



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

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Summary record of the 2224th meeting*

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Thursday, 20 November 2025, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Mr. Heller

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* No summary records were issued for the 2223rd meeting.

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

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

Third periodic report of Albania (continued) (CAT/C/ALB/3; CAT/C/ALB/Q/3; CAT/C/ALB/RQ/3)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Albania joined the meeting.*
2. **The Chair** invited the delegation to continue replying to the questions raised by Committee members at the previous meeting.
3. **A representative of Albania** said that the State was in the process of establishing its first specialized reception centre for unaccompanied migrant children. The centre, which fully met European standards, would provide immediate protection, safe accommodation, psychological support and legal representation in a child-friendly manner. Recent legislative amendments, including to Law No. 79/2021 on Foreigners, aimed to ensure closer compliance with European Union standards on the rights of migrant workers and the protection of vulnerable migrants. They simplified administrative procedures, expanded access to documentation for foreign nationals and strengthened mechanisms for identifying vulnerable persons, including unaccompanied children.
4. Under a bilateral protocol between Albania and Italy on strengthening cooperation in the management of migration, a joint migration facility had been set up in Albania. The centre had been established in Albania for procedural purposes but fell under the exclusive jurisdiction of Italy. Within the centre, Italian legislation applied, including with regard to asylum procedures, administrative decision-making and repatriation. Albania retained responsibility for securing the centre's perimeter and providing assistance during the transfer of migrants to and from the country. The operational staff inside the centre were deployed by the Italian authorities. Since Italy had jurisdiction within the centre, it bore international responsibility for ensuring respect for the rights of persons accommodated there, while Albania bore responsibility for its own actions or omissions in relation to its external security function.
5. The State had taken comprehensive legislative, institutional and operational measures to align its asylum and immigration system with international standards. The National Strategy on Migration was the main policy document in that field. Its objectives included improving service quality for migrants and their access to social care, health, education and information, promoting integration and strengthening local support structures, enhancing the national return and reintegration mechanism in line with the European Union strategy on voluntary return and reintegration and strengthening the asylum system by improving procedures, institutional capacities and reception conditions for asylum-seekers.
6. Under the most recent National Action Plan for Combating Trafficking in Persons, training had been organized for law enforcement personnel, prosecutors, judges and victim coordinators. The Ministry of the Interior, in cooperation with the General Directorate of State Police and regional anti-trafficking committees, was conducting coordination meetings at the local level to strengthen inter-institutional cooperation in the investigation and prosecution of trafficking and to review related trends, focusing on cases involving migrant workers. Standard operating procedures for the protection of victims and potential victims of trafficking, including children exploited through forced labour and begging, were in the finalization phase.
7. Every year, during Anti-Trafficking Month, awareness-raising and information activities were carried out with school students, psychosocial professionals, front-line workers, the Roma and Egyptian communities, vulnerable groups and survivors of trafficking. A national anti-trafficking strategy was currently being drafted, in which context the recommendations of international, regional and national bodies doing work in that area would be taken into consideration. Victims of trafficking could receive financial compensation only pursuant to a court decision that recognized the harm they had suffered and ordered the payment of damages by the perpetrator. Assets seized from traffickers were used indirectly to support victims through social programmes, shelters and services.

8. The number of unaccompanied minors arriving in Albania had fluctuated over the years, from 68 in 2020 to 18 in 2024. In the first half of 2025, 34 unaccompanied minors had been identified. In 2025, a total of 128 applications for subsidiary protection or refugee status had been received. Of those, 101 were currently being processed. Seven persons had been granted refugee status and nine subsidiary protection, four applications had been rejected, zero applications had been revoked, three had been interrupted, four persons had subsequently left the country, and there had been no cases of refugee status being lost. Between 2021 and 2025, there had been a fluctuation in applications, from 66 in 2021 to a peak of 261 in 2023, before falling to 106 in 2025.

9. Albania had reinforced border procedures to guarantee access to the asylum system at its borders, organized continuous human rights training for border police, enhanced monitoring with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and carried out internal inspections to prevent unlawful pushbacks. Persons who expressed an intention to seek asylum were transferred to the premises of the asylum authority for registration and further processing. Vulnerable persons, including unaccompanied minors, were referred directly to specialized services and provided with temporary accommodation.

