



**Convention on the Elimination  
of All Forms of Discrimination  
against Women**

Distr.: General  
5 July 2022

Original: English

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**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination  
against Women  
Eighty-second session**

**Summary record of the 1896th meeting**

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Thursday, 23 June 2022, at 3 p.m.

*Chair:* Ms. Acosta Vargas

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*The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.*

**Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention** (*continued*)

*Seventh periodic report of the Plurinational State of Bolivia (CEDAW/C/BOL/7; CEDAW/C/BOL/Q/7; CEDAW/C/BOL/RQ/7)*

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of the Plurinational State of Bolivia joined the meeting.*

2. **Ms. Prada Tejada** (Plurinational State of Bolivia), introducing her country's seventh periodic report, said that the Plurinational State of Bolivia had made unprecedented progress in advancing women's rights since the democratic and cultural revolution led by civil society organizations, indigenous and aboriginal campesino peoples and workers in 2006. With the adoption of the Constitution in 2009, the first in which the indigenous and aboriginal campesino population had provided input, a legal framework had been established to guarantee the rights of women.

3. That process of profound political, economic, social and cultural change had been abruptly halted by the coup d'état of November 2019, which had resulted in a return to the old values of the colonial republic and the neoliberal model, with privileges for the few and poverty for the masses, the looting of the State and a swift reversal of the hard-won achievements of the Bolivian people. Racist violence had been levelled principally against indigenous and aboriginal campesino women; symbols of indigenous and aboriginal campesino people recognized under the Constitution, such as the *wiphala* flag, had been publicly desecrated and burned; and paramilitary groups had perpetrated violent and racist acts, as documented by various human rights organizations. The de facto Government that had assumed control following the coup had committed systematic human rights violations: freedom of expression had been curtailed and there had been massacres and summary executions under a supreme decree that had been condemned by the international community.

4. The human rights violations perpetrated between September and December 2019 had been investigated and documented in a report by an interdisciplinary group of independent experts of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. Thanks to the unity and struggle of the Bolivian people in the streets and at the ballot box, democracy had been restored and the Movimiento Al Socialismo party had won the ensuing elections. Memory, truth and justice had been established as the basis on which to rebuild the country and restore its social fabric.

5. The fight against all forms of violence against women was a priority and 2022 had been declared a year of cultural revolution, with the dismantling of the patriarchy for a life free from violence against women. Action had been taken to tackle the structural root causes of such violence through education. Furthermore, the Economic and Social Development Plan for the period 2021–2026 had been developed with input from various stakeholders. The Plan comprised 10 main lines of action, with a particular focus on decolonization and dismantling of the patriarchy.

6. The Plurinational State of Bolivia recognized that violence against women, in all its forms, was a structural problem rooted in patriarchy – a system of domination, repression, exclusion and exploitation that was reinforced by capitalism. One of the first steps taken by the current Government had been to draft a supreme decree in 2020 to bolster the progress that had been made and overcome obstacles to the realization of women's rights in the nine years since the adoption of the Comprehensive Act on Guaranteeing Women a Life Free of Violence (Act No. 348). In the drafting process, the Government had held consultations with stakeholders, including women from rural as well as urban areas, women's rights organizations, female workers and indigenous and aboriginal campesino women. Once adopted, the decree would reinforce the legal framework and institutional capacities at various levels of government to combat violence against women more effectively.

7. As of 2019, 27 courts had been established under Act No. 348 to deal with violence against women. In 2022, the Council of the Judiciary had announced the reform of 28 courts

in order to reduce delays in the processing of cases involving violence against women and other offences under the Act.

8. In response to the major failings identified in the administration of justice, the President had established a commission to review cases in which persons convicted of femicide or rape had been released without having served their sentences. It was comprised of representatives from the highest bodies in the executive, legislative and judicial branches, as well as the Attorney General's Office and the Ombudsman's Office. The commission had been tasked not only with reviewing cases and identifying problems, but also with finding immediate solutions and appropriate responses to satisfy public demands for justice.

