2017 approving the policy framework for administrative reform in Uzbekistan, which outlines a fundamental overhaul and upgrading of the existing governance system. As part of the administrative reform process it is planned to review the operations of more than 100 State executive and economic management bodies.

35. The public services system in Uzbekistan is being steadily improved and upgraded, with the aim of enhancing the quality of life of the population, the investment climate, the entrepreneurial environment and business development.

36. To raise the quality of the country's public services system to a transformative new level that fully meets the needs of the population and business entities and is capable of resolving specific system-wide issues, the President adopted decrees on 12 December 2017 on measures for the radical overhaul of the national system for the provision of public services to the population and a decision on the operation of the public services agency in the Ministry of Justice.

37. The decree approved a list of 58 public services which will be gradually introduced over the period 2018–2020 and provided at public service centres on a single-window basis. They include services widely demanded by the public, such as the connection of households to water supply, sanitation and heating networks and other mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems, authorization for individual housing construction projects, recording first and last dates of residence at a particular address and registration of domicile, and the issuance of various archival transcripts, patents, certificates and duplicate official documents.

38. Through the launch, on 1 April 2017, of an online system for the registration of business entities that reduces to 30 minutes the time taken to complete the registration procedure, Uzbekistan has been able to improve its position on the "Business registration" indicator of the Doing Business 2018 global ranking from 24 to 11.

39. The range of online services has been increased, in order to ensure that the public and businesses have the best possible access to public services. Business operators are now able to apply online for licences for various activities.

40. A system has been introduced whereby draft laws and regulations and government programmes that are under preparation or have been adopted are uploaded to a shared interactive public services portal, for broad public discussion. In 2017, government agencies and civil society organizations were actively involved in the preparation and review of more than 30 draft laws and other regulatory and statutory instruments and in the elaboration of proposed amendments and additions to the legislation on human rights and freedoms.

41. Close attention is being given to efforts to ensure the more effective protection of civil rights and to improve the work of the courts and law enforcement agencies within the framework of the Laws and Regulations Act, the Police Detective Work Act, the Pretrial Detention in Criminal Proceedings Act, the Procuratorial Service Act (new version), the Internal Affairs Agencies Act, the Courts Act, the Anti-Corruption Act, the Administrative Detention Enforcement Act, the Supreme Judicial Council Act and acts issued by the President aimed at strengthening the legal and social guarantees for court proceedings and the social status of judges.

42. In 2017, in order to give effect to arrangements for the realization of citizens' rights and freedoms, amendments and additions were made to the Citizenship Act and presidential decrees were issued amending the regulations on the procedure for the consideration of Uzbek citizenship issues, setting out radical measures to streamline the border exit procedures for citizens of Uzbekistan, approving regulations on the procedure for granting

political asylum in Uzbekistan and specifying measures for the further strengthening of inter-ethnic relations and friendly ties with foreign countries.

43. To ensure better coordination of the activities of ministries and departments, and also of civil society institutions working in the area of human rights protection, the following inter-agency coordinating structures have been created:

- Commission on Minors' Affairs of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan and branches of the Commission in the regions
- State Interdepartmental Commission to Combat Human Trafficking and its branches in the regions

44. The Constitution and laws of the Republic of Uzbekistan enshrine the principle of the primacy of international human rights, pursuant to which, if national laws are inconsistent with international rules, the rules of the international treaty prevail.

45. The provisions of the Covenant were included in the ruling on court verdicts handed down by the Plenum of the Supreme Court on 23 May 2014. Under article 21 (3) of the Courts Act, clarifications delivered by the Plenum of the Supreme Court on the application of legislation are binding on courts, other authorities, enterprises, institutions, organizations and officials applying the legislation which is being clarified.

46. In order to raise awareness of the Covenant by public officials and government agencies, essential measures have been taken to familiarize them with its content through additional classes, seminars, conferences and round tables for the instruction of judges, lawyers, officer cadets and law enforcement officers.

47. International treaty provisions are included in the curricula of the Presidential Public Service Academy, the Legal Professional Development Centre of the Ministry of Justice, the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Academy of the Procuratorial Service, the Tashkent State School of Law and the University of Global Economics and Diplomacy.

<i>Name of educational institution</i>	<i>Names of courses and subjects</i>
Presidential Public Service Academy	Legal foundations of the State public service Right to vote and electoral process Foundations of international law
Legal Professional Development Centre	Role of lawyers in civil and commercial cases Role of legal services in upholding the law on the labour rights of citizens Essence and substance of the Communications from Individuals and Legal Entities Act International and domestic mechanisms for the protection of human rights International standards for the administration of justice and the law of the Republic of Uzbekistan Rights of the child: international standards and Uzbek law Categorization of offences against life and their considerations by the courts Role and importance of the United Nations Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment in the system of international legal standards of justice and other areas
Academy of the Procuratorial	Training modules on the prevention of offences, forensics, criminal law

<i>Name of educational institution</i>	<i>Names of courses and subjects</i>
Service	
Tashkent State School of Law	International human rights law International labour law Rights of the child
University of Global Economics and Diplomacy	Human rights International human rights law

Paragraph 5 of the concluding observations

Article 2 of the Covenant

48. Pursuant to the changes and additions introduced in 2017 to the Ombudsman for Human Rights of the Oliy Majlis (Ombudsman) Act, provisions are made for material and other measures in support of the work of the Ombudsman to be funded from the State budget and for these funds to be reflected in a special budget line.

49. This Act was aimed at harmonizing the activities of the Ombudsman with the Paris Principles and at giving effect to recommendations of the United Nations treaty bodies regarding improvements in the area of human rights work. The Act gave the Ombudsman additional powers and means of protecting human rights and freedoms, including:

- Right of the Ombudsman to appeal to the Constitutional Court, to file actions and claims with the courts on behalf of complainants, to submit reports to the chambers of the Oliy Majlis on various aspects of human rights and freedoms, and to submit proposals to its committees on the consideration of communications from representatives of the State executive and administrative authorities
- Right to petition the heads of government agencies and other organizations on the need to remedy identified violations of the law on human rights and freedoms, and to eliminate their causes and contributing circumstances
- Right to lobby the relevant authorities to take legal action against persons whose acts have been found to violate human rights and freedoms
- Right to unrestricted visits to places of deprivation of liberty to examine the conditions of detention and to conduct private interviews with the detainees
- Strengthened status of the regional representatives of the Ombudsman
- Enlarged areas of interaction with civil society institutions, international organizations and foreign institutions for the protection of human rights

50. In December 2017 these laws were further elaborated by the following regulations, adopted pursuant to a joint resolution of the kengashes of the Legislative Chamber and the Senate on measures for the further improvement of the institutional and legal framework for the work of the Oliy Majlis Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman):

- Regulations on the Commission for the Observance of Constitutional Rights and Freedoms, under the authority of the Oliy Majlis Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman), which define the basic tasks, rights and obligations of the Commission, the procedure for its constitution and the safeguards for the rights of its members
- Regulations on the offices of the Oliy Majlis Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman) in the Republic of Qoraqalpog'iston, the provinces and the city of Tashkent, which govern the procedure for the appointment, tasks, rights and obligations of such regional offices, safeguards for their work, and their interaction with local government authorities in their areas and with civil society institutions

51. To give practical effect to the country's human rights laws, the Ombudsman:
- Has set in place an online help desk, at the address www.ombudsman.uz, and a telephone helpline for the submission of oral reports and for the provision of legal advice to citizens, and conducts personal interviews with citizens, including during visits to the regions
 - Participates in the work of inter-agency bodies set up to combat corruption and human trafficking, to study the status of the observance of human rights and freedoms by law enforcement and other authorities, and to upgrade the system of State support for persons with disabilities and the parliamentary commission set up to uphold citizens' guaranteed labour rights
 - Organizes the regular monitoring of observance of the rights and freedoms of persons held in custody by law enforcement agencies and, together with the committees of the chambers of the Oliy Majlis and in accordance with an approved schedule, monitors and analyses efforts to prevent torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment
52. In fulfilment of the recommendations of the Human Rights Committee concerning accreditation, a visit by experts from the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) has been scheduled, to assess the work of the Oliy Majlis Human Rights Commissioner.
53. In 2017, a new national human rights institution was created, the Commissioner for the protection of the rights and legitimate interests of business entities, who reports to the President and who will promote the introduction of new arrangements for effective dialogue between business entities and government agencies and the provision of additional guarantees of State protection for the rights and lawful interests of business entities.

Paragraph 6 of the concluding observations

Articles 2 and 26 of the Covenant

54. Part III of the common core document of Uzbekistan (HRI/CORE/UZB/2017) sets out details of the legal and institutional framework set in place to prevent discrimination and ensure equality.
55. As a democratic State, Uzbekistan has ratified a number of conventions and incorporated them in its law, thereby ensuring that all its people enjoy equal and effective protection against discrimination on any grounds. It also ensures the application of these rules.
56. Currently, there are 1,388 women occupying decision-making positions in the public sector and in civil society organizations. Of these, 45 are employed in ministries and departments, 39 in the Office of the President, the Senate and Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis, and the Cabinet of Ministers, 22 in civil society organizations, 207 in local authorities, and 1,075 are members of local councils of people's deputies. Currently, 17 members (20 per cent) of the Senate are women.
57. The country is taking sustained measures to strengthen safeguards for the protection of women's rights: thus, article 125-1 has been introduced in the Criminal Code and article 473 in the Code of Administrative Liability on liability for breach of the law on marriageable age.
58. Particular attention is being given to upholding women's labour rights: article 68 of the Labour Code has strengthened guarantees for the job placement of single parents, parents with numerous children under 14 years of age and parents of children with disabilities, for graduates of colleges and institutions of higher education, including girls and victims of trafficking in persons, especially women. Article 84 of the Labour Code exempts pregnant women, women with children under the age of 3 and graduates of upper secondary and vocational schools and institutions of higher education from the need to serve probationary periods once they are hired. A decision of the Cabinet of Ministers of 5 December 2017 lays down the procedure for interaction between local self-governing

bodies and the Youth Union, the Women's Committee and agencies dealing with labour and employment matters for the public, for young people and for women.

59. The Code of Criminal Liability includes rules on the liability incurred by parents or persons acting in their stead if they prevent children, including girls, from receiving general compulsory and secondary specialized vocational education. Local self-governing bodies have established commissions for work with women and commissions for public oversight, and there are 8,700 advisers in the country providing legal, psychological and other assistance to women and helping them to find employment.

60. Family legislation lays down the procedure for the division of property in the event of dissolution of the marriage, guaranteeing the rights of both spouses. Spouses have equal rights to common property, including in cases where one of them was occupied with housekeeping or care of the children or for any other valid reason did not have independent earnings or any other income.

61. Pursuant to the State Pensions Act, preferential treatment is accorded to citizens who lack the requisite number of working years but belong to certain categories of citizens regardless of the age of retirement, by reducing their prescribed age of retirement by 10 or 5 years. Among the benefits available to citizens, women are granted preferences in the calculation of seniority. Thus, among such benefits, the requisite service length for women employees is five years less than that for men and the requisite length of service for women employed full-time in underground work or working in highly dangerous and difficult conditions is half of that for men.

62. For women, time spent on leave to care for a child up to the age of 3, up to a maximum of three years, is included in calculating their length of service.

63. New regulations have been adopted on the responsibilities of the Deputy Prime Minister and chair of the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan, who is now responsible for ensuring the protection of women's rights and interests and for raising their legal and political profile in society.

64. In order to give more power to the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan, and also radically to upgrade its work to support indigenous women and to bolster the institution of the family, on 2 February 2018 a presidential decree was adopted on measures to that effect. The decree identifies the following priorities for the work of the Women's Committee:

- To ensure that women's problems are promptly identified, by identifying women in need of assistance or in difficult circumstances, including women with disabilities, and providing them with social, legal, psychological and financial support
- To provide targeted support in such areas as finding employment, securing better working conditions and ensuring the wider involvement of women, in particular young girls in rural areas, in family and private enterprises and handicrafts
- To ensure that government agencies and civil society organizations cooperate closely in the early prevention of crime among women, principally through one-to-one support for those most likely to commit offences; and also through measures to ensure the social rehabilitation and reintegration of women released from correctional institutions

65. For the purpose of conducting basic, applied and innovative research in areas of family values and traditions, a national applied research centre, known as the Oila ("Family") Centre, was set up under the Cabinet of Ministers along with its local branches. The centre's main objectives are to give wide publicity to the concept of healthy families as key to a healthy society and to promote the constitutional principle that places the family under the protection of society and the State.

66. A public foundation has been created to support women and families and its principal objectives are to ensure material assistance for women and families in difficult social situations and for women with disabilities, and also to support women's business initiatives.

67. A system for the collection, analysis and compilation of gender statistics is being perfected in order to monitor progress in ensuring gender equality, measured against 176 indicators relating to demographics, health, education, employment, social protection, public and political life, entrepreneurship and other factors.

Paragraph 7 of the concluding observations

Articles 2 and 26 of the Covenant

68. All citizens of Uzbekistan enjoy all the universal rights enshrined in international instruments and national law.

69. Decriminalizing article 120 of the Criminal Code runs counter to the traditions of the country's multi-ethnic population, its family values and national customs, which have been formed over the course of thousands of years, and would be strongly opposed by the public at large.

