

\* No summary record was prepared for the rest of the meeting. This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be submitted in one of the working languages. They 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 this document to the Editing Section, room E.4108, Palais des Nations, Geneva. Any corrections to the records of the public meetings of the Committee at this session will be consolidated in a single corrigendum, to be issued shortly after the end of the session. GE.06-45451 (E) 211106 UNITED NATIONS

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COMMITTEE AGAINST TORTURE

Thirty-seventh session

SUMMARY RECORD (PARTIAL)\* OF THE 735th MEETING

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva,

on Monday, 13 November 2006, at 3 p.m.

Chairperson: Mr. MAVROMMATIS

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(continued)

Fourth periodic report of the Russian Federation (continued)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES UNDER ARTICLE 19 OF THE CONVENTION  
(continued)

Fourth periodic report of the Russian Federation (continued) (CAT/C/55/Add.11; CAT/C/RUS/Q/4, 4/Rev.1 and 4/Add.1; HRI/CORE/1/Add.52/Rev.1)

At the invitation of the Chairperson, the members of the delegation of the Russian Federation resumed their places at the Committee table.

The CHAIRPERSON invited the delegation to reply to the questions put by Committee members at the 732nd meeting.

Mr. LOSHCININ (Russian Federation) said that the full text of article 1 of the Convention had not been included in domestic legislation or the Constitution because the State Duma, on the recommendation of the Supreme Court, had found that its inclusion would not be consistent with the current Criminal Code. International legal instruments, including the Convention against Torture, took precedence over domestic law in the event of conflict between the two.

Mr. SEMENYUK (Russian Federation) said that staff from the prison administration department conducted regular inspections of places of detention to monitor conditions of detention, investigate complaints and provide assistance. Pursuant to federal regulations, inspection teams were dispatched every five years to inspect detention centres and prisons, including medical and rehabilitation facilities. Permanent oversight of all prison system facilities was ensured by the Office of the Procurator-General. The operation of some detention centres and prison colonies was monitored by international organizations, some of which conducted regular visits. Representatives from the Council of Europe, for example, had visited correctional facilities in the Chechen Republic in early 2006, resulting in improvements in prisoners' living conditions and medical care. Representatives of the media also frequently visited prisons.

Although prison conditions in the Chechen Republic were not perfect, the space allocated to inmates approximated to the requirements established by the Federal Government. Cells in a new facility being built near Grozny and scheduled for completion in 2007 would measure an average of 6.6 square metres. The Russian prison system had its own medical service, and medical facilities were located in each detention centre and prison colony. Inmates requiring lengthy treatment or surgery were taken to one of 132

prison hospitals, and medical personnel made on-site visits when necessary.

The Code of Criminal Procedure granted suspects the right of access to defence counsel from the time of their arrest or from the start of the criminal investigation, and provided for the participation of the defence counsel in investigations. There were currently some 58,000 women in detention centres and prison colonies in the Russian Federation. In order to prevent sexual abuse and physical violence against female prisoners, the latter were housed separately from men, and female support staff were employed at women's rehabilitation centres. Pursuant to the same Code, special consideration was given to the particular health needs of female convicts, including improved living conditions and increased food rations for pregnant or nursing mothers. Convicted women enjoyed the same access to justice as men. For the past several years, the Office of the Procurator-General had received no complaints of acts of violence against female prisoners or of sexual abuse. When abuse occurred, victims were given a medical check-up, an official record of the incident was prepared, and the head of the institution was informed.

The reform of the Russian Federation's prison system was aimed at establishing civilized conditions of detention and respect for the rights of accused and convicted persons. That was reflected in its consistent prison administration policy, which was in full conformity with the international obligations undertaken by the Federal Government. The strengthening of ties between the institutions of the Russian prison system and the United Nations would help to ensure respect for the rights of prisoners in the Russian Federation.

Mr. GOLTYAEV, responding to a range of questions raised by Committee members concerning respect for human rights under martial law in the Chechen Republic, said that limitations on personal rights and freedoms in specified emergency conditions were, in all cases, imposed in strict compliance with the Federal Constitutional States of Emergency Act No. 3-FKZ of 30 May 2001, which, in turn, conformed fully to the Russian Federation's obligations under international treaties. Article 35 of the Act prohibited the establishment during a state of emergency of special courts or other accelerated judicial proceedings. Individuals who had been detained under the provisions of the Code of Criminal Procedure and were suspected of committing acts of terrorism or other serious crimes could have their detention extended for the entire period of the state of emergency, up to a maximum of three months.

