



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

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Summary record of the 1487th meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Thursday, 24 November 2016, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Ms. Gaer (Vice-Chair)

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In the absence of Mr. Modvig (Chair), Ms. Gaer (Vice-Chair) took the Chair.

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

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

Fourth periodic report of Armenia (continued) (CAT/C/ARM/4, CAT/C/ARM/QPR/4)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Armenia took places at the Committee table.*

2. **Mr. Asatryan** (Armenia) said that, in the context of the joint Council of Europe/European Union project on supporting criminal justice reform and combating ill-treatment and impunity in Armenia, two sets of consultation meetings had been held with international experts on the draft Code of Criminal Procedure and the ensuing proposals had been incorporated. The draft had also been harmonized with the Constitution as amended in December 2015. The draft had been submitted to the National Assembly and the first reading was expected to take place in December 2016. The schedule for the second reading would depend on the proposals made by the parliamentarians. A proposal concerning the possibility of excluding pardons, amnesties and statutes of limitations for acts of torture had been made to the working group on the new Criminal Code. With regard to the penalties for acts of torture in the Criminal Code, articles 341 and 309.1 provided for the same penalty, namely a prison term of 4 to 8 years, or of 7 to 12 years if there were aggravating circumstances, and deprivation of the right to hold certain positions or practise certain activities for up to 3 years. Article 119 criminalized torture between private actors and did not cover crimes committed by public officials or the purposive element provided for in article 309.1. The draft law on the Human Rights Defender was currently pending its first reading before the National Assembly. Guidelines and methodologies for the Human Rights Defender's monitoring activities were being developed.

3. Concerning the extraterritorial jurisdiction of Armenia, the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic had developed its own political, social and financial policies and adopted its own legislation. Dilgam Asgarov and Shahbaz Guliyev had been arrested by the law enforcement agencies of Nagorno-Karabakh, which operated entirely independently, charged with the relevant articles of the Republic's Criminal Code for particularly grave crimes and found guilty by the Stepanakert Court of First Instance. They had appealed that decision to the higher courts of Nagorno-Karabakh. The Republic of Armenia did not have any jurisdiction over the courts of Nagorno-Karabakh.

4. There were unfortunately no statistics on the number of cases in which the courts had deemed confessions to be inadmissible as evidence on the grounds that they had been obtained through torture. A proposal would be made to that effect, however. Under Armenian legislation, there was no legal basis for the suspension of proceedings pending the investigation of claims that a confession had been obtained through torture, but in practice cases were postponed in such circumstances. A comprehensive study had been carried out on international experience with audiovisual recording of interrogations, with the involvement of the Ministry of Justice, the police, the Prosecutor General's Office, the Ministry of Defence and the National Security Service, and a joint project proposal had been submitted to the Government. Implementation of the project would require the allocation of additional funds. The European Union budget support programme on the protection of human rights in Armenia required the establishment of a legal framework to ensure audiovisual recording of interrogations in 10 pilot police stations in 2017, with recordings to begin in 2018.

5. In general, the time frames established under the 2014-2016 National Human Rights Action Plan had been respected; 100 of its 119 measures had already been fully implemented and a further 10 were expected to be completed by the end of 2016. In implementing the plan, efforts had been made to strengthen dialogue and cooperation between State authorities and civil society. A new Action Plan would be developed for the period 2017-2019 and adopted in the next six months; State authorities and representatives of civil society had submitted their proposals to that end.

6. Under the amendments to the Civil Code adopted in 2014 and 2015, the scope of fundamental rights and freedoms for breach of which compensation for non-pecuniary damages could be claimed had been expanded. If it had been established by the investigating authority or the court that, as a result of a decision, action or inaction of a State or local self-government body or official, there had been a violation of a person's rights guaranteed by the Constitution and the Convention, the person was entitled to compensation. The purpose of the amendments had been to ensure an effective compensation mechanism and eliminate the practice of double judicial proceedings. Benchmark compensation amounts had also been increased in order to ensure compliance with international and European standards. The courts enjoyed a certain margin of appreciation in that regard, however, and were to determine the amount of compensation in accordance with the principles of reasonableness, equity and proportionality. There were 14 cases before the courts of first instance with respect to compensation for non-pecuniary damage, and no final judgments had yet been handed down.

