



International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

Distr.: General
10 December 2019

Original: English

Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination 100th session

Summary record of the 2788th meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Wednesday, 4 December 2019, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Mr. Amir

Contents

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

Combined seventeenth to nineteenth periodic reports of Israel

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

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

GE.19-20893 (E) 091219 101219



* 1 9 2 0 8 9 3 *

Please recycle The recycling symbol, consisting of three chasing arrows forming a triangle.



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

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

Combined seventeenth to nineteenth periodic reports of Israel (CERD/C/ISR/17-19; CERD/C/ISR/Q/17-19)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Israel took places at the Committee table.*
2. **Ms. Raz Shechter** (Israel), presenting the combined seventeenth to nineteenth periodic reports of Israel (CERD/C/ISR/17-19), said that civil society had participated in the preparation of the reports. Israel had a vibrant democracy and a unique multicultural society, including a wide array of subgroups within the Jewish majority. In a speech delivered in 2015, the President had acknowledged that the former secular Jewish majority had been replaced by four distinct minority groups, namely secular Jews, modern Orthodox Jews, ultra-Orthodox Jews and Arabs. He had emphasized the need to build a partnership between the various communities in Israeli society, based on a shared sense of security, responsibility for the future of the country and commitment to justice and equality. The diversity of Israeli society was also reflected at all levels of the Government.
3. Israel had an active civil society and remained committed to the rule of law and to the principles of democracy and equality before the law. Those principles were enshrined in the Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel, which provided for freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture, guaranteed protections for the holy places of all religions and upheld the principles contained in the Charter of the United Nations.
4. The unprecedented persecution and betrayal that the Jewish people had suffered throughout the centuries, culminating in the Holocaust, had shaped Israel's fundamental values, which were based on respect for human rights, the obligation to protect minorities and the principles of freedom and equality for all. Those principles guided all branches of the Government in their work and were enshrined in the Basic Laws, including the Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty, which provided protections for the rights of all citizens and facilitated coexistence.
5. Israel had an active and autonomous judiciary that ensured equality and democratic rights. The Supreme Court played an important role in the protection of human rights. Citizens and non-citizens, including Palestinians, were guaranteed access to justice to pursue complaints of violations of their basic rights or civil liberties. In the preceding 12 months alone, the Supreme Court had heard over 10,000 cases.
6. Israel had ratified seven United Nations human rights conventions, which reflected its commitment to the protections that they provided. Israel highly respected the United Nations treaty bodies and gave serious consideration to their conclusions.
7. While the delegation was attending the meeting with the intention of discussing developments in Israel, she understood that the Committee was also interested in the situation in the West Bank and Gaza. Israel continued to face security challenges, having suffered a number of devastating attacks in recent years committed by perpetrators from those areas. The Government sought to find the proper balance between its commitment to the rule of law and its obligation to defend its citizens against terrorism, while ensuring that it upheld human rights and the principles of international law. Israel was seeking a peaceful solution to the situation through bilateral negotiations. Nonetheless, it maintained its principled position that, according to treaty law, the Convention was not applicable beyond a State's national territory; as such, the Convention did not apply to the West Bank or Gaza, over the latter of which Israel had not exerted control since its disengagement in 2005. The delegation would do its best to answer any questions regarding those areas, however.
8. She recalled that Israel had requested that the current meeting should be postponed until after the Committee had reached a decision regarding its jurisdiction to act on a matter submitted for its consideration in a Palestinian communication. Although its request had been denied, the delegation remained ready to engage with the Committee in a constructive manner, on the understanding that doing so would not prejudice its position with regard to that communication.

9. **Mr. Neuman** (Israel) said that the Israeli parliament (the Knesset) had adopted various pieces of legislation on Convention rights in recent years, including an amendment to the Penal Law to define racism or hostility as an aggravated circumstance in homicide offences and a provisional amendment to the Legal Aid Law, valid for three years, to provide free, non-means-tested legal assistance to any person who filed a civil suit under the Prohibition of Discrimination in Products, Services and Entry into Places of Entertainment and Public Places Law. The Legal Aid Administration was currently handling dozens of complaints under those provisions.