10. **A representative of Albania** said that the State took all allegations of mistreatment and denial of rights at its borders seriously. Official police procedures strictly prohibited arbitrary pushbacks and any form of violence. Under national legislation and international obligations, any person arriving at the border had the right to request asylum or protection, and officers were trained to respect that right. Denial of access to asylum procedures, physical abuse and abandonment in border areas were not permitted under Albanian law or relevant operational protocols. Accountability mechanisms were in place, including internal monitoring, cooperation with international organizations and referral systems for vulnerable groups. Any credible report of misconduct was subject to investigation and disciplinary action.

11. The State actively promoted transparency and awareness of rights in its reception centres. Informational materials were displayed informing individuals of their right to seek asylum and of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) complaints mechanism, thereby providing clear channels for reporting misconduct. Frontex had established a comprehensive fundamental rights framework to monitor and ensure respect for fundamental rights in all its activities. The framework included the appointment and deployment of fundamental rights officers, who conducted spot visits, oversaw operational activities and were required to report any suspected violations.

12. Additional elements included a fundamental rights strategy and action plan, a code of conduct, a serious incident reporting system, a complaints mechanism, a supervisory system on the use of force and mandatory training for all Standing Corps officers on European and international law, including with regard to fundamental rights and access to international protection. The Executive Director of Frontex could suspend, terminate or decline to launch operations if serious violations of fundamental rights or international protection obligations had occurred or were likely to persist. Taken together with Albanian national safeguards, those measures ensured that border management operations conducted under joint operations with Frontex were carried out in full compliance with European standards and international law.

13. **A representative of Albania** said that, by law, the maximum period for which an asylum-seeker could be held in administrative detention was one year. However, in the case raised by the Committee, concerning three Iraqi nationals, the individuals in question had initially sought asylum but, during the processing of their cases, had become subject to deportation orders on grounds relating to the protection of public order and security, following which they had been placed in a closed migrant centre. Their detention had lasted for less than two years. Considerable efforts had been made to secure their transfer to Germany or Greece. Subsequently, the detention measures imposed had been replaced by an obligation to reside in a designated area, from which the individuals had absconded. The State respected the one-year limit for administrative detention and had strengthened judicial review procedures and case management to prevent prolonged detention, applying non-custodial alternatives for vulnerable persons.

14. To date, 38 citizens – 9 women and 29 children – had been repatriated from the Syrian Arab Republic. The nine women remained under probation. The Government prioritized rehabilitation and reintegration, ensuring access to physical, psychological and social support services. The Coordination Centre for Countering Violent Extremism had organized meetings to provide intersectoral support for repatriated families, including psychosocial services, humanitarian assistance such as food cards, reimbursement of rent and financial support to cover the cost of basic utilities. Educational support had also been provided to school-aged children. In cooperation with civil society organizations funded by the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund, the Centre had promoted economic empowerment through vocational training for repatriated women.

15. In addition, the State had piloted tools for managing violent extremist prisoners under the Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Türkiye (Horizontal Facility III) cooperation initiative. Rehabilitation and pre-release programmes had been implemented in four remand facilities and at the Probation Service Office in Tirana, and relevant training sessions had been organized for professionals in the field.

16. **A representative of Albania** said that the General Prosecutor’s Office ensured the independence and impartiality of investigations into complaints or allegations of violations committed during public protests. To uphold those standards, investigative and procedural actions were carried out by judicial police officers attached to the prosecution service, rather than by judicial police officers of the State police. As the case management system in the prosecution service had not yet been fully established, statistical data on specific cases could not be provided. Arrest in flagrante delicto and pretrial detention were not used in prosecutorial or judicial practice in relation to misdemeanours or minor offences.

17. **A representative of Albania** said that the National Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities set policy goals and measures to improve quality of life and provide accessible and affordable social care and healthcare for all persons with disabilities. An evaluation of the previous plan had been launched, and an action plan for the period 2026–2030 was being drafted. The guiding principle of that process would be the full participation of all persons with disabilities. Measures had been taken to reduce gender-based violence, with a focus on prevention, protection and the rehabilitation of victims through coordinated referral mechanisms. Services for victims were provided through crisis management centres for cases of sexual abuse and emergency shelters for victims of gender-based violence. Legal aid and psychosocial support were available. Awareness-raising remained an important component of the State’s efforts in that regard, including through the annual “16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence” campaign.