7. Training courses for judges, prosecutors, court officials, lawyers and law enforcement and prison personnel on the provisions of the Convention were mandatory. The officers of all police detention facilities were periodically trained at the Police Educational Complex. A total of 600 prison staff received training annually, and those involved in the documentation and investigation of torture received systematic training on the Istanbul Protocol. Human rights education and training initiatives had been implemented in the Armed Forces since 2010, supported by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and other international organizations, civil society and academic circles. The Handbook on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of Armed Forces Personnel, produced jointly by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, had been translated into Armenian and was taught by local experts.

8. With regard to prison overcrowding, both the draft Criminal Code and the draft Penitentiary Code would emphasize the fact that prison sentences should be a measure of last resort, further liberalize the rules governing life imprisonment and early/conditional release, and reinforce the principles of individual assessment and individual sentence plans. The adoption of the draft Code of Criminal Procedure would also decrease recourse to pretrial detention. The newly established Probation Service was responsible, inter alia, for alternative punishments, alternative measures of restraint, conditional release and rehabilitation. Under Armenian legislation, the minimum living space for both remand and convicted prisoners was 4 square metres, and that requirement was being met. The issue of overcrowding had existed until March 2016 exclusively at Nubarashen prison and had concerned remand prisoners only. As a result of extensive legal and organizational measures, the problem of overcrowding had been eliminated. A further four units of Armavir prison had been made fully operational in December 2015, increasing the prison's capacity by 800 places to 1,200; the prison was expected to be occupied to full capacity by the end of 2016. Every year, 141 million drams were allocated from the State budget to the Penitentiary Service for refurbishment and renovation works. Since March 2015, a range of sanitation, hygiene and anti-epidemiological measures had been undertaken in all prisons.

9. Between 2014 and 2016, no cases of violence had been registered among remand and convicted prisoners. Considerable efforts were made to identify criminal activity and create a healthy moral and psychological atmosphere in prisons. A range of measures, including disciplinary action and transfers to higher-security facilities, could be imposed if persons intentionally violated the internal prison regulations, tried to establish a hierarchy among prisoners or did not comply with the demands of prison officers. Investigations were carried out into all incidents of self-harm, and prison psychologists prepared reports for the Division of Social, Psychological and Legal Activities of the Penitentiary Service. Measures were also taken to prevent suicide. Under a 2015 memorandum of cooperation, psychologists from the AYG Centre for Psychological Services visited the Nubarashen and Armavir prisons to provide psychological services to prisoners. There had been 26 deaths in prison so far in 2016, and a similar number every year since 2012. In 2016, 18 deaths had been caused by illness and 8 by suicide. Five prisoners had been released on compassionate grounds in 2016. The recruitment, distribution and effective use of prison staff required a dynamic approach and modern solutions. Between 2015 and 2016, 198 junior staff positions had been restructured into service positions, which implied a substantial salary increase as well as securing sufficient staffing.

10. An individual programme of correctional rehabilitation was drawn up for each convicted prisoner based on the specific social and psychological needs of the person concerned. A plan for conditional early release was drawn up three months before the convicted prisoner was released, including activities to ensure smooth reintegration into society. The 2017-2020 Strategic Programme of Legal and Judicial Reforms provided for the availability of purposeful activities for all inmates, including prisoners serving life sentences. Upon admission, detainees underwent an initial medical examination, which must be conducted out of the hearing and sight of prison officers. If an injury or health complaint detected as a result of a medical examination was reported by the detainee to have been the result of a criminal act, the person conducting the examination informed the administration of the detention facility or prison, which in turn informed the competent authorities. There were clear regulations on how to conduct medical examinations and record medical information. The national AIDS prevention programme had been introduced in the prison system in 2004, and both staff and prisoners had been given training. Active drug addicts received treatment at the Central Prison Hospital and were then monitored by prison medical staff. Harm reduction measures, including a single-use syringe exchange, were being implemented in nine prisons. The methadone detoxification programme had been implemented in the prison system since 2011. There were currently 16 prisoners with tuberculosis and 19 with HIV/AIDS, as well as 280 drug addicts.

11. A total of 17 individuals were serving life terms at Armavir prison. Other inmates would be transferred to the facility on a regular basis until its full capacity had been reached.

12. The Armenian authorities attached particular importance to the training of public officials, and due consideration would be given to the Committee's recommendations concerning training in the area of juvenile justice. As part of a multi-year project entitled "Supporting the criminal justice reform and combating ill-treatment and impunity in Armenia", national and international experts had produced training materials for use at the Academy of Justice, where the Guidelines on Justice in Matters involving Child Victims and Witnesses of Crime had been incorporated into the curricula.