Pursuant to the amendment of article 100 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, persons suspected of any one of 10 clearly defined crimes must be notified of the charges against them within 30 days. An exhaustive list of the crimes to which that measure applied had been included in his delegation's written replies to the list of issues (CAT/C/RUS/Q/4/Add.1). The 30-day period could not be extended, and no restrictions were placed on the procedural safeguards granted to persons suspected of those crimes.

While it was true that in the Chechen Republic the number of recorded terrorist crimes had risen from 389 in 2004 to 427 in 2005, and that the total number of recorded crimes for 2005, which stood at 6,802, had risen by 21 per cent over the previous year, its overall crime rate was among the lowest of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation: 220.5 crimes committed for every 100,000 persons. Moreover, there had been a drop in the number of abductions in the Chechen Republic from 845 in 2002 to 108 in 2005. Of the total number of persons abducted in 2004 and 2005, 67 were linked to the activities of illegal armed groups. As part of counterterrorist operations, 1,931 criminal investigations relating to the abduction of 2,708 individuals had been initiated and gradual progress was being made in resolving the related cases. In 2005, the Office of the Procurator-General had prosecuted 25 criminal cases relating to abduction, which was twice the figure for 2004. Allegations of abductions and illegal detentions by government personnel were often exaggerated. In general, the victims of abductions were members of organized groups of criminals, abductions were often carried out by persons disguised in official police uniforms and most abducted individuals eventually returned home.

There were no unofficial places of detention in the Chechen Republic. The Government immediately investigated any reports of the existence of such places, but to date it had not been able to identify a single one. In Chechnya in 2006, the military procurator's office had considered 224 cases involving crimes allegedly committed by servicemen against local citizens and 94 cases of other individuals who were alleged to have committed crimes against such citizens. A number of human rights organizations in Chechnya provided assistance to individuals in lodging complaints with international bodies. Those activities were carried out in much the same way as they were in other entities of the Russian Federation. Of the 250 complaints lodged with the European Court of Human Rights by persons in Chechnya, 150 were considered to be of high priority. No filtration points existed in Chechnya, and freedom of movement was guaranteed by the domestic laws and Constitution of the Russian Federation.

The three defence lawyers who had been appointed by the families of young men detained following a raid by armed gunmen in the city of Nalchik in October 2005 had been withdrawn from their cases because they had participated in the investigation as witnesses.

Mr. MILEKHIN (Russian Federation) said that the ORB-2 (Operational Search Bureau of the North Caucasus Operations Department, Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs) carried out its activities pursuant to article 11 of the Police Act (No. 1026-I of 18 April 1991). Article 92 of the Code of Criminal Procedure provided that individuals might be held in ORB facilities long enough to record their name and the nature of their offence, but in any case no longer than three hours. Individuals could be detained for up to 48 hours in order to determine which corrective measures were to be taken. In such cases, the detainee was sent to the temporary detention facilities of the Unified Group of Forces operating in the North Caucasus region, which was answerable to the Ministry of the Interior. There the detainee was registered in accordance with established procedures. The Office of the Procurator of the Chechen Republic ensured the legality of the treatment of suspects and accused persons, and prepared reports on its findings. In 2005, 143 persons had been held in such detention facilities; for the first 10 months of 2006, that figure was 112.

Responding to queries about legislation governing police investigations, he said that, pursuant to the Constitution, all persons were innocent until proved guilty by a court of law and had the right to a defence counsel from the time of their detention, remand in custody or indictment. The President and Prime Minister were responsible for oversight of police investigations. The Procurator-General and other procurators were responsible for monitoring compliance with legislation governing police investigations. Failure to do so constituted a punishable offence.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation, the Office of the Procurator-General of the Chechen Republic and the Office of the Procurator-General of the Russian Federation were responsible for overseeing the activities of the Chechen militia.

There were currently two battalions of troops (northern and southern areas) operating under the aegis of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

Mr. TERESHENKO (Russian Federation), responding to questions concerning the armed forces, said that the military units deployed in the North Caucasus region, which comprised the Chechen Republic, performed the same duties (training, protection of military installations, combating terrorism, etc.) and had the same status as units in other parts of the Russian Federation.