18. Beneficiaries of social services included children with disabilities, young people from marginalized families or who were in conflict with the law, and victims of domestic violence or trafficking in persons. Services included residential and long-term care. Pre-social care services were also provided to inform beneficiaries of available services, assist with initial assessments and help them to identify services appropriate to their needs. Specialized services were provided to children in need, including child victims of sexual abuse or trafficking in persons, and children in conflict with the law. Additional services included telephone and online counselling for crisis intervention and the referral of cases of domestic violence to child protection services. The provision of social services was the responsibility of local government; in recent years the Ministry of Health and Social Protection had supported municipal authorities through a dedicated social fund to facilitate the establishment of new services.

19. **A representative of Albania** said that the Constitutional Court had not conducted a review of the compatibility of the Convention against Torture with the Constitution. The Court had made direct reference to the Convention in its jurisprudence, as well as to the case law of the European Court of Human Rights and to other human rights instruments, in particular the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (European Convention on Human Rights). The relationship between ratified international agreements and domestic legislation rested on two principles: direct application, except in the case of non-self-executing instruments, which required implementing legislation, as was the case of the Convention against Torture; and the supremacy of ratified international

agreements over domestic law in the event of conflict between them. Such agreements were placed immediately after the Constitution in the hierarchy of norms.

20. In its decision No. 3 of 2004, the Constitutional Court had analysed the compatibility of articles 86 and 87 of the Criminal Code with the Convention against Torture and had found them to be in conformity. In decision No. 14 of 2011, the Court had held that States Parties were obliged to ensure independent and comprehensive investigations into allegations of torture by public officials. In that case, the Court had found that the prosecution service and the court concerned had failed to fulfil their obligations under the Convention. In decision No. 1 of 2023, the Criminal Division of the Supreme Court, examining a request for extradition to China, had considered reports submitted under the Convention against Torture regarding prison conditions in that country and had rejected the request.

21. As part of its monitoring activities, the Centre for Legal Civic Initiatives, a non-governmental organization, had assessed 80 court decisions on sexual offences and stalking issued between 2020 and 2024. In its report issued in 2025, it had indicated that, in 24 of those cases, the final decisions rendered had contained references to international standards, including United Nations conventions, as well as frequent references to the case law of the European Court of Human Rights. The High Judicial Council, the High Prosecutorial Council and the School of Magistrates were working to ensure that training and continuing education for judges and prosecutors promoted the use of international instruments and the case law of the European Court of Human Rights.

22. The European Convention on Human Rights and all the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights were a source of law in Albania, with direct application and supralegal status. Furthermore, the Court's interpretation of rights and freedoms had been followed by the Criminal Chamber of the Supreme Court and in a number of other judicial decisions. Four judgments of the European Court, in which it had found that Albania had violated article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights in connection with detention conditions, access to medical treatment in prison and procedural issues, were currently being implemented through specially developed plans of action transmitted to the relevant departments. In addition to the technical measures taken pursuant to the judgments, the Government had also amended the Code of Criminal Procedure. Requests to reopen two of the cases were being examined by the authorities.

23. **A representative of Albania** said that the Convention against Torture was not self-executing in its entirety, although ratified international agreements were part of the domestic legal order and prevailed over incompatible legislation. The adoption of specific legislative and institutional measures had been required to ensure the Convention's effective implementation, for instance with regard to the criminalization of acts of torture and the establishment of procedural mechanisms for the investigation, prosecution and extradition of persons accused of torture.

24. **A representative of Albania** said that prison staff were not subjected to any political influence. Since 2017, recruitment had been done only through open competitions, including a written test and an interview conducted using established criteria. Successful candidates then underwent basic training before being officially appointed. The General Directorate of Prisons employed more than 4,500 people in the central directorate and 21 institutions; staffing levels had not been reduced despite the closure of five establishments. An incentive programme had been adopted, including remuneration and training measures. Manuals had been developed in the areas of basic training, leadership and management, juvenile prisoners, mental health and suicide prevention, and safety procedures, including with regard to the use of force and physical restraints and prisoner transport.

25. By law, prison staff must not use force against prisoners except where necessary to prevent an escape or in cases where the lives of staff or other prisoners were at risk or where a prisoner failed to obey a lawful order. Staff were required to immediately report instances of use of force and to justify that it had been a last resort, lawful, proportionate and of the shortest possible duration.