70. In Uzbek society, the traditional family is widely respected as a natural and fundamental social institution.

71. On 2 February 2018, a policy outline for the strengthening of the institution of the family was approved, pursuant to the presidential decree adopted on measures radically to upgrade efforts to support women and to uphold the institution of the family, which provides for comprehensive measures to strengthen the institution of the family and ensure that government agencies, civil society organizations and citizens participate actively and cooperate closely in that process. The outline covers five areas of activity:

- Upgrading the institutional and legal framework for strengthening the institution of the family and bolstering the social partnership
- Conducting fundamental, applied and innovative research on aspects of strengthening and developing the modern family
- Promoting demographic development and enhancing the well-being of families
- Boosting the educational potential of the family, while preserving traditional family values in society and enriching the spiritual and moral aspects of family life
- Creating an effective system for providing meaningful guidance, advice and practical assistance to families

Paragraph 8 of the concluding observations

Articles 2, 3, 23, 24 and 26 of the Covenant

72. The Women's Committee has carried out a further legal analysis of the bill on guarantees of equal rights and opportunities between women and men, which defines the principal areas of State policy to ensure equality between women and men and is aimed at improving opportunities for both men and women to exercise the full range of their rights and freedoms. Currently, the bill is under consideration by relevant ministries and departments.

73. Gender-balanced legislation has been developed in Uzbekistan on issues relating to equality between women and men in all spheres of public life. As a result, where the country's economy is concerned, the workforce is divided 44 per cent and 56 per cent between women and men, respectively. Women's employment levels are 40.3 per cent in education; 37.7 per cent in health; 28.4 per cent in culture and the arts; and 26.4 per cent in science and scientific services, and women's employment in small businesses and private enterprise has grown considerably.

74. The representation of women in the highest leadership positions of the country's executive bodies stands at 16 per cent. Women also hold the posts of deputy hokims (local governors) in 167 district and 26 urban administrations. The proportion of women in local government bodies is 17.1 per cent.

75. During the 2014 elections, 24 women deputies (16 per cent) were elected to the Legislative Chamber, 17 per cent to the Senate, and the proportion of women in political parties ranges from 30 to 50 per cent.

76. There are 3,294 women employed in the Ministry of Justice system, including 180 in management positions, 94 women judges and 856 female officers in the judiciary, and 27 per cent of the staff of the Ombudsman's secretariat are women.

77. In the country's employment make-up, there has been a sustained increase in the proportion of women, which currently measures 45.5 per cent. Some 170,000 women are employed in the business sector; 34 per cent of managers in the private sector are women; and every year some 500 new jobs are created for women through the growth of entrepreneurship, farming and home-based work.

78. The Bar Chamber and its local branches employ 52 women, including 2 in senior management positions.

79. Of the members of the trade unions that make up the Federation of Trade Unions of Uzbekistan, 48.6 per cent are women, as are 41 per cent of the chairs of primary trade union organizations, 14 per cent of the chairs of joint trade union committees, 23.2 per cent of the chairs of district and urban trade union councils, and 7.1 per cent of the chairs of the regional associations of trade union organizations. Women hold 32 per cent of the management posts in the administration of the Federation of Trade Unions of Uzbekistan. Of the 12 department chiefs in the Council of the Trade Union Federation of Uzbekistan, 33 per cent are women.

80. There are eight women holding leadership positions on the staff of the National Association of Non-Profit Non-Governmental Organizations of Uzbekistan, and women head 46 per cent of the country's non-profit non-governmental organizations.

81. The Oila National Applied Research Centre has drafted and submitted proposals on raising the marriageable age for women from 17 to 18 years and stiffening the administrative and criminal liability for entering into marriage with a person who has not attained the marriageable age (Code of Administrative Liability, art. 47-3; Criminal Code, art. 125-1).

82. A proposal has been drafted on introducing provisions in the rules on citizens' assemblies, making it obligatory for those chairing such assemblies to report cases of polygamy so that the perpetrators of that offence can be prosecuted. To enforce this mandatory requirement, it is planned to reconsider the administrative liability incurred by the chairs of those assemblies for failure to report offences. These draft amendments and additions to the relevant statutory instruments will be tabled for consideration by the Government.

83. On 12 June 2018 a presidential decision was adopted on measures for the further upgrading of the civil registration system, which provides for the abolition, with effect from 1 July 2018, of the government fee for notarial certification of marriage contracts and agreements on the payment of maintenance; and also for the consideration by the courts of applications for the recognition or establishment of paternity, of the provenance of a woman's child and also of the time of the child's birth.

84. One of the key provisions of the presidential decision concerns the establishment of regional commissions to investigate and identify unregistered births and deaths, and also marriages that have been concluded or dissolved, and to ensure their subsequent registration in civil registry offices headed by district or municipal hokims.

85. The Women's Committee of Uzbekistan, working together with the Ministry of Internal Affairs, has adopted a programme of activities to promote accountability for breaches of the law on marriageable age and to publicize the mandatory nature of secondary specialized and vocational education, in particular among girls. A plan is currently being put into effect to give wide coverage in the print media, on television and over the radio to stories about the strengthening and safeguarding of families, and the prevention of divorce, domestic violence and other negative practices.

86. The Women's Committee, in conjunction with interested ministries and departments, regularly organizes events with students from universities and upper secondary and vocational schools to raise awareness among these young people about healthy lifestyles, reproductive health, the importance of mandatory premarital medical examinations, the bearing and raising of healthy children, the prevention of early pregnancy and childbirth, and to strengthen advocacy and outreach work to foster a desire in young people to create their own healthy and prosperous families and to lead healthy lifestyles.

87. The Women's Committee holds thematic meetings on the prevention of early marriage and premarital medical examinations, the importance of marriage contracts and the legal safeguards provided by a registered marriage.

88. Questions relating to the legal framework for gender equality and efforts to improve the gender balance, and to the difficulty of categorizing offences against sexual freedom are covered in the curricula of the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Academy of the Procuratorial Service and the Legal Professional Development Centre of the Ministry of Justice.

89. In addition, employees of the law enforcement agencies, the court system and judges participate in the conduct of various courses, workshops, symposiums and conferences on these subjects organized both by government agencies and by civil society and international organizations.

90. Over the course of 2017, the courts heard 26 cases involving breach of the law on marriageable age (Code of Criminal Liability, art. 473), brought against 48 persons. Also during 2017, 33 prosecutions were brought against 34 persons for polygamy (Criminal Code, art. 126). In addition, in 2018, two such cases were brought against two individuals (see annex to the report).

Paragraph 9 of the concluding observations

Articles 2, 3, 7 and 26 of the Covenant

91. A programme of practical measures to improve the system of social rehabilitation and adaptation, and also to prevent domestic violence, was approved by the presidential decision of 2 July 2018 on such measures. Under this programme, a bill is to be prepared on the prevention of domestic violence. The programme includes measures to prevent conflict, domestic violence and suicidal behaviour. A separate section of the programme covers measures to improve the system of specialist training and professional guidance, and also awareness-raising activities. Pursuant to a decision of the Office of the Procurator-General, it is planned to establish strict oversight over the rule of law in the family and domestic sphere and to stipulate the mandatory liability incurred by each case of domestic violence and invasion of privacy. Together with the Supreme Court and the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Office of the Procurator-General has been instructed to take measures to ensure that victims of domestic violence have unconditional and unimpeded access to justice and to full protection. Law enforcement officers will be trained in how to take effective action in conflict situations and cases where domestic violence has been uncovered. The document requires the Ministry of Health promptly to inform the law enforcement agencies, local branches of the Women's Committee and the Oila Centre of each instance of violence against family members in at-risk groups.

92. In recent years, following extensive amendments to criminal law, offences against the family and minors have been consolidated in chapter V of the Code, on offences against the family, young persons and moral standards. Pursuant to these amendments, offences against the family are deemed to be those that impair specific social relationships underpinning the sound moral, intellectual and physical development of adolescents that are defined, guaranteed and protected by Uzbek law.

93. Article 121 of the Criminal Code, on coercing a woman into sexual relations, has been amended to include punishment in the form of restriction of liberty for a period of between three and five years. The Criminal Code has been supplemented with an article 130-1, on the preparation, import, distribution, advertising or demonstration of products

that promote a cult of violence or cruelty; article 133, on the removal of human organs or tissues; article 138, on the forced and unlawful deprivation of liberty; and article 234, on unlawful detention or remand in custody.

94. In general terms, liability is provided under the country's current criminal law for the offence of marital rape. Thus, under article 118 of the Criminal Code, rape – that is, sexual intercourse involving the threat or use of violence or by taking advantage of the helpless state of the victim – is a punishable offence. Under paragraph (b) of the third part of that article, rape by a spouse is also covered by the offence of rape by a close relative (the notion of relative is defined in section 8 of the Criminal Code).

95. In 2017, 269 cases were considered and 324 individuals were prosecuted for rape under article 118 of the Code. During the first quarter of 2018, 51 cases were considered under that article and 62 individuals were prosecuted.

96. In 2017, 23 cases were brought against 46 individuals, 18 of whom were then prosecuted, on counts of having compelled a woman to enter into marriage or having prevented a woman from entering into marriage (Criminal Code, art. 136). In addition, during the first quarter of 2018, two further such cases were brought against six persons who, following reconciliation of the parties, were then released from criminal liability (see annex).

97. On 6 July 2017 the Interdepartmental Commission to Combat Crime and Prevent Offences approved a package of measures for the prevention of domestic violence over the period 2017–2018. The package comprises arrangements to study the causes and conditions that lead to domestic violence. All complaints lodged in connection with any form of domestic violence are registered and investigated by the internal affairs agencies in the prescribed manner. In cases in which, as a result of domestic violence, a person is caused minor bodily harm without prejudice to health, a case file is opened for the purpose of instituting administrative proceedings against the offenders under article 52 of the Code of Administrative Liability and is referred to the court in accordance with the procedure prescribed by law.

98. In order to identify and eliminate the causes and conditions conducive to the commission of crimes of violence, guidelines have been developed on the conduct of investigations into attempts on the life and health of individuals, and into offences committed by persons whose names are on the preventive watch list of the internal affairs agencies. Section heads of the internal affairs agencies report regularly to the public on work carried out in this area. With the help of the media, efforts are being made to track down perpetrators of serious crimes of violence and to convey specific recommendations to women on actions for them to take in extreme situations to prevent the use of violence against them.

99. In June 2018, a policy outline was adopted to strengthen the institution of the family, under which centres for the social adaptation of women – or crisis centres – are to be established in each region and these centres will provide women victims of violence with the full range of psychological, social, legal and rehabilitative services. Such centres have already started operating in many regions. Consideration is being given, in the process of revising the Criminal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure, to introducing a system of free legal aid to victims of violence, provided at the State's expense, and to the procedure for granting such aid.

100. On 2 July 2018, a presidential decision was adopted on measures to improve the system of social rehabilitation and adaptation, and also that for the prevention of domestic violence, which provides for the establishment of a national centre for the rehabilitation and adaptation of persons who have suffered from violence and for the prevention of suicide. Over time, rehabilitation centres will be established in the regions, under the responsibility of the local branches of the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan.

101. Women's rights issues, including the suppression of violence against women and children, are included in a number of subjects taught at the Department of International Law and Human Rights and other departments of the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, in the curricula of the Legal Professional Development Centre of the Ministry of

Justice, for judges and lawyers in civil and criminal cases, and the Academy of the Procuratorial Service, for procuratorial officials.

102. The in-service training system for staff of the crime prevention service and internal affairs officers includes the study of international instruments for the prevention of various forms of discrimination against women and of violence against women. The in-house dual-language newspapers of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, *Ha postu* and *Postda* (“In the Line of Duty”), regularly list the contact telephone numbers of the Ministry, its specialized services and its local branches, which members of the public can call on matters of domestic violence and protection for the rights of victims of violence. To keep the public informed about the outcome of work on the above-mentioned issues, the Ministry makes active use of the resources of the media – television, radio and the press – including live press briefings, radio broadcasts, the in-house publications *Na postu* and *Postda* and *Shchit* and *Qalqon* (“Shield”), and others.

103. In 2017, the staff of the crime prevention service of the Uzbek internal affairs authorities conducted a total of 37,958 (33,219 in 2016) meetings, talks and lectures on legal topics, including the prevention of delinquency among minors and young people, the protection of their rights and lawful interests, including 9,859 such events (7,733 in 2016) with the public in mahallas (self-governing citizens’ associations) in their residential areas, 279 (249 in 2016) with university students, 8,467 (6,800 in 2016) with students of upper secondary and vocational schools and 19,353 (18,437 in 2016) with schoolchildren.

104. The Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs regularly organizes conferences, round tables, workshops and thematic meetings for officer cadets, trainees and permanent staff on topics which cover issues of the protection of women’s rights, including, in particular, international and national mechanisms for protection of the rights of women and children; the work of the internal affairs agencies to combat and prevent violence against women and children; preventive measures mounted by the internal affairs agencies to prevent violence against women and children in the family; international instruments and Uzbek law on the prevention of offences against women and children; details of the observance by internal affairs officers of the conventions on the rights of the child and the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women; and specific features of investigative work by detectives of the internal affairs agencies in cases of violence against women.

105. As part of their legal advocacy work with mahalla committees and educational institutions in the city of Tashkent, faculty members of the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs have also been conducting awareness-raising events on such topics as the prevention of violence in families, the role of the Conciliation Commission in preventing early marriage, the work of crime prevention inspectors in the suppression of domestic violence, and others.

106. The Academy has a Women’s Committee, which has been set up to ensure the application of provisions relating to the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and to gender equality, by carrying out presentations, conferences, workshops, round tables, sociological surveys and psychological testing. Over the reporting period, the Committee held more than 50 such events, with the participation of 1,194 women. The events covered issues related to the prevention of domestic and family violence.

107. The Academy of the Procuratorial Service organizes instruction in the prevention and eradication of violence against women. In addition, the journal *Akademiya Axborotnomasi* (“Academy Bulletin”) publishes articles on the prevention and elimination of violence.