9. The Supreme Court of Justice had issued a series guidelines for expediting proceedings involving offences related to violence against women and the Plurinational Constitutional Court had issued an order for the courts to prioritize such cases. The Public Prosecutor's Office had taken steps to ensure that prosecutors effectively complied with procedural rules, especially when dealing with offences of rape and femicide. Eight prosecutors had been removed from their posts and were facing charges for failing to do so. Likewise, the Council of the Judiciary had investigated a large number of criminal enforcement court judges. Many had subsequently faced disciplinary or criminal proceedings, and 10 had been removed from office. Cooperation agreements had been concluded between the courts, the prosecution service and the prison system in order to improve communication and oversight. Two observatories on violence against women circulated previous judgments that had been handed down, ensured that cases were correctly processed and compiled statistics, thereby facilitating information-sharing between courts and follow-up of cases.

10. The Constitutional Court had rendered a judgment establishing that prisoners convicted of violence against women, including rape and femicide, were eligible for release only when they suffered from serious or terminal illnesses that required external medical care, as certified by a qualified medical practitioner. Protective measures had to be adopted for the victims and their families when offenders were released. The regulations of the Public Prosecutor's Office and the Forensic Research Institute had been amended to incorporate a gender perspective and staff had been given training to prevent revictimization of persons who had suffered gender-based violence. The Ministry of Education had implemented programmes to raise awareness of violence against women and amendments to the Criminal Code were being debated to remove the limitation period for crimes of rape and femicide.

11. School curricula at all levels of compulsory education contained material on sexual and reproductive health, and a regulation had been introduced to guarantee an education to students who became pregnant. The Ministry of Education provided teacher training courses on sexual and reproductive health, sexual orientation, gender identity and transmission of sexually transmitted infections. The Ministry of Health and Sports and the Ministry of Justice and Institutional Transparency were working together on a comprehensive education programme to raise awareness of issues related to sexuality and gender identity, under which more than a hundred medical professionals had received training in 2020. Guidelines had been published on the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons, including their sexual and reproductive rights.

12. Various programmes had been launched to guarantee women's rights to land and economic rights and promote women's entrepreneurship, including the Seed Capital Fund, and measures had been taken to empower women of African descent and indigenous women in particular. Women with disabilities received support through projects such as the National Solidarity and Equity Fund, from which over 10,000 women had benefited.

13. **A representative of the Plurinational State of Bolivia**, speaking via video link, said the Office of the Ombudsman was concerned that close to 47,000 reports of gender-based violence had been registered by the Public Prosecutor's Office in 2021, approximately 8,500 of which were cases of sexual violence against girls, adolescents and women. In the same year, teenage pregnancies had risen to an alarming rate of over 110 a day, and that was just those that were officially in the system. There was also a lack of compliance with the rules governing legal terminations of pregnancies, according to which women, adolescents and girls, in cases of rape and incest, were supposed to simply show a copy of their complaint

and give their free and informed consent in order to obtain a termination; as a result, girls and adolescents who had been raped were being forced to carry their pregnancies to term. In the period 2014–2021, the public health services registered only 559 legal terminations, some 62 per cent of which were in cases of rape.

14. Another matter of concern was that, in the 2020–2022 period, the Public Prosecutor’s Office had initiated criminal proceedings for the offence of abortion against 186 women, many of whom were victims. Such criminalization of abortion was leading to thousands of women and girls seeking illegal terminations that were putting their health and lives at risk, and to the restriction of access to public health services. Victims faced obstacles when it came to access to justice. In 2021 alone, 39 per cent of all cases brought before the judiciary involved gender-based violence. However, despite the announced reorganization in order to guarantee 31 specialized national courts for those offences, those courts had not materialized. In 2021, the Public Prosecutor’s Office had assigned only 13 per cent of its prosecutors to deal with cases involving gender-based violence, although such cases accounted for 36 per cent of all cases. Furthermore, there was a lack of due diligence in investigation at the preliminary stages, especially by the police, and specifically by the Public Prosecutor’s Office and the Forensic Investigation Institute.

15. The legal system did not allow for interoperability or a database that could be shared by the Supreme Court of Justice, the Judiciary Council, the Public Prosecutor’s Office, the police and the Directorate General of Prisons, which would guarantee transparency and reliability of data, for both victims and defendants.

16. Despite the legislative progress made regarding women’s participation in political and public life, of the 670 reports of political harassment and violence in the last few years there had been only one conviction.

17. The Committee should urge the Government to: approve a law on sexual and reproductive rights that promoted comprehensive sexual education and allowed termination of pregnancy, in line with current regional and universal standards; decriminalize abortions and put an end to the criminal prosecution of women who sought to have them; amend the criminal definition of torture to include the circumstances of forced pregnancy; and ensure that reform was led by women and incorporated a gender perspective, in order to address the structural problems of impunity and lack of due diligence in cases of gender-based violence.