A three-year State programme to ensure the safety of victims, witnesses and other participants in criminal proceedings had been initiated, and work was under way in the Ministry of Defence and the Military Criminal Division of the Supreme Court on a decree relating to specific protection measures to be taken by the commands of military units with respect to military personnel. Such measures would be applicable to all military personnel involved in criminal proceedings, including witnesses of torture. When applying such measures account would be taken of the particular type of military duties performed by the person requiring protection. Other measures to ensure the safety of military personnel, including those subjected to harassment by peers, would include transfer to another military command, unit or service, subject to their written consent. The decree would enter into force in January 2007. In the meantime, decisions relating to transfers were the responsibility of the military procurator of the unit concerned.

Pursuant to a decree issued by the Ministry of Defence in 2006 on the procedure for reporting offences and incidents within the armed forces, internal investigations were conducted into all cases of concealment of offences or wilful distortion of information reported; the guilty parties were liable to severe disciplinary or criminal penalties. In 2005, appropriate disciplinary measures had been taken in connection with all 19 cases investigated by military procurators in which commanders had concealed breaches of military regulations.

In 2005, fewer breaches of regulations (3,820) and cases of physical violence (2,668) had been reported compared with 2004. The number of victims had decreased by 12.5 per cent, and there had been a 25.7 per cent reduction in the number of incidents resulting in suicide.

Mr. LEBEDEV (Russian Federation), providing information on procuratorial activities, said that on 3 February 2006, when addressing the Board of the Office of the Procurator-General, President Putin had outlined the priorities for reform in that area. They included effectively coordinating activities to combat crime, restoring public confidence in law and order, and tackling abductions, trafficking in persons and corruption. He had laid emphasis on the need to punish criminals, irrespective of their status in society.

Military procurators' offices formed an integral part of the procuratorial system of the Russian Federation. They had the same powers as other procurators' offices, but exercised them solely in the military domain. The Office of the Procurator-General was responsible for oversight of the military procurators' offices. Inquiries into complaints of offences committed by military personnel and civilians and related criminal investigations and proceedings were the exclusive responsibility of the procurator's office that had received the complaint. Breaches committed by procuratorial officials in connection with the processing of the complaint or the treatment of the complainant or failure to follow orders of superiors were punishable under article 47 of the Federal Act relating to the Office of the Procurator of the Russian Federation.

There was a standardized procedure for the registration of complaints relating to law enforcement and procuratorial officials, which was set out in inter-agency regulations. Under the regulations, complaints filed must be registered immediately on standard forms provided for the purpose. In 2004, 312 complaints had been received concerning breaches of investigation procedures, as a result of which 39 officials had been subjected to disciplinary measures and 32 to criminal proceedings. In the first half of 2006, 125 such cases had been reported.

Turning to extradition matters, he said that the Office of the Procurator-General would not take any decision on an extradition case unless the competent authorities of the State concerned provided assurances that the person to be extradited would not be subjected to torture, cruel or other inhuman and degrading treatment, or the death penalty upon his or her return.

With regard to the Uzbek citizens held in a remand centre in the Ivanovo oblast, the director of the Federal Penal Correction Service had been instructed not to extradite, deport or forcibly return them to Uzbekistan until further notice. The Uzbek citizens involved had applied to the Ivanovo oblast immigration service for temporary asylum. Pending a decision on their application, they would remain in the remand centre.

The deportation of Rustam Muminov had been effected in violation of the Federal Code of Administrative Offences. Following an inquiry into the incident by the Moscow procurator's office, proceedings had been initiated under article 286 of the Criminal Code. The case had been referred to a higher procuratorial authority for further investigation.

Under Federal Act No. 5,242-I of 1993, Russian citizens had the right to freedom of movement and to choose their place of residence within the territory of the Russian Federation, in accordance with the Constitution and international human rights treaties. Any restriction of those rights was only allowed in accordance with the law. The registration or non-registration of citizens must not serve as a pretext for any restriction on enjoyment of the rights and freedoms set forth in the Constitution and laws of the Russian Federation.

In accordance with the Refugee Act of 1997, applications from refugees must be processed within three months, with a possible further three-month extension if necessary. Prior to the formal application, refugees must submit a preliminary application. There were thus two interview stages under the procedure, which might have given rise to some confusion among members of the Committee. Regrettably there was often not enough time for inquiries and expert assessments. Interviews were conducted by the migration services in close cooperation with representatives of UNHCR. In the light of UNHCR recommendations, the Russian Federation was drafting new legislation relating to refugees aimed at expediting procedures for processing asylum applications.

