



# International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

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## Human Rights Committee 145th session

### Summary record of the 4263rd meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Tuesday, 3 March 2026, at 10 a.m.

*Chair:* Mr. Soh

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*The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.*

**Consideration of reports submitted by States Parties under article 40 of the Covenant**  
(continued)

*Initial report of Andorra (continued) (CCPR/C/AND/1; CCPR/C/AND/QPR/1)*

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Andorra joined the meeting.*
2. **Mr. Quezada Cabrera** said that he wished to know whether the offence of torture was subject to a statute of limitations and, if so, whether consideration had been given to amending the Criminal Code to render it imprescriptible. It would be interesting to learn whether a review to increase the penalties for degrading treatment under article 112 of the Criminal Code had been considered. He would also welcome clarification of whether measures had been taken to repeal legislation allegedly allowing for persons with disabilities to be subjected to forced treatment and medication in psychiatric interventions and institutions.
3. He would welcome information on the mechanisms in place in domestic legislation to ensure the prompt, thorough and impartial investigation of allegations of torture or ill-treatment and the excessive use of force. It would also be useful to receive statistical data, covering the reporting period, on complaints of torture, ill-treatment and excessive use of force recorded, as well as investigations conducted, prosecutions pursued, convictions secured and reparations provided to the victims in such cases.
4. He would be grateful for clarification of whether steps towards the decriminalization of defamation had been considered and, if not, of the reasons for retaining that offence in the Criminal Code, bearing in mind its potential to impinge seriously on freedom of expression. In that regard, he would appreciate an explanation, drawing on the most relevant case law of the courts of Andorra, of how the subjective element of the offence of defamation under article 325 of the Criminal Code, specifically, the intention to damage an institution's reputation, was assessed.
5. The Committee had received reports that, following more than four years of defamation proceedings arising from statements she had made before the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in 2019, the abortion-rights activist Vanessa Mendoza Cortés had ultimately been acquitted in January 2024. He wished to know whether Ms. Mendoza had received any form of reparation following her acquittal and whether measures had been taken to protect human rights defenders appearing before United Nations treaty bodies and other international organizations from reprisals of any kind.
6. Detailed information on practical measures taken to ensure the exercise of the rights to peaceful assembly and freedom of association would be welcome, including clarification of the nature and purpose of the prior notification requirement under Act No. 31/2021. Lastly, he wished to know whether the amendment of the Labour Relations Act (No. 31/2018) had been concluded and how the law protected the rights to form and join trade unions and to strike, including whether trade union formation could proceed free from employer restrictions in practice.
7. **Mr. Carazo** said that he wished to know whether training on gender-based and domestic violence for law enforcement officers, judicial personnel and other officials was compulsory and regular and would welcome empirical data on the results of such training. Disaggregated statistical data on complaints, investigations, prosecutions and sanctions in cases of violence against women would also be appreciated, as would clarification of measures taken to combat impunity and uphold the principles of effective judicial response and non-revictimization. He also wished to know how the performance of judges and prosecutors in providing gender-sensitive judicial services was reviewed, and whether binding guidelines, disciplinary mechanisms or effective remedies existed to correct decisions that perpetuated gender stereotypes or revictimized women.
8. It would be useful to receive substantive information on mechanisms for the immediate protection, compensation and comprehensive rehabilitation of victims of gender-based violence. Details of available reparation measures, including shelter, long-term psychological support, financial compensation and guarantees of non-repetition, and the

extent to which those mechanisms were accessible, sufficient and effectively used, would be appreciated. He would also like to know whether the State Party had adopted a comprehensive strategy for preventing violence against women and, if so, how its impact on the reduction of gender-based violence and the elimination of stereotypes was evaluated.

9. He would welcome an explanation of how the prohibition of voluntary termination of pregnancy in the State Party was compatible with articles 6 and 7 of the Covenant and general comment No. 36 (2018) on the right to life. He wondered which legal provisions guaranteed effective access to abortion services in cases where the life or health of the woman or girl was at risk, where the pregnancy was the result of rape or incest or where the fetus was not viable. Moreover, he would welcome clarification of how the medical referral system for accessing abortion services abroad prevented undue physical or psychological suffering, particularly for women and girls in vulnerable situations.