18. The Committee should also follow up and monitor investigation proceedings in cases of violence against women carried out by the Public Prosecutor’s Office, the Forensic Investigation Institute and the police. Lastly, the Office of the Ombudsman called on the Committee to monitor the so-called shared management agreements at the various levels of government, particularly in autonomous territorial authorities, which had resulted in a significant reduction in the length of the terms of office of female elected officials.

#### *Articles 1–6*

19. **Ms. Bonifaz Alfonzo** said that, while the progress made over the past 10 years was to be commended, problems remained, such as the overwhelming poverty that persisted, particularly in rural areas. One particular issue of concern was access to justice. In that regard, she wished to know whether there were any plans to set up specific courts to try cases of violence against women separate from courts trying cases of corruption. Bearing in mind that in 95 per cent of cases involving sexual violence no punishment was imposed, that the conviction rate was approximately 1 per cent and that dismissals of claims by the Public Prosecutor’s Office accounted for 85 per cent of the cases closed, she would also like to know what measures were planned to put an end to impunity. Were there plans to raise the budget assigned to the justice sector, which stood at less than 1 per cent of the treasury’s budget? That would be particularly useful for funding public defence, assistance for victims and training for judges. She wished to know what care was given to indigenous women involved in court proceedings and what progress had been made regarding their access to interpreters and translators. Had the State party considered increasing the budget of the public defence system?

20. She would like to know of any measures being taken to reform legislation in order to facilitate young persons’ access to justice in the event of sexual violence, including the

provision of psychological support. She wondered whether the State party had considered amending articles 233 and 239 of the Act on Summary Criminal Procedure and Strengthening Measures to Combat Violence against Children and Women, amending the Code of Criminal Procedure, to provide more effective protection for victims. She wished to know whether any measurable results had yet been obtained from the training given to judges to incorporate a gender perspective when trying cases.

21. **A representative of the Plurinational State of Bolivia**, speaking via video link, said that, as part of the overhaul of the justice system, there had been separation of anti-corruption courts and family violence courts, with the result that special courts now dealt solely with cases of violence against women. There were more than 1,000 judges, although 47 per cent of those were temporary judges; structural measures were planned to put an end to temporary appointments of judges, however. The number of prosecutors had increased by 45 – those prosecutors could be assigned to work on cases related to violence against women and children, which was going to be prioritized under the reorganization of the judicial system.

22. **A representative of the Plurinational State of Bolivia**, speaking via video link, said that results had been achieved following the establishment of the commission to follow up on cases in which persons convicted of femicide, rape and infanticide had been released without having served their sentences: 10 judges had been tried, placed in pretrial detention and dismissed from their posts and eight prosecutors had been removed from their posts, in relation to cases of violence against boys, girls, adolescents and women. Some 21 perpetrators of femicide and rape had been returned to prison following their arbitrary release by judges, against whom proceedings had since been brought. The parliament had recently approved draft legislation that sought to increase penalties for judges who had released perpetrators of femicide arbitrarily, and there had been amendments to the law on the enforcement of penalties and to Bolivian criminal procedure to better combat violence against women, adolescents and children.

23. **A representative of the Plurinational State of Bolivia** said that all cases of femicide were prioritized, and no cases were dismissed or ignored. Interim measures had been taken where appropriate, and perpetrators placed in pretrial detention. In view of the Government's commitment to ending impunity for perpetrators of femicide, efforts were made by the police, the Public Prosecutor's Office and the judiciary in general to ensure that all cases were duly investigated. The 1 per cent conviction rate had changed enormously. His delegation would provide other figures in writing.

24. **Ms. Prada Tejada** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) said that members of indigenous communities who had dealings with the justice system were assisted by the victim support service of the Ana María Romero Plurinational Service for Women and for Dismantling the Patriarchy, in coordination with the Office of the Deputy Minister for Indigenous and Aboriginal Campesino Justice.