Following their preliminary application, refugees were issued with a certificate that entitled them to accommodation, which could be in

private homes, hotels or temporary migration centres. The rights of such persons to food, medical assistance and other services were set forth in article 6 of the Refugee Act. In accordance with the provisions of article 10 of the Act, refugees who had applied for refugee status could not be returned to their country of origin against their will if there was a risk of persecution. Refugees whose applications were rejected were informed of the grounds for the decision and had the right to appeal against it. Persons who did not avail themselves of that right were obliged to leave the territory of the Russian Federation, together with their families, within one month. There was ample jurisprudence on refugee-related issues.

Temporary asylum was also granted to foreign nationals or stateless persons on humanitarian grounds, such as circumstances that threatened their life or health. The Russian Federation received very few applications for political asylum - 10 to 20 a year; the persons concerned preferred to apply for refugee status, which afforded better protection.

Ms. ZOLOTOVA (Russian Federation), providing information on the judicial system, said that in the first six months of 2006, 675 officials had been convicted for abuse of authority involving violence, the threat of violence or the use of weapons, and 144 of them had been sentenced to terms of imprisonment of up to three years. In 2003, there had been two cases of torture used to obtain confessions; in 2004 - four cases; in 2005 - seven cases. In the first half of 2006, there had been 546 cases of offences involving serious or very serious bodily harm. Some 145 persons had sought rehabilitation; 106 applications had been granted.

The list of candidates for jury service was based on the electoral roll, where no indication of occupation was given. Candidates selected were obliged to inform the authorities in writing of any circumstances preventing them from performing jury service. Government officials were excluded on those grounds. In addition, the prosecution and the defence were entitled to request the removal of members of the jury with or without justification.

The procedure for the appointment of judges guaranteed their independence from the executive power. Candidatures were submitted to the judicial appointments board, two thirds of which was composed of members of the judiciary, and one third of members of the public. Legislation relating to the tenure of judges provided for disciplinary sanctions and even dismissal.

In the area of domestic violence, federal legislation on social support, the Code of Criminal Procedure and the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation had been amended to enhance the legal guarantees to protect children, women and elderly family members from all forms of cruel treatment. The Criminal Code had been revised to enhance the right of women to protection from all forms of violence. Criminal liability had been increased for wilful offences against life or health and offences of a sexual nature, regardless of where such offences took place and whether or not they were committed by a family member.

Criminal liability had been established for the following: driving a person to suicide; deliberately impairing a person's health; inflicting beatings; cruel treatment and other ill-treatment; and subjecting a person to physical or psychological suffering. For the first time, the concept of cruel treatment was understood to mean subjecting a victim to physical or psychological suffering.

Efforts to combat human trafficking, particularly for the purposes of slave labour and prostitution, had been given a high priority. In the first half of 2006, over 800 criminal cases had been brought for those offences, compared with over 1,300 in 2005. In 2004, the Russian Federation had ratified the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the additional protocols thereto, including the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.

There were 23 crisis centres for women in the Russian Federation, and 97 crisis units within social services departments. Dispensaries were also being set up, to provide emergency services to girls and teenagers who had been subjected to sexual violence or exploitation. Over 300 telephone hotlines had been set up to provide emergency psychological support.

With regard to the events in Kaliningrad, she explained that the area had been identified as a hub of drug-trafficking operations and other illegal activities. Of the 46 dwellings that had been demolished, only one had been built legally and had the status of a residence; the others had been built without official permission. In November 2005, the regional court had issued an order to demolish 68 illegally constructed houses, following proceedings initiated by the regional administration. There had been no appeals.

The police officers involved in "Operation Tabor" had issued an official apology to the Roma community, whose leaders had requested that no criminal charges be brought.

Mr. LOSHCININ (Russian Federation) said that he was unable to confirm the accuracy of the information contained in the article by Anna Politkovskaya in the International Herald Tribune concerning Beslan Gudaev. When Mr. Gudaev had arrived at the detention centre in Grozny he had been suffering from serious injuries. He had requested medical assistance on five occasions and had duly received it. His health was now satisfactory. The Office of the Procurator of the Chechen Republic was carrying out supplementary investigations into the alleged violence inflicted by law enforcement officials, with a view to bringing charges against them.