108. Lecturers at the Tashkent State School of Law carry out educational, awareness-raising and publishing activities on the prevention and elimination of violence against women for the general public, covering such issues as the preservation of the family and the reduction of cases of divorce, marriage under sharia law, and others.

109. During the first half of 2017, thanks to action by the Women’s Committee and the Mahalla Foundation, it was possible to avoid 12,000 divorces and resolve the alimony payment problems of 10,000 citizens. Psychosocial support was administered to 978

families in conflict, 846 women whose husbands had left the country, and 995 families in serious difficulty because of various illnesses.

110. Integrated groups have been set up in every region, district, city and mahalla to study the social and economic situation of families and their moral and spiritual welfare. For example, 60 per cent of the problems identified in families were resolved at the mahalla level and 40 per cent were followed up by district and regional hokimiyats and incorporated into local development programmes. To date, 193 district and municipal development programmes based on the needs and wishes of the people have been submitted to the Cabinet of Ministers.

111. Among the various activities carried out over the course of 2016 by the Women's Committee, together with government agencies and other civil society organizations, 91,461 were aimed at improving the legal awareness of the population, 70,982 involved work with troubled families, and 44,512 were focused on crime prevention, human trafficking and illegal migration.

112. Statistical compendiums are now regularly published on the status of women and men in Uzbekistan and, to improve the system for disseminating information on women's rights, the State Statistics Committee, working in conjunction with the Women's Committee, has launched its official website at the address gender.stat.uz, which contains data on health, education, work and social protection from a gender perspective. In addition, a system has been set in place to train representatives of government agencies and non-profit non-governmental organizations in the collection and analysis of gender statistics with the participation of international experts.

113. Awareness-raising measures are being conducted by the Women's Committee and the Oila National Applied Research Centre in the press, on social media and on television and radio, and flyers have been produced on the prevention of violence against women.

114. Nine social and legal support centres and 170 advisory centres for women have been set up in the regions and are operating as non-profit non-governmental organizations on a pro bono basis. They provide social, psychological and legal support and assistance in the job placement of women living in difficult circumstances. In the course of 2016, 6,685 women in crisis situations contacted these centres either in person or via their hotlines. In response to their applications, these women received the following services free of charge: 1,439 received essential legal advice; 467 – psychological assistance, 197 – material assistance; 128 – assistance with finding jobs; 258 – opportunities to acquire vocational skills; 143 – documents for submission to the court; 72 – legal support in judicial proceedings; and 168 – temporary housing.

Paragraph 10 of the concluding observations

Articles 2 and 6 of the Covenant

115. The events in Andijon in May 2005 were associated with terrorist attacks resulting in the loss of life and causing extensive damage to private and government property. In response to these incidents, criminal proceedings were instituted and, in the investigation, it was established that the terrorist acts had been committed by members of Akromiya, a religious extremist organization.

116. In all, there were 187 victims, 63 of whom were civilians and 31 law enforcement officers and soldiers who were killed by the terrorists. Counter-terrorism measures resulted in the elimination of 89 members of the religious extremist organization Akromiya.

117. In all, 287 persons received injuries of varying degrees of severity, including 91 civilians, 49 law enforcement officers and 59 soldiers, and 76 terrorists were injured.

118. During their terrorist attacks, the culprits took 70 people hostage and brutally slaughtered 15 of them.

119. At the end of the preliminary investigation, criminal cases against 362 persons involved in the perpetration of terrorist acts in Andijon were referred to the courts.

120. During open hearings, the guilt of all the accused was fully established on the basis of the evidence obtained in the criminal proceedings and a range of sentences was handed down.

121. On two occasions, from 11 to 16 December 2006, and from 1 to 4 April 2007, the European Union dispatched delegations to Uzbekistan. These delegations visited sites related to the tragic events, conducted face-to-face interviews with witnesses and reviewed the investigation materials and the court proceedings.

122. During these meetings, representatives of the European Union heard reports on the findings of the investigation into the Andijon events, including on the issue of proportionality in the use of firearms by security forces, and received answers to the questions which they raised. A trip was arranged for the representatives to Andijon province, where they were able to visit the sites of the terrorist acts and where the sequence of events was explained to them. Accordingly, following this meeting, the European Union experts came to the unequivocal conclusion that the Andijon events had been a serious terrorist attack against Uzbekistan.

123. On two occasions, from 11 to 16 December 2006, and from 1 to 4 April 2007, the European Union dispatched delegations to Uzbekistan. These delegations visited sites related to the tragic events, conducted face-to-face interviews with witnesses and reviewed the investigation materials and the court proceedings.

124. In the light of the foregoing, the initiation of an international investigation is not considered appropriate.

125. The basic requirements and procedures relating to the use of force and firearms are spelled out in the laws and regulations governing the work of the law enforcement and security forces. Thus, the Internal Affairs Agencies Act clearly stipulates the conditions under which physical force, special devices and firearms may be used. More extensive explanations are provided in internal official documents.

126. Weapons may not be used against women, persons showing manifest signs of disability or minors when their age is known or is obvious, except in the event of such persons mounting an armed attack, armed resistance or a group attack that threatens the life and health of citizens or an internal affairs officer.

127. Internal affairs officers are not permitted to use firearms in places where significant numbers of people are gathered and collateral damage may result.

128. A list of the types of firearms and ammunition issued to the internal affairs authorities is approved by the President of Uzbekistan. The issuance to and use by the internal affairs authorities of firearms and ammunition not included in the list are prohibited.

Paragraph 11 of the concluding observations

Articles 4, 7, 9, 10, 14, 18 and 19 of the Covenant

129. Under the Constitution, the President may, in exceptional cases for the sake of public safety, declare a state of emergency applicable throughout the territory of Uzbekistan or in specific localities and submit a decision to that effect within three days for ratification by the Chambers of the Oliy Majlis. The conditions and procedure for the imposition of a state of emergency are regulated by law.

130. No state of emergency was ever declared in Uzbekistan over the period 2015–2018. In exceptional circumstances (a genuine external threat, mass riots, major or natural disasters or epidemics), and to ensure public safety, the President declares a state of emergency throughout the territory of Uzbekistan or in specific localities and submits the decision to that effect within three days for approval by the Chambers of the Oliy Majlis. The conditions and procedure for the imposition of a state of emergency are regulated by law: article 93 (19) of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

131. The Counter-Terrorism Act of the Republic of Uzbekistan sets out clear definitions of the concepts of “terrorism” and “terrorist activity” as understood in the country’s law.

Under article 2 of the Act, the concept of terrorism is defined as the use or threat of violence or other criminal acts that endanger the life or health of individuals or threaten to destroy or damage property and other physical facilities and are designed to compel a State, an international organization, an individual or a legal entity to perform or abstain from performing any act, to disrupt international relations, to encroach upon sovereignty or territorial integrity, to undermine State security, to provoke armed conflicts, to intimidate the public, to destabilize the social and political situation, or to achieve political, religious, ideological or other purposes for which criminal liability is established by the Criminal Code. The Act defines the term “terrorist activity” to mean activities which include the organization, planning, preparation and perpetration of terrorist acts, incitement to terrorist acts, the formation of terrorist organizations, the recruitment, training and arming of terrorists, their financing and logistical support.

132. Terrorism is criminalized under article 155 of the Criminal Code and, in consequence, all the principles of the Code, as set out in its General Part, also apply to persons suspected or accused of terrorism.

133. In accordance with articles 2, 6, 7, 9 and 14 of the Covenant, the following rights are to be guaranteed to perpetrators of terrorist acts:

- Pursuant to article 5 of the Criminal Code, equality before the law without distinction as to sex, race, ethnicity, language, religion, social background, beliefs, personal situation or status in the community
- Right to life, insofar as article 155 of the Criminal Code does not provide for the death penalty, which has been abolished in Uzbekistan
- Right to protection against torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, in accordance with article 235 of the Criminal Code
- With the introduction in Uzbekistan of habeas corpus pursuant to articles 242 and 243 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, the right to security of person and protection from unlawful detention and imprisonment; and also the right to have their case reviewed by an independent and impartial court and to a judicial review of the judgment on appeal, in cassation or in supervisory proceedings, in accordance with the Code of Criminal Procedure

134. Despite the fact that terrorism is one of the most heinous crimes, in the course of the investigation of a criminal case, the same rules of the criminal procedure law of Uzbekistan apply to the perpetrators of terrorist acts as to the perpetrators of other offences.

135. In particular, along with the other rights established by the aforementioned articles, they have the fundamental right to protection; the rights to make a telephone call to a lawyer or close relative from the moment of actual detention, to refuse to give evidence, to be informed that testimony may be used against them as evidence, and to meet with a lawyer in private without any restriction as to the duration and number of interviews; and other rights.

136. Currently, specific actions are being taken to protect the rights of persons from effects of the conduct of counter-terrorism operations. On 24 May 2017, the Cabinet of Ministers issued a decision approving regulations for the compensation of harm caused to individuals or damage to the property of individuals or legal entities as a result of counter-terrorism operations. The regulations provide for reimbursement of the costs incurred by such persons and for the damage to their property and the provision of free medical assistance in the event of personal injury and, in the event of their death, the payment of a pension or a survivor’s benefit to a member of their family. There are regulations covering the consideration of applications for the payment of compensation for damage to property.

137. A bill on countering extremism has been considered by the Legislative Chamber and approved by the Senate of the Oliy Majlis and has now been submitted to the President for ratification.

Paragraph 12 of the concluding observations

Articles 2 and 6

138. Over the reporting period, efforts have continued in Uzbekistan to give full effect to the rights and interests of persons held in remand centres and correctional facilities.

139. A law passed on 29 March 2017 introduced a series of amendments into the Penalties Enforcement Code to strengthen safeguards for the effective protection of the rights of convicted persons. In particular, they have the rights:

- To receive information on procedures and conditions for the serving of their sentences and on their rights and obligations
- To file proposals, applications and complaints in their native language or in another language with the prison administration, the body enforcing the sentence and other government agencies and civil society associations
- To receive responses to their proposals, applications and complaints, in the language in which they were submitted, and to receive health care, including medical attention, outpatient and inpatient, in accordance with a medical report

140. Round-the-clock medical care is available in every facility in the correctional system and they each have a medical unit providing inpatient and outpatient services.

141. Where the lives of convicted persons are in danger, to ensure their personal safety and with their consent, they are transferred to another facility of the same category to serve the remainder of their sentences.

142. Where there is a risk of unlawful acts against convicted persons, they are held in isolation from other inmates. In addition, to ensure the safety of convicted persons, all facilities are equipped with modern video surveillance equipment.

143. In the event that convicted persons or persons remanded in custody incur physical injuries, they immediately undergo a medical examination by medical staff at the detention facility. On the basis of a decision by the head of the facility, or by the official or authority in charge of the criminal case, rendered on their own initiative or at the request of a detainee or remand prisoner or of that person's counsel, the medical examination may be conducted by health-care professionals of the public health system.

144. A system has been set in place to train medical staff in the application of international standards for the identification of victims of torture. Continuous training is provided to medical professionals of the correctional system in identifying the medical and biological indicia of torture or ill-treatment. The training is administered by the Faculty of Forensic Medicine of the Tashkent Institute of Advanced Medical Training, under the responsibility of the Ministry of Health.

145. Since 2010, more than 600 medical professionals working in the correctional system have undergone specialized training and refresher courses in the Tashkent Institute of Advanced Medical Training. During the first six months of 2018, 30 medical professionals attended in-service training and refresher courses in the Institute in the detection of medical and biological signs of torture or ill-treatment.

146. Mortality rate of persons held in correctional facilities:

Year	Total	Cause of death	
		by disease	as a result of injuries, accidents and suicide
2015	0.5%	0.48%	0.2%
2016	0.46%	0.45%	0.01%
2017	0.38%	0.36%	0.02%
during the first 5 months of 2018	0.16%	0.15%	0.01%

147. In the event of the death of a convicted person or remand prisoner the facility administration immediately notifies the person's close relatives, legal representative, official or authority in charge of the criminal case, and also the procurator.

148. Upon the death of a convicted person or remand prisoner a preliminary inquiry is conducted, with a forensic medical examination carried out by the health authorities. If violence is established as the cause of death, criminal proceedings are instituted against the perpetrators.

149. Over the period 2015–2018, there were two cases of the death of convicted persons where criminal prosecutions were initiated by the procuratorial authorities in the correctional facilities under the first part of article 97 of the Criminal Code.

150. It should be noted that, over the past 15 years, there have been no reported cases of the arbitrary deprivation of life of persons held in facilities of the correctional system.

Paragraphs 13 and 14 of the Committee's concluding observations

Articles 2, 7 and 14 of the Covenant

151. Uzbekistan has continued to apply the provisions of the Convention against Torture. Thus, article 8 of the Internal Affairs Agencies Act of 16 September 2016 stipulates that internal affairs officials are forbidden to employ torture, violence or any other cruel or degrading treatment.

152. An Act of 9 January 2017 on the procedure for the application of administrative detention includes provisions designed to prevent and eliminate the torture of persons held in administrative detention. In particular, the personal security of such persons is to be ensured and the use on them of physical force and special devices should not involve the infliction of any suffering, nor be accompanied by cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. The procurator is to be notified without delay of every case in which harm is caused to the lives and health of persons taken into custody and of any other persons (art. 29).

153. By an Act of 4 April 2018, amending and supplementing certain statutory instruments of Uzbekistan related to the adoption of measures to strengthen guarantees of citizens' rights and freedoms in forensic investigative activities, liability has been stiffened for the use of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, and the range of possible victims and culprits has been widened.