13. The number of convicted minors stood at seven. In 2016, two minors had spent time in solitary confinement, but only after previously having been issued severe reprimands. The maximum permissible duration of solitary confinement was 10 days. There was no requirement under the new draft Code of Criminal Procedure for audio or video recording equipment to be installed in interrogation rooms.

14. Proposed amendments to domestic legislation, specifically concerning rehabilitation for victims of torture and their families, had been drafted and circulated for consideration on 17 October 2016. The means of rehabilitation provided would, in principle, include medical, psychological, legal and social services.

15. The adoption of comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation was a priority policy issue. At the request of the Ministry of Justice, the Eurasia Partnership Foundation had carried out a study on discrimination and intolerance in Armenia for the purpose of identifying and addressing gaps in existing laws. The outcomes of the study had been analysed and new legislation was being drafted.

16. Activities to design an information system for the electronic management of prisons had been completed and had led to the development of a register of unprecedented scale. The register would hold information on, inter alia, all the procedures carried out with regard to pretrial detainees and convicts, conditional early release from punishment, changes to prison regimes, visits, education and work. Prisoners' medical histories would be documented in line with the Istanbul Protocol. The automated electronic management system could receive reports in any format, carry out analytical activities and perform administrative duties without the need for human involvement. Moreover, it would be possible to coordinate the prison register with other registers kept by the law enforcement authorities in Armenia so as to enhance the protection of human rights and ensure respect for internationally recognized standards. It was expected that the automated system would enter into operation in early 2017 with the support of the European Union and the Council of Europe.

17. **Mr. Ghahramanyan** (Armenia) said that the Special Investigation Service had launched investigations into 78 complaints of torture or other ill-treatment by public officials in 2014, 106 in 2015 and 92 between 1 January and 1 November 2016.

18. In 2014, complaints of torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment had been filed by a total of 103 individuals, including 1 minor and 20 women. In 2015, complaints had been filed by 96 individuals, including 26 women. Between 1 January and 1 November 2016, complaints had been filed by 140 individuals, including 8 minors and 27 women. No amnesties had been granted to persons convicted of torture or other ill-treatment.

19. Between 2012 and 2016, the Service had launched investigations into 23 complaints of hindering the lawful professional activities of journalists.

20. The relatives of the 10 people who had lost their lives in the presidential election protests of late February and early March 2008 had been officially recognized as victims and were being given all the support to which that status entitled them. Four police officers had been accused of exceeding their authority during the protests, but there was not yet enough evidence to bring formal charges. The Service was endeavouring to conduct a comprehensive and impartial investigation into each individual complaint.

The meeting was suspended at 4.05 p.m. and resumed at 4.15 p.m.

21. **Mr. Bisharyan** (Armenia) said that, in 2014, three police officers had been convicted of exceeding their authority and of using violence against a number of villagers.

22. In 2015, a traffic police officer had been charged with striking a driver who had committed a traffic offence. The case was pending in court.

23. Also in 2015, criminal charges had been brought against six law enforcement officials in three separate cases. In the first, two police officers had been accused of ill-treatment in a nightclub. Criminal proceedings were ongoing. In the second, three officers had been charged with using violence against a detainee. Investigations were ongoing. In

the third case, a traffic police officer had been accused of beating a person found driving under the influence of alcohol. The case had been referred to the public prosecutor's office and was pending.

24. In 2015, four officers of the Special Investigation Service had been charged with hindering the professional activities of journalists and causing damage to the property of others during demonstrations in Yerevan in July of that year. Over 200 witnesses had been heard during the extensive inquiries into the case, which had also involved expert statements and the examination of video and other recordings. The four officers accused had been provisionally suspended from their duties and court proceedings were ongoing. A further case had been opened in respect of other events in July 2015, when a group of armed individuals had taken over and occupied police buildings in Yerevan. Police officers had allegedly used violence against some individuals and detained persons on police premises for periods longer than provided for by law. Journalists had been hindered in their professional activities and lawyers had been prevented from providing legal assistance to detained persons. In all, 83 persons, including 6 journalists and 3 lawyers, had been recognized as victims in the case.

25. In July 2016, media outlets reported that journalists had been prevented by force and threats from covering demonstrations in the Sari-Tag area of Yerevan. Twenty journalists had been found to be victims, and charges of criminal mischief and hindering the activities of journalists had been brought in a criminal case against four persons, who had been subsequently sentenced to imprisonment for 1 year and a fine. A civil case had also been upheld; one person had so far been found guilty and fined and two others were under restricted residence orders, with the case ongoing.