10. As the criminalization of abortion produced a chilling effect incompatible with the Covenant, he would be grateful for clarification of whether women and healthcare professionals remained liable to face criminal penalties in relation to the seeking or providing of voluntary termination services, and how that situation was compatible with the State Party's obligations under the Covenant. With respect to the bill on women's rights announced for the 2023–2027 legislature, he would welcome information on a concrete and binding timeline for its adoption, on how its content would ensure full compliance with the Covenant, and on how the legislative process would take into account general comment No. 36 and the Committee's jurisprudence.

11. **Mr. Ndiaye** said that he wished to know how the State Party's climate- and energy-related measures translated into concrete guarantees for the right to life and related rights, including health and housing, for persons most exposed to climate risks. Information on specific preparedness measures and plans for heat waves, avalanches and landslides would also be appreciated.

12. He wondered whether the adaptation measures already identified by the Government in a 2014 adaptation process were being implemented; whether any of the initial measures identified had been revised, prioritized or abandoned, and on what basis; and whether the State Party envisaged adopting a comprehensive national adaptation plan with concrete actions and deadlines. Given acknowledged limits on the adaptive capacity of mountain territories, information on how the State Party assessed the residual risks to life and safety remaining even after implementation of adaptation measures would be appreciated.

13. He would welcome information on how the costs of the energy transition and adaptation were distributed among social groups; what measures had been taken to prevent vulnerable persons from bearing disproportionate burdens, including in the form of energy prices; and how the law protected consumers at risk of energy poverty, including clarification of how such persons were identified, what concrete support they received and how the relevant mechanisms contributed to the protection of their rights to life and health.

14. He wondered how the State Party's citizen participation framework had been used for climate- and environment-related decisions and how the effective participation of persons and communities in vulnerable situations was ensured. It would also be useful to learn how the National Agency for Climate Change and Energy incorporated equality and non-discrimination criteria into its work and what follow-up was given to its recommendations, including any policy adjustments. He would welcome information on accountability mechanisms in place for situations in which climate-related decisions risked exposing certain groups to increased risks to their life and health.

15. He wished to know what measures were being taken to reduce reliance on and the duration of pretrial detention and to promote non-custodial alternatives, including information on any guidance for judges on such measures. He would appreciate information on the legal and practical safeguards in place for persons deprived of their liberty, including measures to ensure immediate notification, in a language understood by the detainee, of the reasons for arrest and of applicable rights; prompt and unimpeded access to independent legal counsel; and respect for the right to notify a person of choice without delay. It would also be useful to learn whether precise deadlines existed for those safeguards, whether exceptions for security reasons were permitted and, if so, what oversight mechanisms prevented abuse.

16. He wondered how the fact that Act No. 15/2019 on the Criminal Responsibility of Minors permitted the disciplinary isolation of minors in juvenile detention for up to 14 days could be reconciled with the principle that isolation should be used only in exceptional cases, as a last resort, for the shortest period possible and never with respect to minors. In that regard, he wondered whether measures were envisaged to prohibit the confinement of minors altogether. He would also welcome clarification on whether strict limits on the total duration and frequency of isolation existed for adult prisoners, whether decisions regarding isolation were subject to independent oversight and whether an accessible complaints mechanism existed for prisoners. A description of material conditions in police custody facilities would be welcome, as would information on any exceptions to the 48-hour custody limit.

17. It would be useful to learn how access to medical care and legal counsel was ensured during custody, whether police facilities were regularly visited by an independent monitoring body and whether persons in custody could submit complaints regarding ill-treatment while detained. He would appreciate detailed information on the healthcare provided in prison, including procedures for ensuring the confidentiality of examinations and records and the possibility for detainees to be examined by an outside doctor of their choice. He also wished to know how prompt access to mental healthcare was ensured for persons in pretrial detention and persons detained for reasons relating to mental health disorders and whether safeguards were in place to protect them from arbitrary and prolonged placement.

18. He would welcome clarification on the mechanisms in place for reviewing and following up on the recommendations of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, with examples of resulting legislative, regulatory or practical changes. It would also be useful to learn whether the reports of that Committee and the authorities' responses to those reports were made public and discussed with civil society and whether persons deprived of liberty had any means of being informed about the recommendations made or of contributing to their follow-up.