26. Prison management had been improved through the implementation of assessment and categorization procedures. Prisons were classified into three security levels, the highest of which was subdivided into three regimes. The time prisoners spent outside their cells had

been significantly increased. A strategic plan for the development of prisons up to 2030 had been approved.

27. Since the establishment of the probation service in 2009 and the adoption of the Juvenile Criminal Justice Code, the number of juveniles deprived of liberty, including in pretrial detention, had plummeted from 210 to 20.

28. **A representative of Albania** said that the objectives of the Prison System Development Plan included addressing infrastructure, staff allocation and overcrowding problems and strengthening rehabilitation and reintegration. Upon admission to prison, prisoners were informed of their rights and obligations, including the right to legal counsel, the prison's regulations and the procedure for submitting requests or complaints. In addition, the prison director ensured that foreign prisoners could notify their family and contact a lawyer, consular representative or a competent human rights organization. A brochure on the rights and treatment of prisoners had been developed and was distributed to prisoners upon entry into the system. A manual on prisoner rights, developed with support from the Council of Europe, was also available in all institutions. Prison-based jurists provided legal information and advice to prisoners on such matters as conditional release, special permissions and aggregation of sentences. Free legal aid was available for prisoners who lacked the financial means.

29. A procedure for the treatment of requests and complaints by prisoners had been adopted and integrated in prison regulations, helping to speed up processing. There was also a platform where prisoners, as well as their family members and lawyers, could submit requests and complaints. The number of submissions processed had risen from 4,549 in 2023 to 5,060 in 2024 and stood at 3,890 so far in 2025.

30. By law, prisoners had the right to visits with family members, lasting at least one hour, a minimum of four times a month. Visits should take place in dedicated facilities under the supervision of prison staff. In the case of pretrial detainees, prior written consent from the prosecutor was required. More frequent visits by the children of female detainees should be facilitated. Visits could be scheduled through an online platform or at the request of a prisoner. In addition, prisoners, especially foreign nationals and those whose families were abroad, had the right to communicate online, using an approved platform.

31. Food in prisons was provided by businesses contracted by the General Directorate of Prisons and was prepared, cooked and distributed in accordance with standards approved by the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Health and Social Protection. Meals were adapted to the health condition, age and activity level of prisoners. All necessary equipment and bedding were available in cells, and living quarters had sanitation facilities, a refrigerator and a television; all facilities had central heating. The 2025 budget for hygiene products was more than 13.8 million leks.

32. Since 2021, 60 of the nearly 100 minors under the supervision of the Crime Prevention Centre for Minors and Youth had successfully completed reintegration programmes. In the past year, 3 young people had received entrepreneurial support, and 10 were serving as role models for other minors. In parallel, the Centre had published two awareness-raising manuals for schools and a practical study on minors in conflict with the law.

33. **A representative of Albania** said that the Crime Prevention Centre for Minors and Youth had been established under the Ministry of Justice with the main mission of running rehabilitation and reintegration activities for juveniles and young people who had completed their sentences. Since 2021, the Centre had carried out 80 awareness-raising campaigns nationwide on the regulatory framework concerning juvenile criminal justice and the consequences of delinquent behaviour. In addition, it had supervised some 90 minors and young people in conflict with the law who had served their sentences at a juvenile institute. To ensure successful social reintegration, a multidisciplinary team comprising lawyers, psychologists and social workers prepared individual workplans tailored to the specific needs and aspirations of each minor. Measures taken as part of the supervision included guidance and assistance in pursuing an education, including free vocational training courses near the place of residence, facilitation of internships with partner businesses and employment referrals.

34. The Directorate of Free Legal Aid continued to fulfil its mandate to ensure equal access to justice for individuals who, owing to economic, social or vulnerable circumstances, were unable to secure legal representation independently. In line with the principles of the Convention and other international human rights instruments, the focus of the Directorate's activities was on vulnerable groups, including victims of violence, trafficking, torture and inhuman or degrading treatment, as well as children in conflict with the law and asylum-seekers. So far in 2025, primary legal aid had been provided in 4,251 cases, involving 2,489 female and 1,762 male beneficiaries, and secondary legal aid in 633 cases, involving 410 female and 223 male beneficiaries. In the category of special beneficiaries, primary and secondary legal aid were provided in 1,648 cases and 328 cases, respectively, including 1,273 cases of domestic violence, 28 of sexual exploitation or abuse and 130 of trafficking in persons.