26. **Ms. Tevosyan** (Armenia) said that, in an important reform to the system of investigating cases of non-combat-related deaths and mistreatment of conscripts in the Armed Forces, the department responsible had been moved in May 2014 from the Ministry of Defence to the newly established Investigative Committee. Between 2014 and 2016, 81 cases of non-combat-related deaths had been investigated, of which 20 had so far been referred to the prosecutor and 37 remained under investigation. Over 400 criminal cases of mistreatment, or hazing, had also been reported to the investigative department during that period: of those cases referred to the prosecution services, 183 had been dismissed and 10 had been suspended because the persons accused had escaped. At present, 49 cases were under investigation.

27. There had been 24 suicides in penitentiary facilities between 2012 and 2016; 5 cases were currently under investigation and 5 others had been suspended because the persons to be accused could not be identified, while the remainder had been rejected for prosecution. Of the three cases of suicide that had occurred in Armavir prison, one was currently under investigation while the other two had been suspended because the persons involved could not be identified. Two suicides had occurred in the prison hospital in August 2016; cases had been opened in respect of both but one had been dismissed while one was still under investigation.

28. **Mr. Ghazaryan** (Armenia) said that, under the 2002 Police Act, when a police officer was under investigation for allegations of torture, he or she was suspended; according to the Police Disciplinary Code, the officer concerned could not resign or be transferred to other responsibilities unless the case ended without a conviction.

29. The number of cases of domestic violence that were brought to court was very low, despite the high number of complaints received, because many complaints were withdrawn at an earlier stage. However, the number that did reach court had more than doubled over the previous four years. Sixty per cent of complaints registered concerned violence by men against women.

30. When a person was arrested and brought to a police facility, that fact, with the exact time, was recorded on the individual's case file and in the police facility journal, together with the person's details and the reason for the arrest. In line with legislation passed in 2006, the individual must be informed of his or her rights and the fact of having been so informed was recorded. If the person bore any sign of injury, a doctor would be asked to check and record the facts. Law enforcement personnel were given training on human rights standards as part of the curriculum in training colleges and academies and during in-service training. The latter, which was repeated each year, covered ethics, action that was permitted during peaceful demonstrations, riots and other situations.

31. **Mr. Touzé** (Country Rapporteur), noting that some questions raised in the list of issues prior to reporting had not been fully answered, asked for more detailed information on how the State party was intending to make the crime of torture imprescriptible, which was a fundamental requirement under the Convention. He would also like to receive in writing the statistics related to domestic violence and to hear how victims were provided with assistance and emergency shelter when they needed it. Noting that there was a new structure dealing with violence within the military, he asked for an explanation of the procedure it used. He would also be interested to know, in respect of the events that had taken place in 2008, whether any of the police officers under investigation had been convicted and, if so, what penalties had been handed down. Had the officers concerned been suspended from their duties during the investigations and had Mr. Vladimir Gasparyan, who had been head of the military police at the time, been questioned? In respect of the Special Investigation Service, he was concerned that the level of evidence it required was reportedly so high that it was often impossible to have inquiries opened.

32. Welcoming the authorities' proactive attitude in according refugee status to persons from the Syrian Arab Republic and other countries, he asked whether those persons were also provided with adequate shelter. He would be grateful for specific information on the keeping of detailed records of all periods of detention and records for individual detainees; and on the actual funding received by the Office of the Ombudsman. He would also like information on the reports that had been received alleging that police officers attempted to dissuade detainees from applying for legal assistance by telling them that it would prejudice their case.

33. In respect of medical visits, the recent report of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment stated that detainees were not able to have access to a doctor of their choice. Was the State party planning to change that practice? He said he would like more information on reports that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) persons were being exempted from military service because of the violence that they might suffer in the army.

34. **Ms. Racu** (Country Rapporteur), noting that the State party had not responded to some points raised in the list of issues prior to reporting, said that she would like to hear about training for law enforcement officers on the prevention of human trafficking and violence against women. She also wished to remind the State party that training on the prevention of torture should be a mandatory part of both initial and in-service training for law enforcement staff and its effectiveness regularly assessed.

35. She asked whether any concrete measures had been adopted to abolish psychological violence and ill-treatment of children in special and residential schools and investigate allegations of ill-treatment. She reiterated the Committee's request for information on monitoring of the Vanadzor Children's Home and the Vanadzor Care and Protection Centre to ensure that children were not subjected to ill-treatment as well as on monitoring of psychiatric institutions, including allowing visits by human rights NGOs.