10. The courts continued to play a crucial role in promoting human rights. In May 2019, for instance, the High Court of Justice had overturned a blanket ban imposed by the Ministry of Defence on a group of Palestinian residents who wanted to travel from the West Bank to Israel for a memorial ceremony, stating, *inter alia*, that its decision related to freedom of expression and personal autonomy. The court had ordered the Ministry to instead conduct a case-specific security assessment of each individual. With regard to a complainant who had been rejected for a position as a professional dentist for refusing to remove her hijab, a regional labour court had ruled that the hiring company had violated the Equal Employment Opportunities Law, noting that the principle of equality enjoyed special status derived from the constitutional right to human dignity.

11. In 2016, the Ministerial Committee for the Advancement of the Integration into the Israeli Society of Israeli Citizens of Ethiopian Origin had established an interministerial team charged with forming an action plan to address racism against persons of Ethiopian origin. Pursuant to the team's recommendations, a unit for coordinating the fight against racism had been set up within the Ministry of Justice. The unit, which was responsible for receiving complaints of racism and discrimination and for supervising the implementation of the team's recommendations, had received a growing number of complaints as the public became more aware of its existence. Thus far in 2019, 450 cases had been presented to the unit, of which 40 per cent involved complainants of Ethiopian descent and 32 per cent involved Arab complainants. The unit had obtained redress for complainants in cases involving discrimination in access to employment, public facilities and private-sector services.

12. In 2015, the Government had adopted a five-year economic development plan for the Arab population for the period 2016–2020, with a budget of \$2.7 billion, the aim of which was to improve access to education, employment and housing, among other things. In 2018, the Government had adopted another plan, with a budget of \$123 million, to improve education, welfare services, transportation and land planning in the eastern neighbourhoods of Jerusalem, which was already being implemented. The Government had also adopted similarly well-funded plans with the aim of reducing the socioeconomic gaps between the Druze, Circassian and Bedouin populations and the rest of Israeli society.

13. Despite court rulings that Bedouin communities had no rights over so-called *mawat* lands (barren land owned by the State), the Government had taken a pragmatic approach to resolving the Bedouin housing crisis in the Negev, having accelerated the development of lands with no ownership claims or links to Bedouin families and advanced the construction of 100,000 housing units for Bedouin residents. The Government had also inaugurated a Druze cultural centre in Yanuh-Jat and had launched a project to raise awareness about post-partum depression among Bedouin mothers in the Negev and to provide relevant training for nurses. Regular lectures and training seminars on the implementation of human rights conventions were also held throughout the year within various government authorities.

14. **Ms. Izsák-Ndiaye** (Country Rapporteur) said that the report before the Committee, which had been received in March 2017, regrettably failed to reflect certain important developments that had occurred in recent years. It also failed to address many of the issues raised by the Committee in its previous concluding observations (CERD/C/ISR/CO/14-16). According to the delegation, the report was the product of a broad collaborative effort. She asked whether an intergovernmental committee had been established and whether civil society groups had been involved in the preparatory work. With regard to the implementation of the Committee's recommendations, she wished to know whether, as in the past, a joint interministerial team had been established for the purpose and what measures had been taken.

15. Noting that the documents submitted by the State party failed to specify which groups were deemed to be minorities who were potentially affected by discrimination, she wondered whether Ashkenazi, Sephardi and Mizrahi Jews were considered to be minorities. She would also appreciate receiving information on the status of Ethiopian Jews and other groups, such as Russians, Afro-descendants and Domari gypsies.

16. During the previous interactive dialogue, the delegation had argued that the basic self-identification of Bedouins was tribal and that it was difficult to recognize their connection to the lands of the Negev. She wished to know whether consultations were being conducted with the Bedouin community in order to recognize their special status and prevent their expulsion from their ancestral land.

17. As identity in the State party was determined by a combination of elements, such as ethnic background, culture and religion, it was important to establish a framework for protection that addressed multilayered, complex and intersecting forms of discrimination. The Committee noted with concern that the State party still had no law containing a comprehensive definition of all forms of discrimination. It would be useful to know which law recognized and protected minorities and other vulnerable groups, and whether there was any plan to enact a comprehensive anti-discrimination law.