25. **A representative of the Plurinational State of Bolivia**, speaking via video link, said that the indigenous and aboriginal campesino justice system was recognized in the Constitution and had the same status as the ordinary justice system, with the Constitutional Court coordinating the relationship between the two systems. Women played an important role in many of the institutions responsible for administering indigenous and aboriginal campesino justice. Recent discussions on how to strengthen the Comprehensive Act on Guaranteeing Women a Life Free of Violence (Act No. 348) had focused on the role that the indigenous and aboriginal campesino authorities should play in combating violence against women. Some representatives of indigenous women's organizations questioned whether the indigenous authorities should be empowered to deal with offences involving violence. That debate was taking place at the national level in response to the President's instruction that all relevant organizations should contribute to the discussion about strengthening Act No. 348.

26. **A representative of the Plurinational State of Bolivia**, speaking via video link, said that special legal procedures had been established to deal with offences committed in areas mainly inhabited by the Afro-Bolivian and indigenous and aboriginal campesino communities. However, the indigenous and aboriginal campesino justice system did not deal with offences such as rape or femicide. In the discussions concerning the strengthening of

Act No. 348, it had been suggested that special support should be provided to that system to enable it to process cases involving violence.

27. **Ms. Rana** said that the Committee had previously recommended that the State party should adopt a dedicated ministry of women's affairs or other high-level office with authority to coordinate and articulate all public policies and strategies for gender equality and the advancement of women (CEDAW/C/BOL/CO/5-6, para. 13 (a)). The Committee would be interested to learn whether any progress had been made towards establishing such an authority. She wondered whether the State party had completed the final evaluation of the monitoring and evaluation framework, coordination arrangements and reporting and impact assessment system for the effective implementation of the Multisectoral Plan to Promote the Dismantling of the Patriarchy and Women's Right to Live Well 2016–2020. If the evaluation had been completed, it would be interesting to learn how the lessons learned from it would be integrated into programmes and policies. The Government might state whether it had adopted a gender-responsive plan to address the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

28. Noting that the current Ombudsman was occupying the position on a temporary basis, she asked when the new Ombudsman would be appointed, how the Government would ensure that the appointment process was transparent and whether it would consider establishing a national human rights institution in the near future. She would be interested to learn whether the report submitted by the Truth Commission to the President in 2021 addressed the issues of femicide and the enforced disappearance and torture of women. She wondered whether the Government would consider establishing a national action plan on Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) with a view to incorporating the women and peace and security agenda into national policy, in accordance with the Committee's general recommendation No. 30 (2013) on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations.

29. **Ms. Peláez Narváez**, noting that the State party made excellent use of temporary special measures in several areas of policy, said that she wished to know whether the use of such measures to apply gender quotas in elections had been successful and whether the public had a positive view of such quotas. She wondered whether the Government would consider applying quotas to other public bodies, such as the citizens' councils that operated in Afro-Bolivian and indigenous communities. The Committee would be grateful to learn whether the State party used temporary special measures for other purposes, such as to promote the socioeconomic empowerment of women or gender equality in education. It would also be interested to know whether temporary special measures directed at a particular group, such as persons with disabilities, always included measures targeted specifically at women within that group. The delegation might state, for example, whether the implementation plan for the Decade for Bolivian People of African Descent 2016–2024 included temporary special measures directed specifically at Afro-Bolivian women.

30. **Ms. Prada Tejada** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) said that the Ana María Romero Plurinational Service for Women and for Dismantling the Patriarchy coordinated policies intended to empower women and also monitored and assessed the implementation of such policies. In 2021, the Plurinational Service for Women had evaluated the impact of the Community-based Agrarian Reform Renewal Act on indigenous women's access to land. Plans were in place to strengthen the implementation of the Act to make it easier for women to acquire the title deeds of land and become more financially independent. The Plurinational Service for Women had also assessed the impact of the Act Regulating Remunerated Domestic Work and the law providing that women employees could take paid leave to undergo screening for cervical or breast cancer. Fathers had acquired the right to take paternity leave following the birth of a child and legislative measures were being taken to close the gender pay gap.

31. The responsibilities of the Plurinational Service for Women included monitoring and following up on reports of violence against women. In 2021, it had provided support in 116 cases in which women had been subjected to violence. The Service also coordinated interactions between State agencies and women's organizations, including organizations of Afro-Bolivian and indigenous and aboriginal campesino women. The budget allocated to the

Service, and the amount spent on its staffing costs, were significantly higher now than they had been in 2019, when it had first begun operating.