35. **A representative of Albania** said that the People's Advocate, which was in line with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles), also served as the national mechanism for the prevention of torture. The mechanism was a separate section of the People's Advocate and conducted regular, unannounced inspections to places of deprivation of liberty. In addition, the People's Advocate could initiate proceedings before the Constitutional Court concerning the conformity of laws or other normative acts with the Constitution or international agreements. Visits to prisons were also conducted by the Parliamentary Commission on Human Rights and civil society organizations. The number of relevant recommendations by the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination that had been partially or fully implemented had increased between 2021 and 2024.

36. The supervisory commission established under the legislation on sentence enforcement was tasked with verifying the complaints of prisoners and, where rights violations were found, could recommend immediate remedial action. Multidisciplinary teams of the General Directorate of Prisons conducted periodic inspections to observe whether prisoner rights were respected. Mailboxes had been installed in all prisons so that prisoners could correspond with any State institution or non-governmental organization in the country and abroad. In addition, two toll-free hotlines had been set up for the submission of complaints to the People's Advocate and the General Directorate.

37. Cases of alleged ill-treatment were addressed to the prosecutorial authorities for a decision on whether to initiate further investigations. In the report of its 2023 visit, the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment had noted that no complaint or accusation had been made relating to violence or ill-treatment committed against prisoners by staff. Furthermore, the Data Protection Commissioner had observed that prisoners' personal information was managed in accordance with the law, while the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination had not identified any cases of discrimination against prisoners. The General Directorate of Prisons responded to access to information requests in a timely manner.

38. **A representative of Albania** said that article 18 of the Constitution established the equality of all citizens before the law and the prohibition of unjust discrimination and privileges and left the space necessary to develop protective policies or regulations to correct inequalities, in acknowledgment of the fact that conditions were not always the same for everyone and that completely uniform treatment sometimes produced injustice. Such policies and regulations must have a legitimate goal or would otherwise be contrary to the Constitution. Article 86 of the Criminal Code criminalized actions by public officials that caused severe physical or mental suffering, especially when committed for discriminatory purposes. The flexibility allowed by article 18 of the Constitution could not be invoked to justify torture. The penalties for the offence of torture were not distributed across several pieces of legislation but were contained in the Criminal Code.

39. **A representative of Albania** said that the General Directorate of Prisons had strengthened measures to improve healthcare for inmates by cooperating with public health institutions, recruiting healthcare staff, undertaking to improve salaries, carrying out general health check-ups, improving medical equipment and ensuring the availability of medicines. Assessments had been conducted at all prisons with a view to identifying new cases of prisoners with mental health problems, analysing their healthcare needs and providing them

with care at a special psychiatric unit. The needs of pretrial detainees and high-security prisoners with mental health problems had been assessed in regular consultation with psychiatrists in the prison system and at regional hospitals, and they had been treated within the prison system accordingly. A working group comprising specialist doctors from the system had been established to evaluate the work of medical staff and mitigate staff shortages. Many of the visits that it had conducted had been for the purpose of carrying out mental health consultations. In addition to improving prisoners' trust in the prison system, the large number of visits carried out by the working group had helped medical staff to better diagnose and determine the needs of prisoners, especially those of new arrivals.

40. Albanian law provided that the living, working and recreational areas of prisons must have adequate heating and natural and artificial light; criteria for those and other elements such as surface area and ventilation were set out in the prison regulations following recommendations from the Ministry of Health and Social Protection. Where individual rooms were unavailable, convicted prisoners were assigned to shared rooms taking into account their age, the offences they had committed, their psychosocial profiles, any conflicts between them and ways in which they might negatively influence each other. Each prisoner was provided with an individual bed and bedding, clean clothing and other personal items. With the permission of the prison administration, they could also have their own clothing, personal items and objects of special personal significance.

41. On the basis of recommendations issued by the Committee, with the support of the Council of Europe and other strategic partners, the General Directorate of Prisons had designed special training modules on mental health, including a framework for the use of restrictive measures. A protocol for the management of incidents involving prisoners with mental health problems was being developed and standard operating procedures for the multidisciplinary treatment of such prisoners, on which staff throughout the prison system had received training, had been put in place.