18. Recalling that the Committee had recommended that the State party should ratify the amendment to article 8 (6) of the Convention, she would appreciate a more detailed clarification of its objections to article 14, on individual communications.

19. The State party had regrettably failed yet again to provide any information in its report regarding the situation in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip and the Occupied Syrian Golan, although it was bound to respect the obligations imposed by the Convention with respect to any person and territory over which it exercised jurisdiction.

20. The “Basic Law: Israel as the Nation-State of the Jewish People”, promulgated in July 2018, was a source of concern because it stipulated that the right to exercise national self-determination was unique to the Jewish people, established Hebrew as the official language, merely according Arabic “special status”, and recognized Jewish settlement as a national value. The right to self-determination could not be confined to a single component of a pluralistic society. The downgrading of the Arabic language sent a negative message to all Arabic-speaking communities, and Jewish settlements were prohibited under international law. The Basic Law also reiterated that Jerusalem was the capital of Israel. The Committee wished to know whether the State party would consider amending the Basic Law, based on the concerns expressed by numerous national and international actors. In particular, it wished to be informed of the outcome of the hearing at the High Court of Justice scheduled for 3 May 2020 concerning petitions filed against the Basic Law.

21. The following pieces of legislation were also a source of concern for the Committee: the 1950 Law of Return; the 1952 Law on Citizenship; the 1952 Entry into Israel Law; the Citizenship and Entry into Israel Law, which had been amended in 2018 to grant the Minister of the Interior broad discretion to revoke the residency of Palestinians; the 1950 Absentee Property Law; the Israeli Land Administration Law; the Amendment to the Land Ordinance; the Amendment of the Negev Development Authority Law; and the Admissions Committee Law. As several categories of social benefits were bound to the completion of military service, minorities who were exempted from such service were excluded. The Committee had previously recommended the abrogation of laws that discriminated against non-Jewish minorities in terms of access to land, property, and economic and social benefits. An update on the implementation of its recommendation would therefore be appreciated.

22. The State party had informed the Committee during the previous review that a new Ministry of Minority Affairs had been established but the current report contained no reference to such a ministry. The Committee would welcome updated information on the institutions tasked with human rights protection and the elimination of racial discrimination. In particular, the State party had recently informed the Committee on Economic Social and Cultural Rights that it recognized the importance of establishing a national human rights institution. She wondered whether a time frame for its establishment had been specified.

23. The Committee had been informed that several organizations, such as the World Zionist Organization, the Jewish National Fund and the Jewish Agency, operated as quasi-governmental entities. It would appreciate information concerning their mandate and status. For instance, could they be held accountable on an equal footing with governmental institutions?

24. The Committee wished to know which legislation could be invoked to claim a violation of equal treatment, in the absence of an anti-discrimination law, and who carried the burden of proof. Welcoming the decision to expand access to free legal aid, she asked whether it would be confined to the Ethiopian community.

25. According to the report, 1,340 emails and several thousand calls concerning incitement to discrimination and racism had been received by the relevant authorities as of March 2016. Updated information would be appreciated. The report also mentioned a decision to establish an interministerial team tasked with forming an action plan to deal with racism against persons of Ethiopian origin. She asked whether there were plans to establish similar teams on behalf of other groups affected by discrimination.

26. According to annex 1 to the report, 9.7 per cent of all civil service employees in December 2015 were Arabs, including Bedouins, Druze and Circassians, and about 9 per cent of judges were from minority groups in 2016. The Committee would appreciate updated statistics.

27. The increase in the threshold requirement for political parties to enter the Knesset from 2 per cent to 3.25 per cent under the amended Election Law in 2014 significantly weakened the chances of minority political parties. Another law of July 2016 permitted a majority of 90 Knesset members to oust a serving member on grounds of incitement to racism and/or support for the armed struggle of an enemy state or a terrorist organization against Israel. Any majority in the Knesset could therefore oust elected minority members on the basis of political considerations. What guarantees could be put in place to prevent such action? The Committee would also welcome information concerning the impact of the recent elections on the composition of the Knesset.