19. He would be grateful for information on the procedures governing the appointment and promotion of judges and wished to know what safeguards existed against political or other undue influence. He would also appreciate details of the disciplinary regime applicable to judges. He wondered whether a prosecutor had ever invoked article 6 (2) of the Public Prosecution Service Act to oppose Government recommendations; whether there were formal guarantees of security of tenure and protection against arbitrary dismissal; what procedure and grounds applied in cases of dismissal or non-renewal of appointment; and whether a systematic review of the applicable legislation and practice had ever been undertaken.

20. He would welcome information on the workings of the legal aid system, including average processing times and measures to ensure its accessibility outside of major urban centres, as well as clarification of how economic difficulty was assessed for the purposes of granting free legal assistance and the safeguards in place to ensure that no person was prevented from accessing justice on financial grounds. Information on measures taken in relation to persons entitled to a free interpreter, including deaf persons using sign language, persons who did not understand Catalan and persons with disabilities, would also be appreciated.

21. He would welcome information on measures to ensure that persons with disabilities had access to political life and to promote the representation and participation of women with disabilities in public affairs and decision-making bodies. He would also welcome recent examples of cases in which civic participation mechanisms had influenced major public policy decisions and data on the proportion of participants in such mechanisms who belonged to traditionally under-represented groups. He wondered how the effectiveness and inclusiveness of those mechanisms were assessed.

22. Lastly, since non-nationals could already participate in civic participation processes, clarification of the practical distinction between such participation and full political rights would be appreciated. In that regard, he wondered whether there were plans to extend full political rights to foreign residents. He would also be grateful for a description of accessibility measures implemented in respect of civic participation tools, and wondered how gender balance and representation of diverse social groups in bodies such as the Citizens' View panel were ensured.

23. **Mr. Yigezu** said that he would welcome information on measures planned to undertake and support research and analysis on trafficking in persons in order to assess its scale and to provide an evidence base for future policy measures. It would also be useful to learn whether there were plans to expand the mandate of the Labour Inspectorate to cover domestic work, temporary work and work carried out by migrants seconded to Andorran companies. In addition, he would welcome information regarding steps taken to increase the number of ex officio inspections in sectors at high risk of labour exploitation and trafficking and to ensure that trafficking offences were promptly and effectively investigated regardless of whether a complaint had been filed. He would also be grateful for data covering the reporting period on cases of trafficking brought before the courts, investigations initiated and persons prosecuted in such cases and resulting convictions, including an indication of whether the victims had been provided with adequate reparation.

24. He wished to know what measures were envisaged to establish safe reporting and effective complaint mechanisms enabling victims of abuse or exploitation to submit complaints without fear. Moreover, further details would be welcome on any review of the conditions governing access to residence permits for trafficking victims, which were reportedly highly restrictive. It would also be useful to learn what steps would be taken to adopt additional measures to detect and identify potential victims of trafficking, including among migrant workers and persons in an irregular situation, and to involve civil society organizations in drafting future anti-trafficking policies and in monitoring and implementing current policy.

25. He wondered whether the State Party intended to accede to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol thereto, the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness in order to ensure access to international protection for persons seeking asylum, including children, so as to better meet its obligations under the Covenant, in particular article 26, including in respect of stateless persons. It would also be useful to learn whether progress had been made in developing a comprehensive legal framework governing asylum, refugee status determination and international protection that upheld the principle of non-refoulement and what measures had been taken to establish a framework for determining statelessness and for ensuring respect for the fundamental rights of stateless persons.

26. **Ms. Abdo Rocholl** said that she wished to know whether an assessment had been carried out on the potentially differentiated impact that the general prohibition on conspicuous religious symbols in schools might have on students for whom certain garments or symbols constituted a direct manifestation of their religion. She also wondered whether the option for students affected by the prohibition to continue their schooling online could result in certain students having to leave in-person education in order to exercise their religious freedom. It would be useful to learn whether the existing regulatory framework fully guaranteed equal treatment among religious confessions.

27. To better understand the practical implementation of measures to prevent violence and ensure protection in the digital environment, she would welcome data from recent years on the number of complaints, investigations and convictions in cases of violence and sexual exploitation of children, including cases facilitated by digital technologies. Information on whether any evaluations had been conducted on the impact of the immediate action protocol for coordination between institutions to protect child victims of sexual abuse and awareness-raising campaigns implemented in that area would also be appreciated.