154. Following recent amendments, the Criminal Code defines torture as unlawful mental, psychological, physical or other pressure on persons subjected to administrative detention, and also on suspects, accused persons, defendants, convicted persons, witnesses, victims or other parties to criminal proceedings, or their close relatives, by means of threats, the infliction of blows, beatings, cruel treatment, the causing of suffering or other unlawful actions, committed by the officers of law enforcement or other government agencies or at their instigation or with their consent or, with their acquiescence, by other persons with the aim of obtaining from them or from third parties any information or an admission of the commission of an offence, of securing their unauthorized punishment for a given act or of coercing them to commit any acts.

155. New qualifying elements (aggravating circumstances) have been introduced, including: torture inflicted on two or more persons; with the use of objects which may cause harm to life or health; for the purpose of falsifying (counterfeiting) evidence.

156. The first part of article 235 of the Criminal Code establishes a punishment, where there are no qualifying elements, in the form of restriction or deprivation of liberty for between three and five years. Previously, the maximum penalty was three years' deprivation of liberty.

157. The second part of article 235 stipulates the punishment, where there are no qualifying elements, of deprivation of liberty for between five and seven years. If, however, serious bodily harm has been inflicted or where there are other grave consequences, the punishment ranges from seven to ten years' deprivation of liberty.

158. In addition to the above penalties, a mandatory additional penalty has been introduced: deprivation of a specified right. This might be, for example, the right to work for the law enforcement agencies.

159. Moreover, the Act establishes criminal liability for falsifying (counterfeiting) evidence and falsifying (counterfeiting) the findings of police detective work; the liability for perjury and false denunciation has also been stiffened. Furthermore, pursuant to this Act, the Code of Criminal Procedure has been supplemented by an article 951, which rules that factual evidence is considered inadmissible as evidence if it was obtained by unlawful means or by denial or restriction of the legally guaranteed rights of persons involved in criminal proceedings or in breach of the provisions of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

160. The mandatory video-recording of the principal stages of legal proceedings is an important innovation, designed to ensure legality and objectivity in the gathering and securing of evidence, introduced pursuant to a presidential decree of 30 November 2017 on additional measures to strengthen guarantees of citizens' rights and freedoms in forensic activities. Such elements include the examination of crime scenes in the case of especially serious offences, searches, the checking of testimony at the scene of events and re-enactments.

161. Vigorous efforts are under way in Uzbekistan to bring the perpetrators of torture to justice, in particular when these are officers of the internal affairs agencies.

162. Overall, in 2015, 14 criminal cases were considered under article 235 of the Criminal Code and 29 persons convicted, including 11 persons sentenced to punitive deduction of earnings and 13 to deprivation of liberty, and 4 were sentenced under other articles of the Code; in 2016, 20 criminal cases were considered and 21 persons convicted, of whom 1 was fined; 3 sentenced to punitive deduction of earnings; 3 to restriction of liberty; 4 to deprivation of liberty; and 2 to suspended imprisonment. Over the course of 2017, 13 cases were considered involving 28 individuals charged with the use of torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

163. During the first six months of 2018, the Central Department of Corrections received 123 communications (compared to 176 in 2015, 224 in 2016 and 241 in 2017) from citizens, alleging unlawful acts by staff members of the correctional system, 41 of which were reports of the use of torture against persons remanded in custody and convicted prisoners.

164. Over the period from 2015 to 2018, three employees of the correctional system were prosecuted under article 235 of the Criminal Code (on the use of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment).

165. Over the same period, 53 complaints of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment were also submitted to the Ombudsman. Following their consideration, three criminal cases were instituted, seven decisions were handed down on the rejection of criminal proceedings, and prosecutions were opened against four employees of the internal affairs agencies.

166. A schedule for the organization and conduct in 2018 of monitoring and analytical work to prevent torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment has been ratified and is now being put into effect by the chambers of parliament and the Ombudsman, with a view to ensuring effective compliance with the law. The schedule includes regular joint activities to review progress in the consideration of comparable complaints and the monitoring of remand centres, special holding facilities and correctional institutions, to hear reports from representatives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs on the implementation of relevant international treaties of the Republic of Uzbekistan, and other measures.

167. To ensure the timely prevention and suppression of violence, torture and unlawful conduct where detainees are concerned, over 2,500 closed-circuit cameras have been installed in the country's correctional facilities (some 1,700 of those in correctional colonies and more than 880 in remand centres).

168. Furthermore, in 2018, surveillance cameras were installed in all 11 remand centres of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, numbering 123 in total, and 43 investigation rooms in

those centres were also fitted with a total of 42 video cameras with sound recording devices. It is planned to install an additional 285 closed-circuit cameras by the end of 2018.

169. Efforts are also being made to raise awareness among the general public regarding the prohibition of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. Over the reporting period in 2018, 84 media spots were arranged. These included 37 broadcasts on television and 7 on the radio, 37 articles in newspapers and 5 in journals, and 5 publications on Internet sites.

170. Pursuant to paragraph 24 of the decision of the Plenum of the Supreme Court of 22 December 2006, on certain issues relating to the application by the courts of acts of amnesty, the range of persons who are not covered by an act of amnesty is to be established by that act, which is to be exhaustive and may not be more broadly interpreted.

Paragraph 15 of the concluding observations

Articles 9 and 14 of the Covenant

171. The following amendments and additions have been made to criminal and criminal procedure law to improve the protection of human rights in the administration of justice and to strengthen judicial supervision of the activities of the pretrial investigation agencies:

- The penalty of short-term rigorous imprisonment has been dropped from article 43 of the Criminal Code.
- In accordance with article 451, the criminal penalty of short-term rigorous punishment has been abolished and community service has been introduced into the system of criminal penalties.
- In accordance with article 1661 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, the courts have been accorded the right to consider applications for the seizure of postal and telegraphic correspondence.
- Under article 226 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, the duration of police custody has been reduced from 72 to 48 hours from the time of delivery of the detainee to the internal affairs agencies or other law enforcement body; article 4151 of the Code of Criminal Procedure sets new rules requiring the courts, among other measures, without delay to remedy shortcomings in pretrial investigations or substantial procedural violations of the Code without referring the criminal case for further investigation.
- A procedure has been approved for the serving of sentences consisting of mandatory community service and a list drawn up of the different forms of such service.

172. Number of applications submitted to the courts for authorization to remand persons in custody:

<i>Period</i>	<i>Number of applications</i>	<i>Including:</i>		
		<i>Granted</i>	<i>Refused</i>	<i>Withdrawn by the procurators</i>
2017	12 883	12 817	53	13
First quarter 2018	2 056	2 049	7	

173. In accordance with article 49 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, a lawyer may be admitted to a case at any stage of criminal proceedings and, when persons are taken into custody, from the actual moment when their rights to freedom of movement are restricted.

174. In order to uphold the adversarial principle in criminal proceedings, article 87 of the Code of Criminal Procedure has been amended to accord the defence counsel the right to gather and present evidence in criminal proceedings, subject to the inclusion of such evidence in the criminal case file and to its mandatory evaluation during the initial inquiry, the interrogation, the preliminary investigation and the court proceedings. This evidence can be gathered by interviewing persons in possession of relevant information and by

obtaining written statements provided with their consent; by requesting and obtaining certificates, testimonials, clarifications and other documents from government and other agencies, and also from enterprises, institutions and organizations.

175. No complaints have been received by the Bar Chamber and its local branches regarding the lawfulness of custody for remand, including the lawfulness of court rulings to that effect. Under Uzbek law, arrest warrants (police detention orders) are not obtained by application to the courts but raised directly by duly authorized officers of the law enforcement agencies and by citizens in exercise of the citizen's arrest initiative.

176. Applications for preventive measures in the form of remand in custody are to be considered in the presence of the procurator, the suspect or the accused, and the defence counsel (if counsel is involved in the case).

177. In addition, in line with article 1021 of the Civil Code, compensation is granted for moral harm, irrespective of whether guilt can be established, whenever harm is caused to an individual as a result of an unlawful conviction, an unlawful criminal prosecution, unlawful remand in custody or extraction of a pledge of good conduct as a preventive measure, unlawful administrative penalties or unlawful imprisonment.

178. As stipulated by article 1022 of the Civil Code, compensation for moral harm is payable in cash. The amount of compensation for moral harm is to be determined by the court, depending on the nature of the physical and moral suffering inflicted on the victim, and also on the degree of the perpetrator's culpability in cases where culpability constitutes the ground for compensation. In determining the amount of compensation due account should be taken of the requirements of reasonableness and fairness. The nature of physical and mental suffering is determined by taking account of the actual circumstances under which the moral harm was caused and the individual characteristics of the victim. Compensation for moral harm is to be paid irrespective of any loss of or damage to property for which compensation is payable.

179. Following a presidential decision of 16 March 2018 on measures for the fundamental upgrading of the psychiatric care system, a bill has been drafted to amend and supplement the new version of the Psychiatric Care Act and to ensure its approval by the nine ministries and departments concerned. The Act has been supplemented with articles specifying and expanding the scope of protection of the rights and interests of persons with mental disabilities, and also the protection of personnel involved in the provision of mental health care. In accordance with a presidential decision, the global action plan on the public health response to dementia 2017–2025 is being adapted, with technical support from the WHO country office in Uzbekistan.

180. The procedure for involuntary committal to a psychiatric hospital is governed by civil law and requires a mandatory judicial procedure. The procedure is administered in accordance with chapter 32 of the Code of Civil Procedure of the Republic of Uzbekistan, on the involuntary committal of persons to a psychiatric hospital or the extension of their hospitalization (arts. 317–319).

181. Work has been completed on the coordination with the relevant ministries and departments of a bill to amend and supplement certain statutory instruments of the Republic of Uzbekistan, which provides for amendments and additions to the criminal law, to regulate the use of coercive measures of a medical nature on persons suffering from mental disabilities who have committed socially dangerous acts.

Paragraph 16 of the concluding observations

Articles 7 and 9 of the Covenant

182. Procedural safeguards to protect the rights of persons held in custody and accused persons have been strengthened. Thus, under article 46 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, accused persons have the right to know the offences with which they have been charged, to give testimony and explanations on the charges laid against them, to use their own language, with the services of an interpreter, and to conduct their own defence. Articles 24 and 64 of

the Code stipulate that the official conducting the initial inquiry, the investigator, the procurator and the court are required to read suspects and accused persons their rights and to give them genuine opportunities to exercise their right to a defence. In accordance with articles 49–52 of the Code, legal aid is provided free of charge. Accused persons are entitled to have private meetings with their counsel without limit as to their number and duration. Persons held in custody and accused persons are entitled to be represented by a lawyer from the moment of their arrest, and to conduct their own defence. If accused persons or defendants are being held in custody, their defence counsel may conduct interviews with them in private without restriction as to their number or duration (Code of Criminal Procedure, art. 53).

183. Persons under administrative detention have, among other rights, the right to receive information about the procedure and conditions for serving their administrative detention, and their rights and duties; to submit applications, suggestions and complaints; to be held in conditions that ensure their personal safety and health and to receive medical care; to have access to a lawyer, family members or other individuals; to one limited telephone conversation per day within the territory of Uzbekistan; to perform religious rites provided that these do not run counter to the internal facility rules, or the rights, freedoms and lawful interests of other persons; and to receive and keep medical products, in accordance with prescribed procedure.

184. Persons who, upon the determination of the medical officer at the special holding centre, are in need of inpatient medical attention, are transferred to State medical facilities. When individuals taken into administrative detention are transferred to hospital for medical attention, their relatives or other persons designated by them are notified without delay. The time spent administering inpatient medical attention to individuals subject to administrative detention is counted as part of their term of administrative detention.

185. From the moment that individuals subject to administrative detention are placed in a special holding centre, the management of that centre is required to accord them the right to make a telephone call or to contact a lawyer, relatives or other persons to inform them of their placement in the special holding centre; to grant them access to a lawyer, family members or other individuals; to inform them about the procedure and conditions for serving their period of administrative detention, about their rights and obligations and about the use of any technical supervision and monitoring devices; to accord them unhindered access to the special help desk of the Human Rights Commissioner (Ombudsman) and to ensure their personal safety; and without delay to notify the procurator of the discovery on individuals placed in administrative detention of signs of physical injury, and also of every instance in which harm was caused to the life and health of such individuals and of other persons as a consequence of the use of physical force and special devices.

186. In the event of the death of a person subject to administrative detention, the management of the special holding centre promptly notifies the deceased person's family and legal representative and the procurator. The death of such a person shall be subject to a preliminary investigation carried out in accordance with the procedure laid down in the Code of Criminal Procedure. After the conduct of a forensic examination and other actions prescribed by the Code of Criminal Procedure, the body of the deceased is handed over the spouse, parents, children and other relatives or legal representatives of the deceased or other persons assuming responsibility for the burial of the body. In the event that no application for the handover of the body is submitted by a spouse, parents, children or other relatives or legal representatives or other persons assuming responsibility for the burial of the body, the burial of the deceased is to be conducted in the manner prescribed by law. Appeals may be lodged against the actions or omissions of the management and employees of special holding centres with a higher authority in the chain of command, a procurator or the court.

Paragraph 17 of the concluding observations

Articles 9 and 14

187. Awareness-raising measures are regularly conducted for all convicted persons serving sentences in correctional institutions by the procuratorial authorities, working in

conjunction with the administration of the institutions, to bring to their attention the requirements and demands of the rules of procedure for custodial correctional facilities, the penalties incurred by convicted persons for failure to comply with or infraction of the obligations imposed on them and the modalities of the application of article 221 of the Criminal Code.

188. Following measures carried out in facilities of the correctional system over the period 2017–2018, the number of prosecutions brought by the procuratorial authorities under article 221 of the Criminal Code has dropped.