28. While she welcomed the five-year development plan on behalf of the Bedouin population, the Committee had received alarming reports of ongoing threats of housing demolitions and forced evictions. The plans for temporary housing solutions and public buildings for the Bedouin population in the Negev aimed to transfer the residents of unrecognized Bedouin villages to temporary structures for a period of up to six years. Civil society groups were highly concerned that those temporary housing complexes would leave more than 100,000 Bedouin people internally displaced. The Committee would appreciate data concerning the number of people who were currently at risk of being displaced, the number of temporary building permits that would be issued, and measures to ensure that affected communities participated in the decision-making procedure.

29. A report dating from 2004 concerning Domari gypsies in Jerusalem had found that 43 per cent of women and 36 per cent of men had no formal education, and that 72 per cent of families depended on unemployment benefits. She wished to know whether there was any policy or legislation aimed at protecting and promoting the community's identity and human rights.

30. All decisions concerning refugee status in the State party were taken by the Minister of the Interior, and the status and rights of persons in need of international protection, including asylum seekers and refugees, were not regulated by law. According to the Population and Immigration Authority, there had been approximately 37,000 pending asylum applications in June 2019. Almost all of the 23,140 Eritreans and 6,466 Sudanese nationals resident in Israel in June 2019 had entered the country irregularly between 2006 and 2012. Agreements with safe third countries for persons who had entered Israel illegally from the Sudan and Eritrea via the Egyptian border were described in the report as an appropriate way of dealing with the situation. The Committee would be interested in hearing why the State party considered that such action constituted the right solution.

31. Asylum seekers and other persons in need of international protection were not covered by the National Health Insurance Law, and their children were not eligible for free membership of the national health insurance programme. Under new legislation of May 2017 in application of the Anti-Infiltration Law, lack of access to welfare services and

social security benefits and the deduction of a significant percentage of the salaries of persons in need of international protection (mostly Eritrean and Sudanese nationals) had resulted in their further impoverishment and had increased the risk of destitution and homelessness among vulnerable individuals. Furthermore, the financial and social struggles of asylum-seeking parents had resulted in the proliferation of low-cost and unsupervised kindergartens where children were at risk of malnutrition and other problems. Were there any plans to revisit that legislation?

32. As the 2013 procedure for handling applications to be recognized as stateless was applicable only to persons who entered Israel in accordance with the regular procedures, Bedouins and their descendants, as well as persons who had entered Israel irregularly, mostly from African countries, were denied access to services and rights. Moreover, since 2010 the State party had revoked the citizenship of some 2,600 Arab Bedouins, rendering them stateless without due process.

33. The occupation divided Palestinians into diverse categories governed by different sets of laws and policies. Israeli civil law governed Palestinian citizens of Israel. Israeli permanent residency law governed Palestinians in the city of Jerusalem. Israeli military law was applicable to Palestinians, including those resident in refugee camps under Israeli military occupation, and Palestinian refugees or exiles living outside Israel. As a result, lower human rights standards were applied, for example, to Palestinian suspects and defendants. The application of two different legal and judicial systems in the same territory was inherently discriminatory and violated the principle of equality before the law. Furthermore, the closure of Jerusalem had resulted in the isolation and severe marginalization of Palestinians living in the city, separating them from the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The Committee had been informed that the residency rights of more than 10,000 Palestinians from Jerusalem had been revoked to date. It remained extremely concerned about the consequences of legislation, policies and practices that amounted to de facto segregation.

34. The High Court of Justice had held that Israel, following its withdrawal from the Gaza Strip in 2005, was no longer an occupying power. Yet Israel continued to control the border crossings and airspace and had declared a maritime blockade and limits to the fishing zone, thereby restricting imports and exports, the movement of people, and access to basic services. Furthermore, 95 per cent of residents were denied access to safe drinking water. Owing to the lack of medical infrastructure and medicines, Palestinians living in Gaza had to seek health-care services elsewhere, especially in the West Bank or Israel. Israel had continued to implement its discriminatory planning and zoning policies. As at July 2019, a total of 362 structures had been destroyed. During the period from 2009 to 2018, some 480 structures for which the European Union or its member States had provided over €1.45 million had been destroyed or seized. Moreover, there were 42 schools in Area C and 8 schools in East Jerusalem facing full or partial demolition in March 2019 owing to a lack of building permits. Half of the schools had received funds from the European Union or its member States, and their demolition would severely impact Palestinian children's right to education.