42. **A representative of Albania** said that, under the National Action Plan for Equality, Inclusion and Participation of Roma and Egyptians in Albania (2021–2025), the Ministry of Health and Social Protection was working with the Ministry of the Interior to increase the civil registration of Roma and Egyptian persons in Albania, including with a view to providing them with improved social, health and other services.

43. **A representative of Albania** said that the Road Map for the Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Prisoners had been approved with the aims of standardizing and documenting work done in that area in line with international standards. A total of 5 courses on life skills and 10 psychoeducational rehabilitation modules addressing topics such as employment, social skills and mental health had been conducted with different groups of offenders, including perpetrators of domestic violence and sexual offences. Participation in therapeutic activities had increased by nearly 150 per cent, which also meant that prisoners were spending more hours outside their cells, in fulfilment of recommendations issued by the national mechanism for the prevention of torture and international monitoring authorities. In 2024, a memorandum of understanding on improving prisoner education had been signed by the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth. In the period 2023–2024, the number of prisons conducting education programmes had increased to 13. Albanian law provided that prisoners must be offered vocational training. In 2025, the General Directorate of Prisons had signed a memorandum of understanding with the national agency for employment and vocational education on improving the availability of such courses. A total of 364 prisoners had been employed in 2023, 356 in 2024 and 454 in 2025; some prisoners were employed by a private employer that operated in the prison system.

44. **A representative of Albania** said that 14 (8 male and 6 female) asylum-seekers had received accommodation outside reception centres in 2022; 12 (6 male and 6 female) in 2023; 21 (9 male and 12 female) in 2024; and 5 (4 male and 1 female) thus far in 2025.

45. **Ms. Maeda** (Country Rapporteur) said that, given that national preventive mechanisms as envisaged in the Optional Protocol to the Convention and in the guidelines on national preventive mechanisms (CAT/OP/12/5) had a structure and a mandate distinct from, yet complementary to, those of national human rights institutions, she would welcome more information on the mandate of the State Party's national preventive mechanism. She

wished to receive details of the process for nominating and appointing the heads of the national preventive mechanism and the national human rights institution and wondered whether the recommendation, made during the fourth cycle of the universal periodic review, to appoint the head of the national human rights institution had been implemented. She wondered what measures the State Party had taken to raise public awareness of the national preventive mechanism, its mandate and its activities.

46. She wished to know why the pretrial detention rate remained high and what efforts were being made to reduce it. She would appreciate statistics on the number of cases in which compensation had been awarded specifically for acts of torture. She would welcome up-to-date information on any investigations conducted by the State Party into the disappearance and whereabouts of the 502 Roma street children from Albania who had gone missing from a children's institution in Greece between 1998 and 2002. She wondered whether there were any cases in which, pursuant to article 314 of the Criminal Code and articles 149 to 151 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, the courts had declared evidence inadmissible on the grounds that it had been obtained through torture, and in how many cases, if any, law enforcement officers who had used illegal interrogation techniques had been investigated and prosecuted.

47. Given that, between 1944 and 1991, at least 5,500 persons had been executed and approximately 6,000 persons had gone missing under the former communist regime, and that the Committee on Enforced Disappearances and the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances had encouraged the State Party to step up its efforts to investigate such crimes, she wished to receive up-to-date information on efforts made by the State Party to search for the victims and investigate and hold accountable those responsible. In the light of the relatively low level of participation by civil society organizations in the reporting process, she wished to know how the State Party encouraged such organizations to take part in the preparation of periodic reports and what steps it took to disseminate the Convention and the recommendations issued by the Committee. She wondered whether, for the next review, the State Party would consider accepting the simplified reporting procedure.

48. **Mr. Tuzmukhamedov** (Country Rapporteur) said that he wished to know why the State Party had accepted individual communications and inter-State complaints procedures under a number of human rights treaties and protocols but not under others, including the Convention, while it had accepted procedures for cooperation with inquiries regarding systematic violations of rights under the Convention and some, but not all, human rights treaties and protocols.

49. He wondered how the State Party's authorities ensured compliance with the Convention, particularly article 16 (1) thereof, inside the perimeter of the migration centre on its territory which was run by Italy under a joint protocol. He wished to know on what grounds the Constitutional Court had ruled that that protocol was constitutional notwithstanding article 122 of the Constitution, under which the Convention appeared to have superiority over national laws.