32. Women's participation in political life had increased significantly in recent years. The percentage of members of the Plurinational Legislative Assembly who were women had increased from 12 per cent in 1997 to almost 47 per cent in 2020. The number of women senators had also increased dramatically over that period. The percentage of members of municipal councils who were women had risen from 18.8 per cent in 2004 to 51.1 per cent in 2022. In the judicial elections of 2017, 24 women had been elected as judges or counsellors of the judiciary. As a result, women now accounted for 46.1 per cent of elected judicial officials. Plans were in place to ensure that all such officials received training with a gender focus.

33. **A representative of the Plurinational State of Bolivia** said that, for the period 2021–2022, a significant level of funding had been allocated to women's issues in the autonomous departmental, municipal, indigenous autonomous and regional governments. In the 1970s, no women judges had been appointed to the Supreme Court. Following the judicial elections of 2017, half of the judges attached to the Court had been women. Although that proportion was now slightly lower, the judiciary's Gender Committee and its gender observatory made every effort to ensure that women judges were appointed in every municipality and department in the country. The new Ombudsman was being selected in accordance with a transparent, meritocratic process that was currently under way. It was hoped that the successful candidate's name would be announced within the next few days. In the area of education, grants were allocated to members of certain communities to enable them to study particular subjects at the higher education level.

34. An international group of experts had identified racism directed against indigenous women as one of the most troubling aspects of the political unrest of 2019. Indigenous women had taken to the streets to defend democracy but had been arrested, tortured and, in some cases, killed. To cite just one example, Patricia Arce, who had since been elected to the Senate, had been violently assaulted by members of a paramilitary group. The Government had committed itself to restoring respect for human rights and ensuring that such violations would not be repeated.

35. **Ms. Prada Tejada** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) said that one of the aims of the National Solidarity and Equity Fund, set up under the Ministry of the Office of the President, was to provide targeted support to women with disabilities. A presidential decree had been issued to designate the year 2022 as the year of the dismantling of the patriarchy. Accordingly, all ministries were working together to develop and implement projects and programmes aimed at the advancement of women's rights. Measures were also being taken to incorporate a gender dimension into public initiatives aimed at supporting other vulnerable groups in the country, such as persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and the Afro-Bolivian community.

36. **Ms. Peláez Narváez** said that both the Constitution and national legislation provided for the adoption of temporary special measures aimed at accelerating de facto equality between men and women. Certain measures appeared to have been taken to improve access to education or provide social security coverage for other vulnerable groups. However, it was her impression that specific affirmative action had not been taken in favour of women, whether they belonged to other vulnerable groups or not. She therefore wished to know what the State party's position was with respect to temporary special measures and what perceptions existed in society regarding the use of quotas in favour of women.

37. **Ms. Prada Tejada** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) said that the issue of temporary special measures in favour of women had been the subject of much debate in her country. Many people believed that Bolivian society should be a meritocracy and that any progress towards gender equality should be left to occur naturally. However, the Government believed that it was necessary to take proactive measures to dismantle the patriarchy. It had worked with women's organizations to institutionalize gender equality and to ensure that all constitutional and legislative measures taken in that regard led to a tangible improvement in the situation of women. Significant progress had already been made, particularly with respect to political participation, and the Government was committed to taking further action in

sectors where the regulatory framework did not yet provide for equal participation of men and women.

38. **Ms. Bonifaz Alfonso** said that she wished to know whether the State party would consider working more closely with private media organizations to prevent the spread of harmful gender stereotypes, including in publicity campaigns. The Committee would also welcome further information on any measures being taken to address attacks against women carried out by religious groups seeking to stigmatize the feminist movement and marginalize lesbian, bisexual and transgender women and intersex persons. It would be useful to learn how the State party ensured that the State was secular in accordance with Constitution, to prevent public institutions from incorporating religious precepts that ran counter to the human rights of women into their policies and programmes.

39. It would be interesting to know the extent to which domestic violence had increased during the pandemic. It would also be helpful to know whether anything was being done to amend the definition of rape in the Criminal Code. The issue of consent was entirely absent from the current legislation, while rape victims were required to prove the existence of psychological or physical intimidation. Teenage victims were being denied justice because their rapists were often tried for the offence of statutory rape, which was punishable by more lenient prison sentences than those that applied to rape. She wondered whether the State party would consider taking measures to repeal provisions of the law concerning statutory rape that carried lighter sentences.