35. The Committee had also received information about increased incursions and raids by the Israeli security forces into various parts of the West Bank, targeting Palestinian civil society organizations and homes and resulting in arrests and arbitrary detention. Settler violence had also reportedly been increasing. Israeli settlements continued to reduce the living space for Palestinian communities. Israel continued to occupy the Syrian Golan, despite numerous resolutions demanding that the occupation be terminated. Syrian citizens suffered from discriminatory policies, particularly related to land and water allocation. Moreover, the Citizenship Law disrupted family ties and Syrian residents were gravely affected by family separation.

36. The Committee had urged the State party in its previous concluding observations to find a satisfactory solution to the issue of family separation and to ensure full access for all residents of Israeli-controlled territories to fundamental rights such as the right to land, housing, movement, marriage and choice of spouse. The Committee would be grateful for information about measures taken to implement the recommendation.

37. **Mr. Kut** (Follow-up Coordinator) said that, in October 2013, the State party had submitted an interim report ([CERD/C/ISR/CO/14-16/Add.1](#)) in response to the

Committee's request for information within one year of the adoption of its previous concluding observations. The interim report addressed the issues raised in paragraphs 16, 18 and 30 of those concluding observations.

38. In paragraph 16, the Committee had recommended that the State party should "abrogate all discriminatory laws [...] to ensure non-Jewish communities' equal access to work and social benefits". That recommendation reflected the Committee's concern about laws conditioning social and economic benefits on completion of military service. Upon receiving the interim report, the Committee had sent a letter to the State party in which it took note that several of those laws were under review by the Supreme Court and requested the State party to communicate the outcome of those reviews in its next periodic report. Unfortunately, that information had not been provided. In fact, paragraph 6 of the periodic report stated that information on military service benefits had been provided in the State party's fourteenth to sixteenth periodic reports (CERD/C/ISR/14-16), submitted in 2011. In his view, it was strange, and not conducive to a constructive dialogue, that State party should respond to the Committee's request for updated information by referring back to a report submitted six years previously.

39. Paragraph 18 of the previous concluding observations referred to discriminatory laws targeting Palestinian citizens of Israel and to the issue of family reunification. In it, the Committee had asked the State party to "revoke the Citizenship and Entry into Israel Law (Temporary provision) and to facilitate family reunification of all citizens irrespective of their ethnicity or national or other origin". In the interim report, the State party had informed the Committee that the Supreme Court had upheld the constitutionality of the Law, which had been enacted initially on a temporary basis and had been renewed at regular intervals since 2003. He therefore asked the delegation to confirm whether the Law was due for renewal and whether it was still constitutional, given that it had lost its temporary character and had become permanent. Paragraphs 146 to 153 of the report addressed the issue of family reunification, but it did not appear as though much progress had been made and the Committee was likely to require further information in that regard.

40. In paragraph 30 of the previous concluding observations, the Committee had encouraged the State party to ratify those international human rights treaties that it had not yet ratified, including the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. The interim report stated that Israel had ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2012 and that it considered the ratification of further international human rights treaties on a regular basis. Accordingly, the Committee would welcome further information from the delegation about the State party's plans to ratify international treaties, including the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

41. **Ms. McDougall** said that, having intended to speak about issues related to the rights to education and work in Israel, she had read the Committee's previous concluding observations, the list of themes, the State party's report and other reports prepared by various United Nations officials and bodies. She had come to the conclusion that in the case of Israel, the Committee could not and should not evaluate the State party's compliance with its obligations under the Convention on the basis of partial information. For example, with respect to the right to employment, the State party had reported that it had greatly expanded the rights of minorities to work in the civil service. Yet at the same time, through amendments to its Basic Laws, the State party had swept away the core citizenship rights and claims to self-determination of all non-Jews. In her view, those moves were part of a larger strategic plan to fragment the non-Jewish population and confine them to non-contiguous areas where their Convention rights, and human rights more broadly, would not be respected.