189. Indicators related to application of article 221 of the Criminal Code:

<i>Period</i>	<i>Number of offences committed by convicted persons under article 221 of the Criminal Code</i>	<i>Number of prosecutions under article 221 of the Criminal Code</i>	<i>Number of persons convicted under article 221 of the Criminal Code</i>
2015	690	658	
2016	798	762	
2017	491	470	568
2018	9	1	

Paragraph 18 of the concluding observations

Articles 7 and 10 of the Covenant

190. The Ombudsman has drafted a bill to amend and supplement the Oliy Majlis Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman) Act and the statute for a national mechanism for the prevention of torture, which provides for the establishment within the secretariat of the Ombudsman’s office of a national prevention department.

191. The National Human Rights Centre has also prepared an alternative statute for a national prevention mechanism, which envisages the creation of an “Ombudsman-Plus” model. The two drafts have been submitted for consideration by the Legislative Chamber.

192. Each newly committed inmate of a correctional facility undergoes a mandatory medical examination, with a view to the early detection and prevention of the spread of infectious diseases (tuberculosis, sexually transmitted infections, intestinal diseases), while those in special categories undergo a range of screening procedures.

193. Since November 2004, the DOTS programme (directly observed chemotherapy short course under the direct supervision of a health worker) is being followed for the treatment of tuberculosis and, since August 2008, the DOTS-Plus programme for the treatment of drug-resistant tuberculosis, in line with global standards and WHO recommendations.

194. To improve the quality of treatment and diagnostic services, over the past 10 years measures have been taken, together with the application of combination treatments, to upgrade and strengthen the technical infrastructure of the specialized hospital for convicted prisoners, and departments of diagnostics, dentistry and pulmonary pathology have been added. Specialized equipment has been sourced and procured, including an electroencephalograph (EEG), ultrasound scanner, rheoencephalograph, Doppler ultrasound device and bronchoscopy equipment.

195. In 2016, State budget funding was used to acquire an Isuzu-mounted digital photofluorography unit for the specialized hospital, together with digital X-ray equipment.

196. Between 2015 and 2017, X-ray fluorography equipment was installed in 10 correctional facilities, ensuring the availability of screening for all those in need of such attention and improving the quality of treatment and diagnostic services.

197. Round-the-clock medical assistance is available in all facilities of the correctional system. Each facility has a working medical unit, providing inpatient and outpatient care.

198. For the performance of mandated tasks, the Central Department of Corrections has 11 working medical units in its remand centres, 19 units in correctional colonies and the special hospital for convicted prisoners (in Tashkent). Among the correctional colonies there is one facility, in Buxoro province, which is run as a medical institution, for the detention and treatment of tuberculosis patients. In 25 open prisons essential medical care is provided by local health bodies.

199. There is running hot and cold water in the facilities and heating provided by their own boilers. The water supply systems in the facilities are equipped with purification and filtering equipment designed to produce clean drinking water. Each facility has a bathing and laundry unit equipped with mixer taps for hot and cold water and bathing accessories. In addition, the living quarters are all equipped with sanitary facilities and water taps.

200. There are working canteens in the facilities. The canteen building and kitchens are equipped with boilers and stoves designed to produce hot meals and drinks three times per day. In addition, they are equipped with electric tea-urns, hot plates and potato peeling machines. Perishable foodstuffs are stored in refrigerators, in separate compartments.

201. Awareness-raising work is conducted by facility staff to prevent inter-prisoner violence. Over the first six months of 2018, there were no attested cases of violence.

202. A single procedure has been rolled out in all facilities of the country's correctional system for the reception and registration of communications from the public, including complaints and allegations of unlawful methods of investigation, treatment of persons held in remand and convicted prisoners in correctional institutions.

203. Complaints and applications from prisoners are received on a daily basis by officials of the correctional facility. The issues raised in these communications are studied and, depending on the findings, the necessary measures are taken to resolve them in a timely manner.

204. Staff of the correctional system attend weekly training sessions, the syllabus of which includes the study of international standards and domestic law in the field of human rights, and also amendments and additions being made to the legislation of Uzbekistan.

205. Each facility of the Central Department of Corrections has established a legal resource corner, containing literature on international human rights standards, the legal codes of the Republic of Uzbekistan and other legal literature.

206. Continuous efforts are being made to improve the forms and methods of educational work with staff, to eliminate the practice of ill-treatment, the use of physical coercion and violations of the rights of convicted prisoners and persons remanded in custody.

207. Staff of facilities of the correctional system enrolling on courses at the Professional Development Faculty of the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs receive appropriate instruction in such topics as the nature and substance of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and its role in the work of staff of the internal affairs agencies, and measures to safeguard human rights in correctional facilities.

208. Every 10 days procurators review the legality of the detention of suspects in police cells and every month that of those held in remand centres. Procurators routinely check the orders and instructions issued by the authorities and are empowered to challenge them if they are found to be at variance with the law. Where upholding the rights of citizens is concerned, particular attention is given to the consideration of their complaints and applications. Post boxes have been installed in custodial facilities for inmates to use in submitting complaints to the procurator, and only the supervisory procurators have access to these. In addition, a call centre has been set up in the Office of the Procurator General which works around the clock, receiving complaints by telephone on the number 1007, which can also be used by convicted prisoners.

209. Over the period of cooperation, assistance was provided to representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), who were furnished with the necessary conditions and given every opportunity to arrange visits to facilities of the correctional system. As a result, they have visited virtually every institution in the correctional system

of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (4 in 2001; 5 in 2002; 30 in 2003; 46 in 2004; 1 in 2007; 19 in 2008; 21 in 2009; 56 in 2010; 41 in 2011; and 19 in 2012).

210. On 12 April 2013, ICRC notified the Central Department of Corrections that it was unilaterally ceasing its visits to correctional institutions. On 21 February 2018, ICRC submitted a request to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the resumption of dialogue regarding the issue of visits by ICRC representatives to correctional institutions, but no specific proposals for visits have been received from ICRC. Nevertheless, the Central Department of Corrections stands ready to engage in constructive cooperation with ICRC, which should be implemented and unfolded in the framework of an equal partnership.

211. To improve the situation of persons held in places of deprivation of liberty, continuous monitoring is carried out both by the correctional system itself, as part of the Department's internal oversight of compliance with the law in its activities, and by other government agencies and non-governmental non-profit organizations (see annexes).

212. Work is currently under way on a draft outline for the upgrading of the correctional system over the period 2018–2021, which includes measures to reform the system for the reintegration of prisoners into society, to improve the system for the serving of sentences by juvenile prisoners, and others.

213. To prevent reoffending, a draft decision of the Cabinet of Ministers has been prepared on the introduction of modern and innovative educational technologies and, for convicted persons with no appropriate qualification, on the development of short-term courses (lasting from three to six months) in skills in demand on the labour market.

214. Over the past 15 years, Uzbekistan has more than halved the number of prisoners held in custodial facilities and, as at 1 January 2017, the country's incarceration rate was 133 per 100,000 inhabitants, giving Uzbekistan one of the lowest rates among the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States and in the world as a whole.

215. The prison occupancy rate averages 80 per cent and at some facilities does not exceed 30 per cent. The rate at the country's only young offenders' institution is under 10 per cent.

216. The decline in the number of prisoners has made it possible to reduce the number of correctional institutions. Over the past five years alone, two correctional colonies have been shut down (in the cities of Tashkent and Navoiy).

217. With a view to further improving the system for the social welfare and employment of persons released from custodial institutions and to increase the effectiveness of preventive and other measures to help these persons, a road map to upgrade the system for the rehabilitation and social reintegration of persons released from places of deprivation of liberty over the period 2018–2022 was approved by government decision No. 543 of 17 July 2018.

218. The following priorities and objectives in improving the system for the social welfare and employment of persons released from custodial institutions have been identified:

- Upgrading the institutional and legal framework for entities responsible for the social reintegration of persons released from custodial institutions
- Social rehabilitation of persons released from custodial institutions, including improving their quality of life and living standards
- Development of a social partnership between government agencies and civil society institutions in the context of work in the area of social adaptation and rehabilitation
- Development of public-private partnerships between government agencies and business entities and, by offering appropriate incentives, securing the broad involvement of the private sector, as part of the process of rehabilitating persons released from custodial institutions
- Preparation, forecasting and planning of measures to ensure the psychological welfare and employment of persons released from custodial institutions

- Effective measures to reduce the rates of recidivism and repeat offending, and to enhance the efficiency of earlier preventive measures

Paragraph 19 of the concluding observations

Articles 6, 8 and 24

219. In fulfilment of the Committee's recommendations on the prevention of forced labour, significant progress has been achieved over the period 2015–2018 in upholding the rights of adults and children to protection from forced labour.

220. On 17 July 2015, the Government adopted a plan of action on the voluntary recruitment by farming businesses of cotton pickers and the prevention of the use of child labour and forced labour in the 2015 cotton harvest, providing for a wide array of measures to prevent the recruitment of primary and upper secondary and vocational school students under the age of 18, health professionals and teachers for the cotton harvest.

221. In the Government's continued application of measures to prevent child labour and forced labour, the following instruments have been adopted:

- Plan of action to improve the working and employment conditions and social protection of agricultural workers for 2016–2018
- Plan of action for the implementation of the ILO conventions ratified by Uzbekistan concerning the prohibition against forced labour and child labour, in 2016
- Plan of action on practical measures for the further cooperation with ILO in line with the outcome of the participation of the delegation of Uzbekistan in the 105th session of the International Labour Conference

222. A joint letter of the Ministry of Labour and the Council of the Federation of Trade Unions of Uzbekistan has been transmitted to the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Qoraqalpog'iston and provincial hokimiyats on the conduct of a campaign to raise awareness about voluntary recruitment and the prohibition against the use of child and forced labour in the cotton harvest.

223. On 8 September 2017, an Act was passed on the protection of children from information that is harmful to their health. The Act also ensures that minors are shielded from information that might lead to their possible sexual exploitation.

224. A decision of the Cabinet of Ministers of 8 August 2017 categorically prohibits the employment of underage workers in the cotton harvest, and also the involvement of organizations of the health and education sector and the engagement of their employees as part of their work assignments.

225. By a decision of 5 October 2017, the Cabinet of Ministers has established a community service fund, under the responsibility of the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations, to obviate the need to assign staff from the social services sector for the performance of community service and to give effect to additional measures to provide employment through the wider engagement of unemployed persons in paid community service.

226. On 4 October 2017, a decision was adopted by the Senate of the Oliy Majlis establishing a parliamentary commission responsible for upholding the guaranteed labour rights of citizens, and a comprehensive plan of measures to give effect to such rights. During the period from 1 January to 22 June 2018, the Senate of the Oliy Majlis received 4,530 complaints, of which 115 (2.5 per cent) pertained to violations of labour rights and employment.

227. On 10 May 2018, the Cabinet of Ministers adopted a decision on additional measures for the elimination of forced labour in Uzbekistan, one paragraph of which calls for the suppression of all forms of compulsory work assignment of citizens, in particular, the assignment to compulsory labour of workers in the education and health-care sectors, employees of publicly funded and other organizations and students and pupils of educational institutions.

228. Thanks to the implementation of system-wide measures, some positive results have been achieved in the area of compliance with international labour rules and standards.

229. On 17 April 2018, the Government held a videoconference on the need to prohibit the compulsory assignment of students, the employees of medical and educational establishments and workers in other social service sectors to agricultural work and work on public amenities and to determine the extent to which managers at all levels may be held personally liable.

230. At that meeting, participants agreed on measures to be imposed on officials for neglecting to perform their duties and for allowing situations to develop where employees were compelled to perform community work.

231. In 2017, a total of 84 billion sum and, in 2018, 714 billion sum, was allocated from the State budget as an incentive to unemployed members of the population to perform paid community work.

232. Monitoring exercises carried out between 2013 and 2017 by ILO and the World Bank confirmed that the Government is undertaking effective preventive measures and conducting an extensive awareness campaign to prevent the use of child labour and forced labour during the cotton harvest. International experts noted with satisfaction the high level of awareness among children and the population as a whole of their rights and the establishment by the Federation of Trade Unions and the Ministry of Labour of a feedback system to exchange information with the public and settle any complaints about violations of citizens' labour rights.

233. Monitoring visits by ILO in 2016 and 2017 confirmed that the practice of using child labour in the cotton harvest in Uzbekistan had ceased.

234. At the same time, the Federation of Trade Unions, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Youth Union and the Women's Committee, together with 39 representatives of registered local non-profit non-governmental organizations from all regions of the country which are members of the National Association of Non-Profit Non-Governmental Organizations of Uzbekistan, carried out a nationwide exercise to monitor child labour and forced labour in the cotton sector, which commenced on 22 September 2017 and continued until the end of November.

235. Under the nationwide monitoring exercise, local-level teams carried out 455 visits to various districts and cities of the country. In this exercise they visited 342 farms, 1 institute of higher education, 169 vocational schools and 9 upper secondary schools, 500 general primary and secondary schools, 121 preschools, 121 businesses, 233 health facilities, 71 hokimiyats and 87 local self-governing bodies. The working conditions of some 35,000 cotton pickers were examined.

236. During this exercise, interviews were conducted by the monitoring teams with 4,433 respondents, using the templates developed by ILO.

237. It was ensured that there was no disruption to the work of educational and medical institutions during the cotton harvest. Infrastructure, including transport, markets, commercial enterprises, everyday services and pharmacies all continued their normal operation.

238. Pursuant to a duly minuted decision of the Cabinet of Ministers dated 8 August 2017, the appropriate conditions of work and leisure for cotton pickers were established, including the provision of hot meals, clean drinking water, moral and material incentives, and the necessary fire-safety and health and hygiene conditions.