In the past few years, four special rapporteurs had visited the Russian Federation, including the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences. The Russian authorities had no problem with the proposed visit by Hina Jilani, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on human rights defenders. If the five special rapporteurs who wished to visit the country submitted appropriate requests, he was sure they would be duly received by the Russian Federation.

The list of requirements for the visit by Mr. Novak, Special Rapporteur on torture, did not comply with the legislation of the Russian Federation. He would shortly transmit to the Committee an English translation of the law in question, which concerned in particular the issue of unannounced visits to detention centres, for which special permission was required. Mr. Novak's visit was consequently being postponed, not refused, pending a decision by the Government. However, he assured the Committee that the visit would take place.

The Chairperson had urged his country to work more closely with NGOs. A total of 400,000 or so NGOs were registered in the

Russian Federation, including over 500 foreign NGOs. Despite concerns raised by foreign NGOs in connection with new legislation and the requirement to re-register, over 130 had re-registered. Registration had been refused in the case of only five NGOs, because they had not registered in Moscow prior to registration in another region. All NGOs were aware of the requirements, and he did not anticipate any problems.

Ms. GAER, Country Rapporteur, explained that in regard to the situation in Chechnya she had originally asked for information on the allegations of wrongful detentions in the ORB-2 centre, not on the status of persons detained in SIZO centres. She wished to know what steps could be taken to investigate the allegations made in relation to ORB-2, and what oversight there was by the Office of the Procurator-General. She expressed concern that, in general, the task of investigating allegations of torture made during a suspect's trial fell to the Office of the Procurator-General, which was also responsible for prosecuting the individual in question. How could that conflict of interest be avoided, in order to conduct effective investigations in a manner consistent with international standards?

She would welcome information on how individuals could register complaints of torture during the preliminary phases of investigation.

She had difficulty accepting the delegation's affirmation, in response to the allegations of detentions leading to disappearances, that such disappearances were the work of criminal groups disguised as law enforcement officials, and that there were no secret places of detention in Chechnya. In that case, she would have expected specific investigations to be under way. The relevant cases that had been heard by the European Court of Human Rights had all followed a similar pattern, starting with individuals being seen in - apparently genuine - military custody, and often ending with bodies being found in mass graves. That did not suggest a series of random incidents. She would welcome the delegation's comments on the recent report issued by Human Rights Watch that documented 82 cases of persons being held in 10 unlawful detention centres in Chechnya, namely private houses.

She would welcome more information on the situation regarding access to defence counsel, particularly in relation to the six cases described by Amnesty International, which had given details of various ways in which such access was refused.

In connection with article 3 of the Convention, she asked the delegation to clarify the circumstances surrounding the extradition to Tajikistan in 2005 of Mahmudruzi Iskandarov, the former leader of the Tajikistan Democratic Party, in what appeared to be a case of extrajudicial rendition. Had assurances been sought from the Tajik Government that he would not be at risk of being subjected to torture upon his return?

She sought confirmation that in the Russian Federation the military procurator came hierarchically below the Procurator-General.

She asked if the authorities had investigated the serious allegations made by the late Anna Politkovskaya in her articles on Chechnya in *Novaya Gazeta*.

Voicing her incredulity at the claims made in the written material provided by the delegation that the authorities had received no complaints of ill-treatment of women in places of detention, she asked how the situation was monitored. She requested an explanation of the decrease in the number of officials prosecuted for torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment despite the increase in the number of complaints in recent years.

In view of the difficulties faced by the Special Rapporteur on Torture, who had been denied unlimited access to places of detention in North Caucasus, she looked forward to receiving a copy of the legislation governing inspection visits. During their visit to the North Caucasus region of the Russian Federation in April and May 2006, members of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) had initially been denied access to a place of detention at Tsentoroy (Chechnya), and had only been able to resume their visit after the President of the Chechen Republic had intervened. There had been NGO allegations, moreover, that detainees had been moved to another centre or otherwise prevented from meeting the delegation. She asked for comments on the allegations and an explanation of what had happened.

Ms. BELMIR, Alternate Country Rapporteur, pointing to the fact that the presidents and vice-presidents of federal courts were currently appointed for six years by the President of the Russian Federation, on the recommendation of the President of the Supreme Court or the Supreme Court of Arbitration, asked to what extent the judiciary enjoyed independence in the Russian Federation. Moreover, legislation needed to be changed to ensure that disqualified persons were automatically, rather than voluntarily, excluded from jury service.