42. To that must be added the strategic forced transfers of non-Jewish populations, in violation of humanitarian law. The State party's claims that "apartheid has always been regarded as abhorrent by the Government of Israel and society", that "there exists in Israel no restrictions of any kind as to place of residence, nor is there any segregation of any kind" and that "the Government has made important inroads into improving the representation of the minority population within the civil service" contrasted with its actions in erasing the fundamental rights of large parts of the population. Moreover, the State party had once again failed to report on the rights of all Palestinians subject to its jurisdiction and effective control, and it had systematically denied the applicability of the

international human rights treaties that it had ratified and their relevance to the Occupied Palestinian Territory. She recalled that, in its concluding observations of 2012, the Committee had expressed concern at the State party's position that the Convention did not apply to all the territories under its effective control and had called on Israel to "review its approach and interpret its obligations under the Convention in good faith and in accordance with international law". Reading those words in the light of the Country Rapporteur's analysis, she had no option but to conclude that the Committee could not evaluate employment and education rights for the entirety of the population under the State party's control, since that information had not been provided. It was clear that Israel moving fast in another direction, which would allow it to claim that it had no unmet obligations and that certain people were not its concern.

43. **Mr. Murillo Martínez** said that, since Israel was known to be a technologically advanced country, especially in the areas of artificial intelligence and cybersecurity, he wished to share some recent comments by the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Telefónica, Mr. José María Álvarez-Pallete, on the subject of the opportunities and challenges presented by the digital transition. Mr. Álvarez-Pallete had stated that never before in its history had humanity witnessed such an accumulation of technology and that it was imperative to place citizens and their rights at the forefront of the newly emerging world, while ensuring that no one was left behind. The digital revolution was changing all aspects of life, through advances that until recently had been unthinkable, while technologies such as 5G networks and artificial intelligence were further accelerating the transformation, leading to significant social and political changes. Inequality was the greatest challenge.

44. In addition to those comments, he invited the delegation to consider that, in 2018, a group of human rights organizations had signed the Toronto Declaration, which acknowledged the potential for machine learning and related systems to be used to promote human rights but expressed concern about "the capability of such systems to facilitate intentional or inadvertent discrimination against certain individuals or groups of people". That in turn raised the question of who, in a world of machine learning systems, would bear accountability for harming human rights.

45. In that context, he was interested to know what steps the State party had taken to ensure respect for human rights in the design, deployment and application of artificial intelligence systems by private companies operating in the law enforcement sector, including in relation to regular review of the rules governing the programming, use and marketing of algorithms susceptible to racial bias. He wondered whether Israel had a national action plan on business and human rights and, if so, whether it included any measures to prevent, mitigate and remedy algorithmic bias. He asked whether any mechanisms were envisaged to ensure that independent oversight bodies were empowered to investigate the use of artificial intelligence tools by law enforcement agencies and immigration authorities, and to check that those tools did not exacerbate inequalities or produce discriminatory outcomes.

46. He wished to know if Israel planned to adapt its legal system and oversight structures to meet the new requirements arising from the use of artificial intelligence. Did it have any statistics on complaints of racial discrimination linked to artificial intelligence and, if so, how many complaints had been made and on what grounds? Had the State party conducted any studies on effective measures and best practices to address possible racial prejudice in artificial intelligence? He asked the delegation to indicate whether the State party continuously and carefully reviewed the tools and algorithms it used in areas where they might have human rights implications, and to state whether the selection of training data and the design of algorithmic models complied with human rights standards and data protection legislation. Did Israeli companies observe such standards, both in Israel and abroad? Lastly, he asked how the Government ensured that Israeli companies promoted diversity and equity in the algorithmic profiling systems that they used in the context of employment.

47. **Mr. Avtonomov** said that he would appreciate information on the recognition and the social and economic situation of the Samaritans, who were a minority group that had not been mentioned in the report. He would be grateful if the delegation could comment on the finding, in a survey conducted by the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission, that 39 per cent of employees felt that their Arab identity affected their chance of being

recruited. He would be interested to know what percentage of civil service employees were Arabs, Druze and Circassians, and what actions had been taken to promote greater participation of those minorities in the civil service and their access to positions at all levels.