239. In addition, the monitoring teams reported the presence of 18 underage children in the cotton fields, four of whom were helping with the harvesting, and they also determined the participation in the cotton harvest of 328 employees of State-sector organizations, primarily educational and health-care establishments, constituting 0.93 per cent of all the cotton pickers covered by the monitoring exercise; 400 employees of industrial enterprises; the unauthorized release into the cotton fields of 9 students from three different years of vocational courses (0.03 per cent of the total number of harvesters), working after class hours to earn extra money or to assist their parents.

240. Regarding the creation of decent work conditions for cotton pickers, those surveyed singled out the following issues:

- In 14.9 per cent of the farms, the work and leisure conditions for pickers were unsatisfactory (inadequate sanitation facilities, disruptions in the provision of hot meals and drinking water).
- 25 per cent of pickers were working without the conclusion of contracts between the work detail and the farmer for the provision of services.
- 0.9 per cent of the pickers were not paid their wages on time.

241. Prompt action was taken to rectify all identified shortcomings and these were reported to the local State executive and administrative authorities. In particular, all the identified underage workers were brought off the fields and steps were taken to ensure their return to school and local job-creation centres were made aware of the new situation.

242. Where the improvement of working conditions is concerned, measures have been set in place to provide food of better quality and to improve the water supply and sanitation facilities. Bank staff have travelled out to the cotton farms to pay wage arrears for cotton harvesting.

243. On the initiative of the Coordinating Council on Child Labour and Forced Labour in the Republic of Uzbekistan and with support from the World Bank, since 2015 the Federation of Trade Unions has been carrying out a project to set in place a feedback mechanism.

244. Staff members in the regional labour agencies with experience in conducting labour rights inspections have been recruited to work with the feedback mechanism. A website for the feedback mechanism (www.fbm.uz) is now up and running. The purpose of the website is to raise awareness of the measures taken to uphold the labour rights and guarantees established by law, including those arising from ratified ILO conventions. In 2016, with technical support from the World Bank, an English-language version of the site providing regular updates concerning labour and employment issues was developed and launched.

245. As a public monitoring facility, the feedback mechanism offers an alternative to government supervision in the area of labour and is intended to complement, not replace, such supervision. Citizens and their communities have the right freely to choose the channels by which they submit communications.

246. One of the functions of the feedback mechanism is to review communications submitted to the round-the-clock call centre, using the short-code number 1092, which works throughout the country.

247. In 2017, an online platform called “Telegram” was set up as a new gateway to the feedback mechanism. It is intended to perform a wide range of functions, ranging from a news platform to an information search engine and even as a means of lodging complaints. The main purpose of the platform is to ensure that the user receives an automatic e-mail response after entering the relevant command.

248. Over the period from January to November 2017, a total of 7,339 communications were submitted by individuals and legal entities through difference channels to the feedback mechanism; 3,309 of these were submitted in writing, 1,308 in person, 1,122 online and 1,600 over the telephone hotline. The vast majority of communications received by trade unions are concerned with the restoration of labour rights and protection of employees’ social and economic interests. A breakdown of the communications by different sectors shows that the great majority originated from individuals in the fields of education, science, culture and health care.

249. Following their review by the unions, the issues raised in 1,485 of these communications were resolved; clarifications were provided to the authors of 3,682 communications; in 193 cases the allegations put forward in the communications could not be substantiated; 27 communications were submitted without names; and 66 were still awaiting review.

250. The trade unions received 1,878 communications on matters which they were not competent to review. These communications were redirected to the competent authorities for their consideration and their authors notified accordingly in writing.

251. All in all, based on the communications submitted, the rights of 954 employees were duly restored and a total of 598,260,219 sum recovered in compensation for employees.

252. In 2017, the main focus of the feedback mechanism was to avert the risk of compulsory labour being used in the cotton harvest (from August to November). During this period, the number of communications rose to 2,516 hits (compared to 207 in 2015 and 1,902 in 2016).

253. A breakdown of the communications received during the cotton harvest showed that, for the most part, they were concerned with such issues as unlawful dismissal and disciplinary action, issuance of employment contracts, and the recovery of wages or equivalent payments. A relatively small number of communications concerned reports of compulsory labour (4 per cent of all such communications) and only three (0.1 per cent) alleged discrimination in employment.

254. Not one communication was received regarding the use of child labour. Over the reporting period, the main channels used to contact the feedback mechanism were the call centre (using the telephone hotline – 45.1 per cent) and online platforms (25.8 per cent).

255. As a result of the measures taken and the growing trust in the feedback mechanism, of the total of 102 communications submitted in 2017 regarding forced labour, only 8 were anonymous, or 7.8 per cent, compared to 17.2 per cent in 2016.

256. The vast majority of communications received during the cotton harvest – 1,325 or 69.7 per cent – were resolved positively; 76 (4 per cent) could not be substantiated; and 102 (1.7 per cent) were redirected to the appropriate authorities.

257. Close attention is given in Uzbekistan to awareness-raising in the area of labour and, to this end, an outline has been developed for a campaign to raise awareness among the general public of national and international labour standards.

258. There were no attested cases of deaths during the cotton harvest or in the performance of community work.

Paragraph 20 of the concluding observations

Article 12 of the Covenant

259. Pursuant to a presidential decree of 16 August 2017 on fundamental measures to streamline the procedure for citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan travelling abroad, with effect from 1 January 2019, the issuance of permits in the form of passport stickers for travel abroad is to be discontinued. From that date, Uzbekistan will be introducing biometric passports for foreign travel.

260. In the meantime and until 1 January 2021, valid biometric passports of the 2011 design may be used to travel to countries that do not require an entry visa. If an entry visa is required, the passport holder must travel prior to the expiry date of the existing exit sticker in the passport.

Number of people applying for exit visas

Period	Total	Including for:		Including:			Denied exit visas
		Permanent residence	Temporary departure	Official travel	Private travel	Tourism	
2017	379 430	6 568	372 862	10 116	7 555	355 191	867
First quarter of 2018	118 338	2 641	115 697	2 905	3 062	109 730	78

261. Foreign nationals may apply for citizenship of the Republic of Uzbekistan after acquiring the status of stateless persons.

262. Since 2016, in accordance with presidential decrees, 1,730 stateless persons have been granted Uzbek citizenship.

263. To date in 2018, no complaints have been lodged with the internal affairs authorities by foreign citizens or stateless persons of violations of their rights to freedom of movement.

264. Uzbekistan has lifted its prohibition on the recruitment of citizens without a temporary or permanent residence permit (*propiska*) or who have not been registered in their place of residence.

265. At the same time, employers no longer incur liability for hiring citizens who have no temporary or permanent residence permits or have not been registered in their place of residence.

266. In addition, it is planned to extend the period during which citizens may reside in a specific area without a temporary residence permit (or registration of residence).

Paragraph 21 of the concluding observations

Article 14 of the Covenant

267. The judicial and legal system has been thoroughly overhauled. The Supreme Court and the Higher Economic Court have been amalgamated and a single supreme body of judicial authority in the field of civil, criminal, administrative and economic procedure has been created, the Supreme Court of the Republic of Uzbekistan, together with administrative courts, which have the subsidiary responsibility to consider administrative disputes arising from matters of public law, and also to hear cases involving administrative offences.

268. An administrative bench has been established under the Supreme Court and the Military Chamber of the Supreme Court has been dissolved.

269. Issues relating to logistic support for the courts have been handed over from the Ministry of Justice to the Supreme Court.

270. A system of economic courts has been set in place, with the aim of ensuring that the economic reforms under way in the country are fully effective and that there is dependable judicial protection for private property and for business activities.

271. A new constitutional institution has been introduced in the court system – the Supreme Judicial Council of Uzbekistan, which is responsible for the development of the country's judiciary and for the professional and in-service training of judges. The creation of this institute has made it possible to improve the system for the selection and appointment of judges. Judges now enjoy indefinite tenure upon completion of their first five and ten-year terms.

272. Judges seeking reappointment submit applications to the Judges' Higher Qualification Board, which makes recommendations on their reappointment. The term of office of judges is computed on the basis of the total length of their tenure of judicial office.

273. Judges have the right to retire on reaching retirement age or where there are other grounds for retirement established by law.

274. The Cabinet of Ministers and the Oliy Majlis Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman) have been added to the list of entities entitled to bring motions before the Constitutional Court.

275. New provisions have been introduced laying down the terms of office and stipulating the requirements for candidate judges, pursuant to which no judge may be elected to the Constitutional Court more than twice and the current five-year term has been retained. The minimum age for candidate judges has been raised from 30 to 35 years and

the age limit for serving judges set at 70. The grounds for the removal from office of judges have been extended.

276. New legislative provisions on the court system are set out in the Constitution, the Courts Act, the Supreme Judicial Council Act, the Code of Criminal Procedure, the Code of Civil Procedure, the Code of Economic Procedure, the presidential decision of 19 April 2017 on the organization of the work of the Justice Research Centre of the Supreme Judicial Council, presidential decrees of 10 April 2017 on the establishment of the Supreme Judicial Council, of 13 July 2018 on upgrading the legal and judicial system and building trust in the judicial authorities, and in other instruments.

277. Judicial oversight of the work of the pretrial investigation authorities has been substantially strengthened; specific measures have been set in place to streamline the functioning of the courts; amendments and additions have been made to the Constitution, the Criminal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedure, the Code of Civil Procedure, the Courts Act and a number of other statutory instruments with the aim of enhancing the administration of justice, with due consideration for the pre-eminence of human rights and freedoms and the need to strengthen guarantees of a fair and timely trial.

278. As a result, in 2017 and the first three months of 2018 alone, the courts handed down acquittals of 262 persons, compared to a mere 7 such acquittals over the previous five years. Furthermore, in 2017, 4,389 persons were released from custody in the courtroom, 18,655 were granted parole, the sentences handed down on 9,367 were commuted to more lenient penalties, and charges unjustly laid by the investigation services were removed from the charge sheets of 5,841 persons.

279. Measures have been taken to overhaul the system of legal defence, to improve the quality of professional legal assistance and the good standing of the legal profession, and also to ensure that the principles of equal rights and adversarial proceedings are fully upheld.

280. Since 1 July 2018, lawyers have enjoyed the right to negotiate pretrial settlements and the reconciliation of parties, and also to act as arbitrators. In addition, the resit intervals for qualifying examinations and mandatory internships have been reduced by half, while employees of the legal service of government agencies and organizations and other individuals who have served as judges, investigators or procurators for not less than three years are exempted from performing mandatory periods of probation.

281. In accordance with the new provisions, legal assistance will be provided on the basis of a specific licence for each area of specialization chosen by the lawyer (criminal, civil, economic, etc.) and a licence may only be cancelled by order of a court.

282. Lawyers are to be able to meet their clients in special rooms that have no audio and video surveillance devices, without the presence of unauthorized persons, at any time and without hindrance, and to bring computers, mobile phones and other communications devices with them into the courtroom.

283. Requests for legal assistance should be satisfied within a period of not more than 15 days from the date of receipt of the request. In the event of inadequate fulfilment of such a request, lawyers may apply directly to the court and administrative liability is incurred by the officials at fault.

284. Career incentives for lawyers are to be provided on the basis of their seniority within the public defender system. Appropriate professional grades are to be assigned to lawyers by the President of the Bar Chamber.

285. A new method has been set in place to ensure transparency in the conduct of the bar exam: the exam may now be monitored in real time over the Internet.

286. The role of the Bar Chamber has been significantly enhanced. Henceforth, draft legislation on issues related to law and justice must be subject to consultation with the Bar Chamber and the President of the Bar Chamber has the right to participate in meetings of the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis called to discuss such draft legislation.

Paragraph 22 of the concluding observations

Articles 7, 9, 10 and 18

287. Under article 5 of the Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations Act, actions aimed at converting believers of one faith to another (proselytism) and any other missionary activity are banned.

288. The Constitution of Uzbekistan set out a prohibition on the forced imposition of religious views. In Uzbek society, with its invaluable heritage of religious and philosophical knowledge, there is no tolerance for the emergence of adherents of religious fundamentalism. Restrictions on missionary activities are primarily necessitated by the propensity of such activities to demonstrate the supremacy and superiority of one religion over others, and the concomitant tendency for them to compete for believers. Activities of this kind arouse social tensions because it is impossible to draw new adherents into their ranks without debasing other religions.

289. As things stand, almost all the believers of Uzbekistan are fully served by an appropriate number of religious organizations and are given every opportunity to satisfy their religious needs.

290. There are 2,242 religious organizations of 16 different faiths operating in Uzbekistan. There are no legal restrictions on the time of registration or number of religious organizations.

291. During the first five months of 2018, 79 cases were brought for violation of the Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations Act, in particular for proselytism and other missionary activities, as a result of which administrative penalties were imposed on 130 individuals.

292. In 2017, administrative charges were laid against 541 persons for contravening the law on religious organizations (article 240 of the Code of Administrative Liability) and in the first three months of 2018 against 126 individuals.

293. During the first three months of 2018, one person was prosecuted for violating the law on religious organizations (Criminal Code, art. 216-2).

294. The Government is working on the ground to counter religious ignorance and harmful trends. A range of measures to counter extremism and terrorism have been put into effect and special attention is being given to working with young people who have fallen under the influence of destructive ideas. More than 16,000 citizens who have fallen prey to extremist thinking have been rehabilitated. Currently, all these individuals have returned to normal lifestyles and are making their own contribution to the development of the country.

295. Great emphasis has been placed on improving the quality of education through the development of a harmonious combination of religious and educational knowledge, on devising a uniform system of teaching, on developing advanced skills training in religious and educational fields, on in-service training and retraining, and on promoting the involvement and participation of representatives of the clerical educational sector in fostering a culture of tolerance, mutual respect, forgiveness, peace and harmony in society and a stable social and cultural environment.