40. At a more general level, she wished to know whether the State party would guarantee the allocation of sufficient resources to support victims of sexual violence. It would also be useful to hear whether the Government intended to provide prosecutors, police officers, judges, psychologists, social workers and forensic scientists with training on issues related to sexual violence. Further information on any training organized for health-care professionals would be of particular interest, since the Committee understood that doctors were sometimes failing in their duties to inform victims about potential pregnancies, to provide information on the morning-after pill and to offer medication for sexually transmitted infections.

41. **Ms. Leinarte** said that it was her understanding that the Plurinational Council to Combat Trafficking in Persons was responsible for coordinating all anti-trafficking measures taken at the national level and evaluating their outcomes. She found it unusual that one body was tasked with both coordination and evaluation, and she therefore invited the delegation to explain the exact nature of the Council's responsibilities. The Committee would also welcome further information about the main outcomes of the national plan to combat trafficking in persons for the period 2016–2020. She wished to know whether a new national plan, proposed to run from 2021 to 2025, had been adopted yet. It would be useful to receive further information about the consolidated database on human trafficking cases that the State party had developed with the support of an international organization.

42. According to the Bolivian authorities, 115 people had been imprisoned for human trafficking or trafficking-related offences in 2020. It would be useful to understand the forms of trafficking that those persons had been convicted of. As at the end of 2020, according to the same data, courts in the State party had rejected 524 of the 600 trafficking cases that had been brought before them. She invited the delegation to explain why that number was so high and to confirm how many people were currently serving sentences for trafficking or trafficking-related offences.

43. It would be helpful to know which branch of government was responsible for the coordination and implementation of victim identification strategies. She would also be interested to know how many victims had received assistance during the reporting period and whether the State party intended to develop special shelters for victims of trafficking in persons. She welcomed the fact that foreign trafficking victims who had agreed to cooperate with the authorities on the cases brought against their traffickers could receive humanitarian visas to stay in the country. Clarification as to whether those victims were authorized to work while they waited for their visas would be of interest to the Committee. She also wished to know how long victims who had refused to cooperate with the authorities were entitled to remain in the State party and whether they could apply for a long-term stay visa.



44. Lastly, although prostitution activities were legal and regulated, the Committee had learned that sex workers were stigmatized in society. She invited the delegation to clarify whether that was indeed the case. It seemed strange to her, since sex workers were usually treated with more respect in countries where prostitution had been legalized.

45. **Ms. Prada Tejada** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) said that a campaign had been launched following the national and international outcry over the case of a young female victim of rape who had been temporarily prevented from having an abortion by organizations affiliated with the Catholic Church. A press conference had been held by the Government to denounce the actions of those institutions, which had also been heavily criticized by women's organizations and the Office of the Ombudsman. Fortunately, the right to abortion of the victim had ultimately been upheld. However, the case served to illustrate the sort of challenges that the Government often faced in guaranteeing the rights of its citizens. The secular nature of the Plurinational State of Bolivia was enshrined in its Constitution, but a large proportion of the country's population was religious and institutions with links to the Catholic Church regularly acted in an unlawful manner to prevent the implementation of legislation that they considered undesirable. The Government would therefore welcome greater support from the international community in its efforts to ensure that women and girls could enjoy the rights that had been conferred on them, including the right to abortion.

46. Domestic violence was the most common form of violence suffered by women in her country. Offences of that nature had become increasingly widespread during the period of civil unrest in 2019 and then throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. There was also a causal link between poverty and domestic violence; to her mind, it was impossible to eliminate violence against women without addressing the structural causes of economic and social inequity. Unfortunately, the de facto Government that had been formed in November 2019 had done very little to address the issue of domestic violence or provide support for victims and had failed to keep reliable records of such offences. The current Government had made addressing the issue of domestic violence a priority and had been working to put in place a new system of comprehensive care for victims.

47. Combating violence against women nonetheless required coordinated action between national, regional and local authorities. Unfortunately, the autonomous departmental and municipal governments did not always take the necessary steps to give effect to the recommendations that the Government issued on such matters. She urged the Committee to take her country's unique administrative structure into account when formulating its own recommendations and to encourage the autonomous departmental and municipal governments to take more decisive action to guarantee women's rights. Her Government was also eager to receive international support for its efforts to reform the Criminal Code. Too often, those efforts were met with resistance, for example when pro-life organizations campaigned against legislation on abortion. In order to adopt and then give effect to the reforms required to guarantee the rights of girls and women, the Government would require the support of both women's organizations on its territory and the international community.

*The meeting rose at 5.10 p.m.*