48. Noting that under Resolution No. 922, Israel had adopted a plan for the economic development of the Arab population for the years 2016–2020, he asked how that plan had been put into practice, whether it had been the subject of a preliminary assessment and, if so, what the results had been. He would also welcome an explanation of the impact of the Basic Law: Israel – The Nation State of the Jewish People on the social, political and economic situation of minorities, given that many United Nations institutions had expressed concerns about the systemic discrimination experienced by persons from those minorities, especially Arab and Bedouin women and girls. The Committee would appreciate information on efforts to combat trafficking in persons, including on investigations, prosecutions, convictions and penalties under sections 199, 201 and 202 of the Penal Law, relating to procurement and inducement to prostitution. Information might also be provided on assistance and rehabilitation for trafficking victims.

49. **Mr. Diaby** said that he would appreciate an indication of how the organizations of the four minority groups mentioned by the head of delegation in her opening statement had been involved in implementing the recommendations put forward by the Committee in its previous concluding observations, and how they had been involved in preparing the report under consideration.

50. It would be interesting to know whether the personal body cameras provided to police officers by the Government had improved the relationship between the population and the police. The Committee would also appreciate information on whether police and security officers in general had received training on the Convention or other human rights conventions and, if so, how many officers had benefited from such training.

51. Resolution No. 1300 of 2014 had mandated a State body to work together with ministries to promote the rights of Israeli citizens of Ethiopian origin. Information on whether that body had been empowered to bring proceedings would be welcome. Additionally, as the body had been in existence for five years, he wished to know whether its role in supporting and integrating the Ethiopian population had been evaluated.

52. Referring to an incident in which a black member of the Knesset had not been allowed to give blood, on the basis of Ministry of Health guidelines that prohibited blood donations by Ethiopian Jews, he asked what measures the Government had taken in that regard and whether the incident had led to any legal proceedings or sanctions.

53. **Mr. Bossuyt** said that the fact that Israel occupied Palestinian territories implied that it exercised jurisdiction over them. The obligations of a State party under the Convention extended to the territories it effectively controlled, and information on how Israel was fulfilling those obligations would have been welcome in the periodic report.

54. The continuous extension of Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories resulted in different rules being applied to the population of the occupied territories, based on their different origins, which raised questions under the Convention. The settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories were not required for Israel's security; they deprived Palestinians of the right to property; and they were an obstacle to a lasting solution to the conflict. The delegation should indicate the goal of its policy on Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories and its vision for those settlements in a future solution of the conflict between Israel and Palestine.

55. **Ms. Verdugo Moreno** said that the State party's legislation on hate crimes met international standards and recognized aggravating circumstances. Concerning the specific cases of offences presented in Annex I, the Committee would appreciate receiving statistics on the implementation of the Convention.

56. With regard to the campaign and hotline organized by the Ministry of Justice that made it possible to report acts of discrimination, the Committee would welcome information on who decided if reports of alleged acts of discrimination deserved to be investigated by the police, what percentage of such acts were investigated, and whether there was a police unit that was trained to work on those types of incidents.

57. The State party's legislation on hate speech on the Internet was laudable but the rise in hate speech by office holders, not only against Sudanese and Eritreans, in particular, but also against minorities in general, was worrisome. It would be useful to learn if combating hate speech was an area of particular concern for the State party, given its facility for promoting violence. The Committee would also appreciate information on how complaints of police abuse and acts of harassment based on race or ethnic origin were addressed and whether specific training had been provided.

58. With regard to the administration of justice and the existence of a different jurisdiction for crimes related to terrorism, she wondered how the Government ensured that it was the objective offence that triggered the application of the Counter Terrorism Law and not the ethnic origin of the alleged offender, which could lead to de facto discrimination.

59. **Ms. Shepherd** said that the Committee would appreciate clarification of the reasons for the reservation to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities expressed by Israel.

60. Admission Committees, regulated in 2011 by Amendment No. 8 to the Cooperative Society Ordinance, had been used to exclude Palestinians from ownership and use of land. While the law stated that there was a duty to respect the right to equality and prevent discrimination, it had also allowed the Admission Committees to reject applications deemed unsuitable to the social life of the community or the social and cultural fabric of the town, thereby legitimizing the exclusion of entire groups. How did the State party plan to ensure that Admissions Committees upheld the non-discrimination principles codified in several international human rights instruments?