296. In order further to improve and streamline the procedure for the government registration of religious organizations and for their re-registration and dissolution, rules and regulations have been approved by a Cabinet decision of 31 May 2018, with a view to significantly improving and simplifying that procedure. In particular:

- Under the previous procedure, the registration authority (the Ministry of Justice and its local offices) was empowered to impose fines on religious organizations equivalent to 100 times the minimum wage for contravening the law or statutory instruments. Under the new rules and regulations, these powers have been removed from the justice authorities.
- The government fee for registration of a religious organization has been reduced: registration of the central administrative body of a religious organization and

religious educational institution is equivalent to 20 times the minimum wage and the registration of other religious organizations to 10 times the minimum wage. Previously, the government fee payable by the central administrative body of a religious organization and religious educational institution was set at 100 times the minimum wage and that payable by other religious organizations at 50 times the minimum wage.

- The number of documents that have to be submitted for registration of a religious organization has been reduced. It is no longer required to submit such documents as a certificate of origin of funds or a copy of the certificate of registration of the organization's name with the hokimiyat.
- The required number of reports has been reduced. Henceforth, religious organizations will report to the justice authorities once per year, where previously they had to report every three months.

297. Currently, work is under way on the drafting of a bill to amend the Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations Act, providing, among other amendments, for a reduction in the number of proponents needed for the registration of a religious organization.

298. In Uzbekistan, there are no restrictions on the use of religious material, except for those calling for the violent overthrow of the constitutional order or for the disclosure of State secrets, or propagating war, violence, pornography, incitement to religious and ethnic discord, or encroaching upon human honour and dignity, or disseminating calumny.

299. Through the scrutiny of religious literature, steps are taken to prevent the use of religion for anti-government, anti-constitutional propaganda, and to suppress the dissemination of ideas of religious extremism, separatism and fundamentalism.

300. For example, of the more than 5,000 religious items brought into the country in 2017, an expert finding was reached in respect of more than 550 books that their import was undesirable. In addition, the publication in the country of some 40 religious items (books and magazines) was deemed to be inappropriate.

301. As a result of these measures, an analysis of legal offences over the period from January 2014 to June 2018 demonstrates a declining trend in offences involving the illicit transfer of materials of a religious nature.

302. In 2014, there were 1,293 such cases, while in 2017 that figure fell to 457. Over the first five months of 2018, a total of 105 official crime-prevention warnings were issued, compared with 142 for the whole of 2017.

303. A similar trend may be seen in the seizure of illegally imported religious materials: thus, in 2014, 98,627 such materials were seized, compared to 23,257 in 2017.

304. The Moslem Board of Uzbekistan and the Tashkent and Uzbekistan Diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church are able to publish the religious literature that they need. A number of periodicals are published by these religious organizations, including the newspapers *Islom Nuri* ("Light of Islam") and *Slovo Zhizni* ("Word of Life") and the magazines *Hidoyat* ("The right path") and *Vostok Svyshe* ("Ascendent East"), which have circulations of 45,000, 1,500, 115,000 and 1,000, respectively.

305. Religious literature is also published by the International Islamic Academy, the Imam Bukhari International Centre and the Bible Society of Uzbekistan.

306. In 2018, work was commenced on the publication of the Qur'an in Arabic (in 50,000 copies) and in Uzbek in the Latin script, in a print run of 10,000 copies.

307. More than 200 titles on Islamic themes, with a total print-run of 1.1 million copies, were also published in 2016 and, in 2017, some 400 titles with a print-run of 1.7 million copies.

Paragraph 23 of the concluding observations

Articles 7, 9, 10, 14 and 19

308. Reforms are under way in Uzbekistan to transform the media into a genuine “fourth estate”, aimed primarily at enhancing the performance of the media, reshaping them as a platform for dialogue with the people, and fashioning a modern market of information services.

309. Under article 121 of the Information Technology Act, a specially designated authority may block the owners of websites and (or) web pages, including bloggers, from having access to their websites and (or) web pages for posting false information on the Internet or for the conduct of other actions that incur criminal liability.

310. Safeguards of the rights of citizens, individuals and legal entities, and of journalists and human rights defenders to obtain information on the activities of the Government have been significantly strengthened through the passing of the Act on transparency in the work of State executive and administrative authorities, dated 5 May 2014, which clearly defines the procedure for the provision of the requested information, for participation in community-level meetings of the public authorities and public administration, and for the creation of information services and websites by organizations. In addition, a public council has been set up for the purpose of coordinating and monitoring efforts to ensure transparency in the work of the State executive and administrative authorities.

311. Complaints citing violations or inappropriate treatment by law enforcement officers are personally scrutinized by the Procurator-General.

312. To date, the total number of media outlets in Uzbekistan has risen to 1,593, 64 per cent of which are non-State-owned. There are 400 websites, of which more than 30 are news websites. The country is currently promoting the development of digital television broadcasting, with the aim of ensuring 100 per cent coverage of this form of television. Over the past two years, five new nationwide television stations have been set up, four of which are non-State-owned.

313. There has been dynamic growth in media networks and Internet journalism, which has more than doubled in volume over the last five years. There are no recorded cases of journalists having been prosecuted for the exercise of their profession.

314. A special role in the development of independent media is played by civil society institutions. Currently, 63.4 per cent (975) of all the country’s media news outlets are non-State-owned. The proportions of non-State-owned outlets in the different media are: for the print media, 54 per cent; for websites, 92 per cent; for television and radio stations, 63 per cent; and for news agencies, 25 per cent.

315. In addition to the growth in their numbers, far-reaching changes may also be observed in their quality and content. This is apparent from the expansion across the country’s media landscape of the network of non-State-owned media outlets, their strong performance and the rapid development of Internet journalism. Similarly, where the qualitative reforms under way in the development of the media are concerned, there has been a noteworthy increase in the number of critical articles, editorial and opinions focused on human rights issues. Audiences are presented with analytical news coverage.

316. A university of journalism and mass media has been established in Uzbekistan to improve the training of media specialists.

317. Over the period 2015–2018, five foreign media bureaux and 33 foreign correspondents were accredited by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

318. All these actions have enabled Uzbekistan to improve by four points its score on the 2018 World Press Freedom Index, issued on 25 April by the international non-governmental organization Reporters without Borders (RSF). In the 2017 ranking, the country was positioned 169th.

Paragraph 24 of the concluding observations

Articles 7, 9, 19 and 21

319. In accordance with current legislation, the right of citizens to participate in rallies, demonstrations and gatherings is guaranteed by article 33 of the Constitution, while articles 201 of the Code of Criminal Liability and 217 of the Criminal Code establish liability for breach of the procedure for the organization and conduct of rallies, street marches and demonstrations.

320. By government decision No. 205 of 29 July 2014, on measures for further improvement of the procedure for the organization and conduct of mass events, regulations were approved for the conduct of mass events. In accordance with these regulations, mass events may be held at facilities included in the list of sites designated for the conduct of categories 1 and 2 mass events. These sites are approved, respectively, by the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan on the basis of recommendations by the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Qoraqalpog'iston and the provincial and Tashkent city hokimiyats, and by the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Qoraqalpog'iston and the provincial and Tashkent city hokimiyats on the basis of recommendations by district and municipal hokimiyats.

321. On the basis of decisions of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Qoraqalpog'iston and the provincial and Tashkent city hokimiyats, certain mass event may be conducted at locations that are not included in the list of approved sites for the conduct of categories 1 and 2 mass events. In 2017, administrative prosecutions were conducted against 262 persons and, during the first three months of 2018, against 76 persons for breach of the procedure for the organization and conduct of gatherings, rallies, street marches and demonstrations (Code of Criminal Procedure, art. 201).

Paragraph 25 of the concluding observations

Article 19, 22 and 25 of the Covenant

322. In Uzbekistan, all the necessary conditions are in place for the smooth performance of the work of civil society institutions. This is evidenced by the growth in the country of non-governmental organizations. In Uzbekistan, there are more than 9,200 active non-profit non-governmental organizations, including 30 international and overseas offices of foreign non-governmental organizations.

323. Uzbek law lays down equal conditions and opportunities for all non-governmental organizations, a uniform registration procedure and rules for the performance of their mandated activities, applicable to local non-governmental organizations and also to the local offices and branches of international and foreign non-governmental organizations.

324. Some 30 local offices and branches of international and foreign non-governmental organizations have been officially registered and are established in all parts of the country. These organizations are carrying out a range of projects and programmes and making tangible contributions in such areas as health care, science, culture, education and others.

325. In recent years, the law on non-profit non-governmental organizations in Uzbekistan has been significantly liberalized, with the removal of artificial barriers hampering their work, thereby promoting interaction between the State and civil society in tackling important problems. Thus, as from 1 January 2014, the government fee for official registration of non-profit non-governmental organizations has been cut by 80 per cent; that for registration of their logos by 60 per cent; the fee for registration of their subsidiaries (local offices and branches) has been cancelled; and the fee for the registration of non-profit non-governmental organizations of disabled persons, veterans, women and children cut by 50 per cent.

326. By a government decision of 10 March 2014, new regulations were approved on the procedure for the official registration of non-profit non-governmental organizations and

their logos, and the accreditation of their foreign national employees and family members. This has reduced the list of documents required for the registration of such organizations and streamlined the registration of their subsidiary offices. Non-governmental non-profit organizations are exempt from 10 categories of taxes and other mandatory payments, including income tax, property tax and value-added tax.

327. Overall, more than 200 statutory instruments have been adopted with a view to strengthening the role and influence of civil institutions in tackling critical social and economic issues facing citizens.

328. Under the law, certain categories of non-profit non-governmental organizations are accorded beneficial treatment in the State registration process. For example, organizations working to protect the rights of disabled persons, veterans, women and children only pay 25 per cent of the registration fee.

329. In accordance with the Political Parties Act, the Government guarantees the protection of the rights and lawful interests of political parties. The State executive and administrative authorities, enterprises, institutions, organizations and their officials are prohibited from interfering in the internal affairs of political parties or in any way impeding their work, if it is being conducted in accordance with the law and their statutes.

330. Instead, the independence of political parties is currently being strengthened, through a series of measures and resolutions aimed at enhancing the role of political parties in governance and reinforcing the legal basis for their activities, initiatives, role, impact and responsibility.

331. In Uzbekistan, four political parties with 833 separate subdivisions have been registered with local judicial bodies, together with two grass-roots movements, Xalq Birligi (“People’s Unity”) and the Environmental Movement of Uzbekistan, the first of which has 5 separate subdivisions registered with local judicial bodies and the second 14.

332. Between 2015 and 2018, no applications were submitted to the Ministry of Justice for the registration of political parties.

333. On 4 May 2018, a presidential decree was adopted on measures to upgrade the role of civil society institutions in the democratic renewal of Uzbekistan, pursuant to which, on 1 June 2018, the previous procedure, whereby the activities of non-governmental non-profit organizations had to be approved by the registering authority, has been replaced with a new procedure, in which planned activities merely have to be notified.

334. The decree provides that:

- Money and property received from foreign States, international and foreign organizations or foreign nationals or on their behalf from other persons are to be credited to the accounts of non-governmental non-profit organizations for the accomplishment of the tasks mandated in their statutes (regulations) and used without hindrance, after consultation with the registration body regarding their withdrawal, in the legally prescribed manner.
- Grant funding for non-governmental non-profit organizations in Uzbekistan is to be paid into accounts specially opened for that purpose in any banking institutions in the country.
- The flat social-payment rate for non-governmental non-profit organizations, which pay wages out of contributions not earned through any business activity, is to be set at a level not to exceed 15 per cent.
- Retired employees of non-governmental non-profit organizations are to receive full pensions, provided that their work in these organizations is their only employment.

335. To raise the profile and boost the importance of indigenous civil society institutions in the country’s all-round and forward-looking development, and to enhance their synergies with the State executive and administrative authorities, it was decided to set up an advisory council for the development of civil society under the authority of the President of Uzbekistan, which would be directly coordinated by the President.

336. On 12 April 2018, the Public Oversight Act was adopted with the aim of regulating the organization and conduct of public oversight of government agencies and institutions.

337. Under the Act, those subject to public oversight include citizens, citizens' self-governing bodies, non-governmental non-profit organizations and the media. The Act provides that public oversight should be exercised over the activities of government agencies, including law enforcement and regulatory bodies, and their officials.

338. It is stipulated that the persons subject to public oversight may submit applications to participate in open peer-to-peer meetings of the government agencies. Public oversight is exercised through monitoring, audits and reviews, public debates and public hearings. The findings of public oversight must be published and made accessible to citizens.

339. The Government is following a policy of social partnership with civil society organizations. The public support fund for non-profit non-governmental organizations and other civil society institutions, which was established under the Oliy Majlis in 2008, and the Parliamentary Commission, whose members are drawn from the Senate and Legislative Chamber, allocate funds from the State budget in a transparent, open, targeted and democratic manner in support of the work of non-profit non-governmental organizations.

340. Over the last nine years, this public support fund has awarded over 60 billion sum in subsidies, grants and social service contracts to support non-profit non-governmental organizations and other civil society institutions and their implementation of various social projects. In the past four years, the total amount of such funding has tripled.

341. The presidential decree of 28 December 2016 on measures to upgrade the work of the Nuronni ("Light") Foundation for the social support of the veterans of Uzbekistan and the presidential decree of 3 February 2017 on measures to enhance the mahalla system were adopted to promote synergies between government agencies and civil society organizations and to enhance the work of non-profit non-governmental organizations, citizens' self-governing bodies and the media. The latter decree is aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of citizens' self-governing bodies, transforming the system of mahallas into the State bodies most accessible to members of the public, which interact with government agencies with a view to providing material assistance and support, and at enhancing the effectiveness of mechanisms for the protection of citizens' rights and lawful interests.