36. While conditions of detention had improved, they remained poor; she encouraged the State party to further improve conditions of detention, especially in the Nubarashen and Vanadzor facilities. She welcomed the recent salary increase for prison staff, which should help recruitment, but expressed concern that staffing shortages and long 24-hour shifts negatively affected staff performance and contributed to burn out, fatigue and tensions between prisoners and staff. She requested information on any efforts to combat the reported criminal culture in prisons and strengthen the authority of administrators. Information would be welcome on incidents of violence between staff and prisoners, including the number of interventions by the rapid response team of the Ministry of Justice. She also called for the abolition of segregation and humiliating treatment of homosexuals and sex offenders in the prisons.

37. She asked the delegation to provide information on measures to improve the quality of medical care in prisons and police facilities. All doctors and attendants should be qualified professionals and staffing shortages, especially in police facilities, should be addressed. Salary increases and opportunities for professional development would help recruit and retain staff. She expressed concern that medical personnel might not be impartial in assessing detainees' medical condition because they were prison system staff. She reiterated that measures should be adopted to ensure systematic private medical examinations for all persons admitted to prisons and detention centres as an essential measure to prevent ill-treatment. Every effort must also be made to improve the quality of medical equipment in places of detention.

38. She welcomed the transfer of prisoners serving life sentences to the new Armavir penitentiary, which would improve their conditions of detention, but said that the delegation had not replied to the Committee's questions on whether those prisoners had access to psychiatric care or recreational activities. There had likewise been no real reply to questions concerning measures to prevent discrimination against and protect LGBTI persons, although a draft bill in that area was a positive step. Information should however be provided on measures to discourage discrimination against persons targeted because of their sexual orientation through information and human rights campaigns and to ensure all allegations of discrimination were impartially investigated and punished.

39. **Ms. Belmir** reiterated her concerns about the influence of the President over the judiciary, particularly in regard to appointment and dismissal, and the fact that the president of the Court of Cassation was responsible for disciplinary measures against judges. There seemed to be no remedy for unjust decisions; there were allegations of corruption in the judiciary. Did the State party intend to adopt any measures to remedy that situation? She also enquired whether any measures were envisaged to address the matter of deaths and threats against the physical integrity of persons during the state of emergency and whether the provisions of article 4 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights were being respected.

40. **Mr. Modvig** expressed concern at the number of suicides in prison during the reporting period; criminal charges had been laid in 23 of 24 cases; in 18, the investigation had been discontinued and no sanctions had been ordered and there would probably be the same result in the remaining 5 cases. That situation was alarming; there seemed to be a pattern where one might suspect prison staff of helping inmates commit suicide. He asked whether there would be a systematic investigation of suicides with a view to assigning criminal responsibility.

41. **Ms. Sujayan** (Armenia) said that her Government was committed to combating domestic violence. The National Strategy of Human Rights Protection and its Action Plan provided for the establishment of mechanisms to combat domestic violence in accordance with international standards. A national programme to combat gender violence had been implemented for the period 2011-2015; the programme stressed prevention and protection

and prosecution of gender violence. A report on the results of that programme had been prepared and had served as a resource for the launching of new strategies.

42. The police made domestic violence a priority; in February 2013 a separate police unit responsible for the protection of the rights of minors and combating domestic violence had been created. It investigated allegations and provided support to victims. Every allegation of domestic violence or violence against women was investigated and registered at the police information centre. The Ministry of Justice was responsible for amendments to the Criminal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure in that regard under the 2012-2016 Strategic Programme of Legal and Judicial Reforms. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs had organized consultations with civil society organizations on measures that could be included in the social protection and social assistance system. As a result, a Social Assistance Act had been adopted which defined domestic violence as any form of physical, sexual or psychological violence or deprivation of economic means.

43. A working group made up of representatives of ministries and NGOs had been created to draft a law on domestic violence, which had been submitted to the Government in September 2016. The draft further developed the definition of domestic violence contained in the Social Assistance Act to take into account the definition in the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence. That definition included acts of physical, sexual, psychiatric or economic violence that occurred in the family or domestic unit or between current or former spouses or partners, whether or not they lived or had lived together. The draft strengthened protection measures, including the establishment of State-funded shelters and support centres to guarantee free psychological, medical and legal assistance and the possibility of temporary financial aid for victims.

44. A Council on Domestic Violence would be created made up of representatives of the State and civil society and chaired by a civil society representative. The Prime Minister would be responsible for coordinating measures to combat domestic violence. In addition, her Government had begun the internal process necessary for ratification of the relevant Council of Europe Convention.