In 2004, the European Court of Human Rights had examined 396 cases of abduction in Chechnya; in 24 cases the victims had been found dead while another 175 had disappeared. What judicial and other steps were being taken to address the problem? What guarantees of safety were given to complainants? What was the exact nature of the powers currently wielded by the Russian authorities in Chechnya?

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe had investigated the issue of the division of powers in the Procuracy of the Russian Federation. More sweeping reforms than those announced by the delegation were required to ensure that the rule of law was fully respected in that regard.

Recalling the country's obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, she asked for an answer to the Committee's question about the age of criminal majority in the Russian Federation.

Although the delegation had stated that all persons were free to travel within the territory of the Russian Federation, she reiterated the Committee's concerns over internal passports, concerns shared by the European institutions. She asked for clarification.

Detainees released from Guantánamo Bay and tried in the Russian Federation had allegedly been subjected to ill-treatment and torture. The Committee would appreciate the delegation's response to those allegations.

Mr. LOSHCININ (Russian Federation) said that whenever the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation in Geneva received

requests from United Nations bodies for information concerning specific human rights cases, they were referred to Moscow and clarifications were given in nearly every case. Accordingly, responses to unanswered questions put by the Committee about specific cases and other detailed information would be given in writing at a later date.

Mr. MILEKHIN (Russian Federation) said that he wished to clarify an earlier misunderstanding over the operational search bureaux (ORB), in particular the ORB-2 facilities in Grozny. ORB-2, set up to combat organized crime in Chechnya, happened to share the same building as a temporary facility set up by the Ministry of the Interior of the Russian Federation for the detention of persons suspected of murder, terrorism or hostage-taking. The Ministry and the district procurator supervised the detentions and kept a complete record. In 2005, just over 100 people had been held in the Ministry's cells and a dozen complaints had been received concerning unlawful acts by officers in that facility. A working group comprising the Procurator of the Chechen Republic, set up by the Ministry of the Interior of the Russian Federation, had recently investigated the alleged existence of illegal detention centres on Chechen territory. None had been found.

Mr. SEMENYUK (Russian Federation) said that, as a representative of the Ministry of Justice, he had personally accompanied the CPT delegation during its visit to North Caucasus in April and May 2006. It had been able to visit every detention centre, including police lock-ups and the temporary detention centres set up by the Ministry of the Interior in Ingushetia and Chechnya. Some of the detainees they had expected to find in certain detention centres had been moved elsewhere, but they had nonetheless been given access to them. The planned visit to Tsentroy (Chechnya) had coincided with a national holiday, but the President and Prime Minister of the Chechen Republic had intervened to allow the visit to go ahead. The delegation had also been able to meet the Procurator of the Chechen Republic.

Mr. LEBEDEV (Russian Federation) confirmed that the military procurator, a collegiate member of the Procuracy, was the Procurator-General's deputy. The Procurator-General could entrust the military procurator with special functions in particular circumstances and had the power of oversight of the military procurator's office, including the right to dismiss members of its staff.

The Office of the Procurator-General of the Russian Federation thoroughly investigated every extradition request, taking into account the legislation of the requesting State and information supplied by the individuals concerned, their lawyers and human rights organizations. Extradition requests were systematically refused if the person risked torture or the death penalty on return to the requesting State. Even when the latter State was a party to the Convention against Torture, extra guarantees were always demanded. For that reason, the Uzbeks detained in Ivanovo had not been extradited to their State of origin. He had no information on the case of Mahmudi Iskandarov, a citizen of Tajikistan.

Ms. ZOLOTOVA (Russian Federation) said the age of majority was not specified in the Convention on the Rights of the Child but there were special provisions relating to minors in the Federal Code of Criminal Procedure; above all, they could not be sentenced to death. In general, prison sentences handed down in cases involving minors were half the minimum sentence applicable to adults. Furthermore, the maximum total prison sentence minors could receive was 10 years. That was reduced to 6 years if the guilty person was aged under 16, though a maximum of 10 years was permissible in cases of exceptional gravity.

The CHAIRPERSON expressed the Committee's appreciation for the delegation's full cooperation and wished the Government every success in its efforts to improve the enjoyment of human rights in the Russian Federation.

The discussion covered in the summary record ended at 5.15 p.m.