342. A national council has been set up to coordinate the activities of citizens' self-governing bodies. The council and its local branches have the status of legal entities. In addition, a programme of comprehensive measures to enhance the activities of citizens' self-governing bodies has been approved.

343. In all, there are some 10,000 citizens' assemblies and mahallas, or self-government bodies.

344. From 2015 to 1 June 2018, registration was denied to 44 non-profit non-governmental organizations and to 4 international non-governmental organizations, on the grounds that their documents failed to comply with the legal requirements. Over the period from 2015 to 1 June 2018, 125 officials were prosecuted for contraventions of the law on non-profit non-governmental organizations.

Paragraph 26 of the concluding observations

Article 2, 19, 21, 22 and 25 of the Covenant

345. Under an Act amending and supplementing various articles of the Constitution (arts. 32, 78, 93, 98, 103 and 117), adopted in 2014, the Central Electoral Commission was established for the organization and holding of presidential and parliamentary elections and also a referendum on the Oliy Majlis. The Act also introduced amendments aimed at increasing the Commission's powers to allocate funds for the participation of political parties in elections and enlist international cooperation. The Code of Administrative Liability was amended to include articles on such issues as unlawful interference in the work of the Central Electoral Commission, its subsidiary electoral commissions and referendum commissions; failure to implement the decisions of the Central Electoral

Commission, its subsidiary electoral commissions and referendum commissions; violation of the rights of a candidate, a candidate's authorized representative, an observer or an authorized representative of a political party; violation of the conditions and procedures for campaigning in elections and campaigning on matters subject to a referendum; spreading of false information about candidates or political parties; deliberate destruction of or damage to information and campaign materials during the lead-up to and holding of elections or referendums; violation of the procedures for funding elections or referendums; and violation of the procedures for the publication of the results of public opinion polls or of election or referendum forecasts.

346. Under the Presidential Election Act, as amended in December 2015, the number of signatures required for the nomination of presidential candidates has been reduced from 5 per cent to 1 per cent of all voters; the practice of election campaigning has been formalized; a system of "election silence" has been instituted, whereby campaigning is not allowed on the day of the election and for one day prior to the start of voting; and rules have been introduced to prohibit the publication on election day of results of opinion polls, election forecasts and other research related to the elections and to allow for the establishment of polling stations at remand centres.

347. Work is under way to prepare and discuss a draft electoral code for Uzbekistan; the draft includes plans to harmonize the election standards and procedures laid down in current electoral laws.

348. The exclusive prerogative of political parties to nominate candidates for the office of President of the Republic of Uzbekistan is enshrined in Uzbek law.

349. This provision is designed to strengthen the role of political parties in elections and, at the same time, to vest greater responsibility in them, to widen the scope of their activities and to foster healthy competition between them, in line with international standards for democratic elections and the practice followed by the leading countries in the world.

350. It should be noted that any citizen, including those without party affiliation, may run for President, through a political party. The right to be elected and to participate in elections is withheld from citizens declared by a court to be lacking in legal capacity, persons serving court sentences in places of deprivation of liberty, military service personnel and members of paramilitary units, professional ministers of religious organizations and associations and citizens who have not resided in the territory of Uzbekistan during the five years prior to the elections.

351. One other limitation imposed under the Constitution is the limitation of term of office, pursuant to which one and the same person may not serve as President for more than two consecutive terms. Each term of office is five years.

352. No citizen may serve as a deputy in more than two representative government executive bodies at the same time. In December 2014, 150 representatives were elected to the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis, of whom 52 were from the Liberal Democratic Party of Uzbekistan, 36 from the Milliy Tiklanish ("National Revival") Democratic Party of Uzbekistan, 27 from the People's Democratic Party of Uzbekistan and 20 from the Adolat ("Justice") Social Democratic Party of Uzbekistan. The Environmental Movement of Uzbekistan has 15 deputies.

353. More than 18.4 million voters (88.94 per cent of all those eligible to vote) took part in the elections to the Legislative Chamber and to the provincial, district and municipal kengashes of people's deputies.

354. Two presidential elections have been held in Uzbekistan over the period 2015–2018 (on 29 March 2015 and 4 December 2016).

355. There were 20,461,805 voters registered for the presidential elections of 4 December 2016, including 825,641 women, more than half the total number of voters. A total of 17,951,667 (87.73 per cent of all voters) took part in the election.

356. The presidential election was monitored by some 600 observers from 46 States of the Americas, Europe, Asia and Africa, and 5 international organizations – the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organization for Security and

Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Association of World Election Bodies and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation – and more than 37,000 observers representing the political parties operating in Uzbekistan.

357. The 2016 presidential elections were covered by 615 national and 272 foreign media outlets, including 315 online publications. Together, the national press centre for the presidential election and the press centres of the district electoral commissions held 180 press conferences, briefings and online briefings on key stages of the electoral process, attended by over 1400 domestic and foreign journalists.

358. More than 1,300 national and foreign media representatives, including 693 local journalists, were accredited by the district electoral commissions to observe and report on the 2016 elections.

359. Since the start of the election campaign, some 15,000 news items on election topics appeared in the media.

360. The financing of election campaigns is regulated by the elections laws and the statutes of the Central Electoral Commission. In an election year, parties receive State funding to cover the costs associated with the election campaign. For example, for the presidential elections in 2016, each party received about 1 billion sum (€294,000), free use of premises for meetings and free media coverage. Private funding of the election campaigns of specific parties or candidates is prohibited. Political parties, voluntary associations, enterprises, institutions, organizations and citizens of Uzbekistan may, on a voluntary basis, contribute funding for the conduct of elections. These funds are credited to the Central Electoral Commission for its use during the election campaign. Thus arrangement was adopted in compliance with recommendations 7.6, 7.7 and 7.9 of the Copenhagen document of OSCE.

361. The Central Electoral Commission of Uzbekistan has developed arrangements to enable candidates, irrespective of their financial means, to participate actively in an election campaign, on an equal footing with one another, and not to influence the choices of voters.

362. At the presidential elections in 2016, the Central Electoral Commission accorded each candidate a sufficient amount of airtime and print space to set out to voters, in detail, the main points of their election programmes. In particular, each candidate was granted: 638 minutes of airtime on national television and radio channels; 206 minutes of airtime on 12 local channels and 286 minutes on the Tashkent television channel; 6 print columns in the newspapers *Xalq So'zi*, *Narodnoe Slovo* and *Pravda Vostoka*, and 5 columns in the newspapers *Ovozi Tojik* and *Nurli Jol*; 55.5 print columns in 30 regional newspapers (following decisions of the district electoral commissions, an additional 30 columns were granted).

363. During the elections, hotlines were set up in the offices of the Central Electoral Commission and the Oliy Majlis for the lodging of complaints related to the elections.

364. As at 3 December 2016, no communications or reports related to the electoral process had been submitted to the Central Electoral Commission, the Office of the Procurator-General or the Supreme Court. According to information from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, there were no attested cases of offences relating to the election campaign.

365. At the same time, however, 129 queries were lodged in writing to the Central Electoral Commission and 347 lodged over the hotline, of which 60 and 102 respectively were not related to the elections. The Ombudsman reported that 304 election-related queries had been lodged by phone. These queries concerned such issues as inclusion in the electoral rolls or explanations of the electoral law. All the queries were dealt with and the issues resolved then and there or, in response, the necessary clarifications were provided.

366. All in all, in 2016 the electoral commissions accredited 548 international observers and 37,352 observers from political parties, including 9,339 each from the Liberal Democratic Party of Uzbekistan and the Milliy Tiklanish Democratic Party of Uzbekistan, and 9,337 each from the Adolat Social Democratic Party of Uzbekistan and the People's Democratic Party of Uzbekistan.

Paragraph 27 of the concluding observations

367. All State executive and administrative bodies have set up official websites, in order to disseminate information on their international obligations, on the implementation of international treaties ratified by Uzbekistan on the protection of human rights and freedoms and on their own activities. The topics covered by these websites regularly include issues covered by the Covenant, and information of this nature is routinely highlighted in the media and on social networks.

Annexes

Number of persons prosecuted for forcing a woman into marriage or obstructing a woman's entry into marriage

Year	Persons convicted										Reasons for closing the case (No. of persons)			Category of persons in considered and closed cases														
	Total cases considered and closed		Including:				Grounds for guilty verdict				On basis of Amnesty Act	Following reconciliation of parties	Other reasons	Women	Minors	Over 60	Foreign nationals	Stateless persons										
			No. of convictions	Cases closed	Compulsory medical treatment administered	Sent back for further investigation	Punishment selected and sentence handed down	Mandatory sentence handed down(CC art. 72)	Sentenced on other grounds (CC, art. 88)	Fines									Deprivation of a right	Salary deductions	Imprisonment	Restrictions of liberty	Deprivation of liberty	Community service	Additional penalty applied	Criminal Code, art. 57, applied		
2015	35	79	18	30	16	48			1	1	25	2	3	4	11		10		2	3	45			5	1		1	
2016	29	79	13	25	15	49			1	5	16				8		8			1	48			6				
2017	23	46	13	18	9	23			1	5	14				6		3	4	1	1	22			1	1			
2018	2	6			2	6															6							

Number of persons prosecuted for polygamy

Year	Including:										Persons convicted										Reasons for closing the case (No. of persons)	Category of persons in considered and closed cases										
	Total cases considered and closed		Sentences handed down		Cases closed		Compulsory medical treatment administered		Sent back for further investigation		Grounds for guilty verdict			Principal penalties imposed																		
	No. of cases	No. of persons	No. of cases	No. of persons	No. of cases	No. of persons	No. of cases	No. of persons	No. of cases	No. of persons	Acquitted	Punishment selected and sentence handed down	Mandatory sentence handed down(CC art. 72)	Sentenced on other grounds (CC art. 88)	Fines	Deprivation of a right	Salary deductions	Imprisonment	Restrictions of liberty	Deprivation of liberty			Community service	Additional penalty applied	Criminal Code, art. 57, applied	On basis of Amnesty Act	Following reconciliation of parties	Other reasons	Women	Minors	Over 60	Foreign nationals
2015	23	24	22	23	1	1						21	1	1		16			5							1	1					
2016	26	28	25	27	1	1				1	20		6	2	14		1		3			1	1									
2017	33	34	31	32	2	2					27	1	4	7	16				3	1		3			2				1			
2018	2	2	2	2							2			1					1													

Number of persons prosecuted for sexual intercourse with a person under the age of 16

Year	Including:										Persons convicted										Reasons for closing the case (No. of persons)	Category of persons in considered and closed cases										
	Total cases considered and closed		Sentence handed down		Cases closed		Compulsory medical treatment administered		Sent back for further investigation		Grounds for guilty verdict			Principal penalties imposed																		
	No. of cases	No. of persons	No. of cases	No. of persons	No. of cases	No. of persons	No. of cases	No. of persons	No. of cases	No. of persons	Acquitted	Punishment selected and sentence handed down	Mandatory sentence handed down	Sentenced on other grounds (Criminal Code art. 88)	Fines	Deprivation of a right	Salary deductions	Imprisonment	Restrictions of liberty	Deprivation of liberty			Community service	Additional penalty applied	Criminal Code, art. 57 applied	On basis of Amnesty Act	Following reconciliation of parties	Other reasons	Women	Minors	Over 60	Foreign nationals
2015	172	200	155	179	16	20			1	1	143	13	23	17	97	5	24					37	18		2	5	17					
2016																																
2017	171	189	166	184	5	5					108	6	70	2	43	1	35	21	6		10	5				4	8				1	
2018	56	67	55	66	1	1					62	2	2	2	20		29	10	1		4			1			7					

Number of persons prosecuted for indecent assault on a person under the age of 16

Year	Including:										Persons convicted										Reasons for closing the case (No. of persons)	Category of persons in considered and closed cases									
	Total cases considered and closed		Sentences handed down		Cases closed		Compulsory medical treatment administered		Sent back for further investigation		Grounds for guilty verdict			Principal penalties imposed																	
	No. of cases	No. of persons	No. of cases	No. of persons	No. of cases	No. of persons	No. of cases	No. of persons	No. of cases	No. of persons	Acquitted	Punishment selected and sentence handed down	Mandatory sentence handed down (CC art. 72)	Sentenced on other grounds (Criminal Code, art. 88)	Fines	Deprivation of a right	Salary deductions	Imprisonment	Restrictions of liberty	Deprivation of liberty			Community service	Additional penalty applied	Criminal Code, art. 57, applied	On basis of Amnesty Act	Following reconciliation of parties	Other reasons	Women	Minors	Over 60
2015	55	56	50	51	5	5					41	1	9		17	12	12					3	5				1	4	1		1
2016	44	46	42	44	2	2					30		14	4	6	8			12			3	1		1			1	4		
2017	57	58	55	56	1	1	1	1			44		12	2	17	1	7	16		1	1	2	1				1	1	3		
2018	14	14	14	14							13		1	1	3		3		3	6							1	1			

Information on the number of visits to places of deprivation of liberty over the period 2015–2018

<i>Organizations</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>2016</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>First six months of 2018</i>
Diplomatic missions and foreign foundations	16		6	5
Ombudsman		5	5	19
Human rights organization Ezgulik (“Kindness”)		4		
Youth Union and Women’s Committee of Uzbekistan			1	
National Human Rights Centre			5	
United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)			1	
Visit by the United Nations Special Rapporteur			1	
Representatives of the Ministry of Justice of the People’s Republic of China and the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Uzbekistan			1	