50. He would welcome more information about the involvement of the State Party in the renditions programme with which it had been connected in the judgment of the European Court of Human Rights in *El-Masri v. the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*. He wondered how many extradition treaties, if any, the State Party had entered into with other countries and how many requests, if any, had been filed by other countries under such treaties. He wished to receive statistics, if available, on the origins of any such requests filed and the number of extraditions that had taken place as a result, compared with data on requests filed by the State Party. He wondered what risks were taken into consideration prior to granting extradition requests and whether they included the risks of torture and ill-treatment; whether the State Party had accepted diplomatic assurances concerning those risks in such cases; and whether it had itself offered diplomatic assurances in such cases.

51. **Mr. Buchwald** said that he would welcome clarification as to whether, under the joint protocol signed with Italy, persons who were deemed to be eligible for asylum were returned to Italy, and which country was responsible for accommodating or transferring elsewhere persons who were deemed to be ineligible for asylum. He wondered whether, under the protocol, the Italian Government was entitled to return to Italy persons held at the centre if,

for example, their testimony was needed in an unrelated case. He wished to know whether the protocol contained any provisions that purported to prevent persons held at the centre from bringing claims against Albania, or to prohibit the national preventive mechanism from visiting the facility. He would be grateful to know whether the protocol was public, and, if so, whether the delegation could provide the Committee with a copy.

52. **Mr. Kessing** said that he wished to know whether, in line with the position of the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment on such situations, the national preventive mechanisms of both Albania and Italy were permitted to visit the facility.

The meeting was suspended at 5 p.m. and resumed at 5.20 p.m.

53. **A representative of Albania** said that, according to official statistics, between 2021 and June 2025, 348 convicted persons had been extradited from Albania and 326 had been extradited from other States to Albania. Bilateral extradition agreements had been concluded with Greece, Türkiye, North Macedonia, Kosovo, the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Italy and Spain. There had been no reported cases of discrimination involving persons extradited from Albania. In one case, an individual's extradition had been postponed for health reasons. In all cases, the applicable procedures and protocols were observed, in accordance with the laws and regulations governing extradition.

54. **A representative of Albania** said that the Constitutional Court had ruled that the protocol between Albania and Italy on migration management did not establish new territorial borders, did not violate the physical integrity of Albanian territory and was procedurally and substantively compatible with the Albanian Constitution. Albania retained full sovereignty over the areas in which the migrant centres would operate. The Court had explained that dual jurisdiction would be applied in the centres, where Albanian and Italian law operated in parallel. The Court had concluded that the protocol did not create new constitutional rights and did not impose substantial new restrictions on the human rights of migrants beyond those already provided for in the Albanian legal order. Therefore, the agreement did not violate human rights and protection standards. The 1995 treaty of friendship and cooperation between the Italian Republic and the Republic of Albania had provided the legal basis for the protocol. The Ombudsman could raise concerns about compatibility with human rights and international protection standards and monitor how the agreement was applied in practice and could bring cases before the Constitutional Court.

55. **A representative of Albania** said that the Italian authorities were authorized to call migrants back to Italy – to testify in court, for example – and could not be prevented from doing so by the Albanian authorities. Complaints from migrants in respect of their treatment at the centre were filed with the Italian authorities, which were responsible for running the centre. The Albanian authorities, which were responsible only for external security, had not yet received any complaints from migrants. The protocol had been published in the media and was available online.

56. **A representative of Albania** said that Albania had ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and initiated the process of harmonizing national law with its provisions. The first step had been to draft a specific framework law on inclusion and accessibility for persons with disabilities, which had been adopted in 2014. The law incorporated the legal definitions contained in the Convention and provided for the establishment of the National Disability Council, an advisory body on disability policy, comprising representatives of government and civil society. Organizations of persons with disabilities were consulted on public policy and legislation. Albania had committed, under the universal periodic review process, to ratifying the Optional Protocol to the Convention by 2027 and was working on the harmonization of legislation to that end.