61. The Committee had been informed of incidents of racial incitement against minority groups by candidates running for office. She wished to know what actions had been taken by the Central Elections Committee to ensure that hate speech was not tolerated in the State party's elections, and whether administrative and legislative measures had been taken to criminalize and prosecute those who perpetrated hate crime.

62. Drawing attention to the Government's approval of Resolution No. 1300, by which it had mandated the Ministry of Aliyah and Immigrant Absorption, together with other relevant ministries, to recommend a new policy for the integration of Israeli citizens of Ethiopian origin into Israeli society, she wished to know how the tension between integration and the retention of cultural practices was being resolved. In the light of reports that the State party had administered birth control measures to Ethiopian Jewish migrant women without their consent in 2013, the delegation should describe the processes being used to monitor that situation.

63. **Ms. Mohamed** said that the status of Bedouins was unclear. The law of 2012 that legalized the policy of demolition and forced displacement of the Bedouin population was wrongheaded. The delegation should indicate if that law had been amended or repealed. Furthermore, members of one Bedouin community had identity cards but had not been granted citizenship. The Committee would appreciate information on what measures had been taken to address that problem.

64. There had recently been many incidents of hate speech and racist and xenophobic discourse and attacks against Palestinian citizens of Israel and residents in the occupied territories, as well as against asylum seekers and persons of African descent. The delegation should indicate what steps the Government had undertaken to prevent those acts and hate speech, especially in schools.

65. Finally, the Committee would appreciate information on the number of Arabs in the Knesset.

66. **Mr. Yeung Sik Yuen** said that, with regard to the hotline set up by the Ministry of Justice, the delegation should provide information on the complaints that had been sent to the police. Had they had been investigated, what measures had been taken, was the hotline still operating and how effective was it?

67. With regard to the list of pending cases before the courts, as given in annex 1 to the report, the delegation should indicate the outcome of those cases and the percentage of cases that had been successfully prosecuted.

68. It was unclear why the budgeting of Jewish and non-Jewish religious services and religious institutions was being handled by two different ministries. In addition, given that the Ministry of Education had allocated \$151.4 million to support rabbinical colleges in 2014, he wondered whether a similar sum was being allocated for other religions.

69. With regard to the Bedouins in the Negev and the 1,000 housing units that had been built, since the land on which the Bedouins traditionally had lived was unowned land, was the Bedouins' transfer into those housing units a case of displacement so that the land could be put to other uses?

70. **Ms. Chung** said that more than 20 per cent of the population of the State party were non-Jewish people. Despite the many recommendations and rulings by international organizations, the reporting State had, in 2018, adopted the Basic Law: Israel – The Nation-State of the Jewish People. The delegation should explain the logic and spirit of that law.

71. According to the Israeli newspaper *Haaretz*, every year, almost 1,000 Palestinian young people, some of whom were not even 13 years old, were arrested and subjected to cruel treatment. She would appreciate explanations in that regard.

72. Large-scale demolition had taken place in order to clear the way for Israeli settlements. In that process, some of the people whose houses were being demolished had protested and had been arrested, punished and, in some cases, even had their citizenship revoked. Many Bedouins were thus at risk of becoming stateless persons. Could the delegation provide statistics on how many people had been stripped of their citizenship?

73. Along the same lines, in Israel, human rights defenders – both individuals and organizations – were often considered to be terrorists and were therefore arrested and mistreated. Gaza was home to 2 million people, but after Hamas had won the Palestinian legislative election in 2006, Israel had declared Gaza a hostile territory. The delegation should comment on the report of the independent international commission of inquiry on the protests in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, submitted to the Human Rights Council in February 2019.

74. Comments had been made by Israeli ministers, even prime ministers, which stereotyped Arab, and especially Palestinian, people and subjected them to prejudice. She would appreciate explanations of the reasons for the impunity with regard to those incidents, as well as for the stereotyping and prejudice that existed in the media and textbooks.

The meeting rose at 5.45 p.m.