45. Armenia complied fully with its obligations under the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its Protocol and granted asylum to all qualified candidates under article 1 of that Convention and article 6 of the Refugees and Asylum Act, 1999. It had ratified the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. The Refugees and Asylum Act had recently been amended to bring it into line with European standards; those amendments had been prepared in coordination with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

46. Armenia fully respected the principle of non-refoulement. It worked to integrate refugees into society despite the socioeconomic problems in the country. Refugees enjoyed civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights similar to those of citizens; its naturalization programme had been commended by UNHCR. Most of the naturalized refugees were Armenian refugees forcibly displaced from Azerbaijan. Recent aggression by Azerbaijan in April 2016 in the Nagorno-Karabakh region had targeted the civilian population, including children and the elderly, in violation of international law, and led to new population displacements. Three captured soldiers from the Nagorno-Karabakh Defence Army had been decapitated.

47. Some 20,000 Syrian refugees had also sought protection in Armenia. That added to the challenges faced by Armenia in integrating refugees from Azerbaijan and Iraq. There had been no change in its policy towards Iraqi refugees of Armenian origin. All qualified candidates, whatever their ethnic origin, were granted asylum. Granting of asylum was the

responsibility of the Migration Service. Most of the refugees were ethnic Armenians who had fled the conflicts in Syria, Azerbaijan, Ukraine or Iraq. Armenia would continue to do everything possible to provide refugees with housing, employment opportunities and health and education services. A comprehensive integration strategy and action plan was being prepared in cooperation with UNHCR.

48. Amendments to legislation on reproductive health and reproductive rights had been introduced in 2016 to combat selective abortions, including the prohibition of gender-specific abortions and sanctions on medical staff who carried out such abortions. Awareness-raising campaigns had also been conducted. As a result, the ratio of male to female births had dropped from 113 boys per 100 girls in 2015 to 108 boys per 100 girls in 2016.

49. Training on the problem of human trafficking had been provided to police, investigators, judges, labour inspectors, persons working with children and social workers with a view to helping them identify and assist victims and ensure those responsible for trafficking were investigated and prosecuted. Training and seminars had been conducted in the capital and regional administrative centres and for mayors of cities having high rates of seasonal migration. The topics covered included: trafficking, forced labour, trafficking of persons and children for the purpose of forced labour and the role of civil society in combating those practices. Once identified, cases were investigated and those responsible were prosecuted. Victims were provided with protection and assistance for reintegration.

50. Training modules had been developed to assist the police in dealing with minors. Preventive outreach activities were undertaken with minors in schools and other settings to educate them about violence, trafficking and exploitation.

51. **Mr. Ghazaryan** (Armenia) said that due to insufficient funding there was currently only one doctor on call at one prison, to deal only with emergencies. It was up to the police to monitor the health of prisoners in their care. The Government had adopted a decision granting detainees the right to a medical examination by a doctor of their choice.

52. Local police were provided with information on how to identify possible situations of domestic violence and were required to call in the specialized police unit responsible for dealing with that problem to assist with the investigation. In cooperation with OSCE, programmes had been organized to report on cases of domestic violence identified by the police and civil society organizations; information centres had been established to provide information on domestic violence and relevant civil society organizations and telephone hotlines. There were three shelters for victims of violence operated by NGOs, which worked closely with the specialized police domestic violence unit.

53. **Ms. Tevosyan** (Armenia) said that the General Military Investigation Department, created in 2014, conducted preliminary investigations of cases of avoidance of military service and crimes during military training and service. Its head was the Deputy Chair of the Investigative Committee of Armenia. It had no connection with the Ministry of Defence.

54. **Mr. Ghahramanyan** (Armenia) said that the Special Investigation Service operated on the basis of the presumption of innocence. It gathered evidence to decide whether charges were warranted and there was a reasonable prospect of a successful prosecution. It could investigate charges against any person, whatever his or her position. Investigations were confidential, and at the preliminary stages at least the names of persons being investigated were not divulged.

55. **Mr. Asatryan** (Armenia) said that the delegation had no information on the issue of the merger of investigative bodies raised by Mr. Modvig. Any other information available relating to the Committee's concerns would be provided in writing. He thanked the Committee for its comments and suggestions on the implementation of the Convention, which would contribute to further improvement of Armenia's legislation and practice in that area.

56. **The Chair** thanked the delegation for its full and informative answers and the constructive dialogue with the Committee.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.