57. **A representative of Albania** said that, in accordance with Law No. 81/2020 on the Rights and Treatment of Convicted Prisoners and Pretrial Detainees, the national preventive mechanism was authorized to conduct unannounced visits to all places of deprivation of liberty, during which it had confidential, unsupervised discussions with prisoners and detainees. It followed up on obvious violations of the rights of persons deprived of liberty that it discovered during inspections. Between 2021 and 2025, the national preventive mechanism had made an average of 85 recommendations per year, many of which had arisen

from complaint-based inspection visits and the remainder from findings in prisons and police facilities. The mechanism's reports were sent to the relevant public institutions with the aim of improving the situation of persons deprived of their liberty. Recommendations touched on issues such as the use of violence, medical care and vaccination, the use of registers, the prevention of deaths in custody and conditions of detention. As of November 2025, the national preventive mechanism had conducted 77 periodic inspections and special inspection visits. Law No. 8328 of 1998 on the Rights and Treatment of Prisoners had been replaced by the 2020 Law on the Rights and Treatment of Convicted Prisoners and Pretrial Detainees. In the interval between the submission of the State Party report and the review before the Committee, many pieces of legislation had been repealed and new laws enacted.

58. **A representative of Albania** said that a former prisoner injured by a fellow prisoner at Lezhë prison in 2012 had been awarded €500,000 in compensation by the courts, while another individual undergoing compulsory treatment at the same prison had been awarded €50,000 in compensation for discrimination in 2023. A convicted prisoner had been awarded €297,000 for negligent treatment at Sarandëv prison in 2017. Several cases involving compensation for suicides and discriminatory treatment in prison between 2014 and 2025 were still pending before the courts. The forensic centre in Lezhë would be used as a penitentiary institution until a new treatment centre was constructed. Several complaints had been submitted in respect of the centre, including three cases of discrimination and four suicides.

59. **A representative of Albania** said that in July 2024, the General Prosecutor had issued a general instruction requesting the proportionate and effective use of security measures and encouraging the use of alternative measures. The General Prosecutor would be carrying out an analysis of the security measures requested by prosecutor's offices over the past five years in order to identify areas for improvement. The Constitution provided that no one could be declared guilty on the basis of a confession obtained under torture, and the Code of Criminal Procedure provided that evidence obtained in violation of that prohibition could not be used. Prosecutors and judges had an obligation, during the investigation and trial, respectively, to assess the admissibility of statements made by the accused.

60. **A representative of Albania** said that the Minister of Justice had prepared a guide on the use of pretrial detention, with the assistance of experts from the Council of Europe, which was currently under discussion. Every year, some 3,000 pretrial detainees entered prison, compared to only 400 convicted prisoners. One of the reasons for that imbalance was that, since 2009, a system of alternative sentencing had been in place, which meant that many convicted offenders were put on probation or ordered to pay fines, for example, rather than serving prison sentences. Prior to 2015, there had been more convicted prisoners than pretrial detainees in the country's prisons. It was hoped that the new guide would provide solutions for dealing with the disproportionate number of pretrial detainees.

61. **A representative of Albania** said that the General Directorate of Prisons took very seriously the post-visit recommendations made by independent monitoring bodies such as the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture, the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture, the Ombudsman and the Albanian Helsinki Committee, on the basis of which it designed national plans of action. Assignments were distributed across the Directorate, and progress on the fulfilment of the recommendations was monitored internally. Considerable progress had been made on the recommendations issued by the European Committee following its recent visit, particularly those relating to forensic psychiatric patients and prisoners with mental health conditions, especially in creating a therapeutic environment conducive to rehabilitation and future reintegration into society.

62. **A representative of Albania** said that the process for the election of the People's Advocate was under way, following the election of the new Government in September 2025. Parliamentary mechanisms were in place to follow up on the implementation of recommendations made by international bodies, including the European Union, United Nations treaty bodies and the Council of Europe. Civil society organizations participated actively in reporting on the implementation of recommendations. An electronic database had been created that would enable follow-up of recommendations. The Committee's concluding observations would be sent to the Ministry for Europe and Foreign

Affairs, which in turn would disseminate them to all stakeholders, including civil society organizations, which would monitor the implementation of the recommendations.

63. **The Chair** thanked the delegation for its constructive participation in the interactive dialogue with the Committee.

64. **A representative of Albania** said that she wished to reaffirm her country's unwavering commitment to the full implementation of the Convention. Her delegation was grateful to the Committee for the dialogue, which had highlighted areas for improvement. The concluding observations would provide essential guidance as the Government continued to strengthen the Albanian legal and institutional framework. The Government stood ready to work closely with the Committee and all international partners to ensure that respect for human dignity and the absolute prohibition of torture were not only legal obligations, but living values of a democratic society.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.