28. She wished to know the status of reported plans to revise the minimum age of criminal responsibility, currently set at 12 years, and whether consideration had been given to revising the maximum duration of pretrial detention for minors, currently set at 90 days. She would appreciate detailed information on children and adolescents in State care, particularly those in the La Gavernera Residential Centre. It would also be useful to learn about daily living arrangements, including whether residents were able to leave the premises regularly, whether young children were protected from situations resembling deprivation of liberty and whether residents had daily access to education and healthcare.

29. It would be interesting to learn whether consultations had been held with representatives of non-governmental organizations, academics or other independent actors during the preparation of the State Party's initial report under the Covenant and whether

institutional mechanisms existed for future consultations in the preparation of other treaty body reports, so as to ensure an inclusive and transparent process. She also wished to know what initiatives were planned to disseminate the Committee's concluding observations in educational or training settings, beyond online publication, in order to promote greater awareness of the obligations arising under the Covenant among the general population.

*The meeting was suspended at 10.55 a.m. and resumed at 11.20 a.m.*

30. **A representative of Andorra** said that the Government's priority with regard to sexual and reproductive health was to ensure that no woman was left without information, medical guidance or professional support. While the legal framework reflected particular constitutional features, the Government had consistently sought to place women's rights, dignity and well-being at the centre of public policy. That commitment was reflected in the establishment of the Comprehensive Support Service for Women, which provided counselling, family-planning information, risk-behaviour prevention and specialized assistance in cases of unintended pregnancy, including clear information on voluntary termination of pregnancy and medical and psychological follow-up, confidentially and free of charge.

31. Provisions relating to voluntary termination of pregnancy in the Criminal Code remained formally in force. However, no woman had ever been prosecuted, convicted or criminally sanctioned for voluntarily terminating a pregnancy. The Government was working to decriminalize voluntary termination of pregnancy for women who sought it. Intensive diplomatic work was under way to that end, including sustained dialogue with the Holy See. The Ministry of Institutional Relations, Education and Universities had recently been established precisely to devote political and diplomatic attention to issues intersecting with the constitutional framework, reflecting the seriousness with which the Government approached reform and its determination to move forward in a manner that strengthened women's rights while preserving constitutional stability.

32. Andorra was a small country spanning roughly 30 kilometres, with a single hospital serving the entire population. Cross-border access to highly specialized treatments not available domestically was therefore a structural feature of the healthcare system, not a circumstance specific to voluntary termination of pregnancy, and involved distances shorter than routine domestic travel in larger countries. That contextual element did not diminish the sensitivity of the issue but helped to explain that seeking certain medical services abroad was neither unusual nor inherently stigmatizing for Andorrans.

33. **A representative of Andorra** said that the Government had not acted against Vanessa Mendoza Cortés for reasons related to her legitimate advocacy concerning voluntary termination of pregnancy. Rather, it had acted in response to statements she had made that had seriously called into question the conduct of public officials. A judicial process had followed, as provided for under the law, and had concluded with acquittal; there was accordingly no basis for compensation. Andorran civil society was dynamic and included feminist associations carrying out legitimate advocacy in respect of the issue of voluntary termination of pregnancy. By way of example of the Government's cooperative approach to civil society, the authorities had in fact, in the past, contracted Ms. Mendoza to deliver workshops on sexual and reproductive health in Andorran schools.

34. During the preparation of reports to international bodies, consultations were held with relevant bodies and associations. In the case of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, for example, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) was normally consulted, and the Ombudsman was always consulted in the context of the universal periodic review. However, no broad consultation with the Andorran associative sector had been carried out for the preparation of the State Party's initial report under the Covenant. Nonetheless, the conclusions and recommendations issued by the Committee would, to the fullest extent possible, be incorporated into educational materials, ensuring that human rights knowledge reached children at the various school levels.

35. **A representative of Andorra** said that the consequences of climate change, including environmental degradation, had to be understood as a foreseeable threat affecting the effective enjoyment of the right to life. The effects of climate change were already established and perceptible in Andorra, resulting in increased risks for ecosystems, socioeconomic

activities and livelihoods more broadly. Public action therefore had to be preventive, based on the predictability of the risk and the available data.

36. Mountain territories were particularly vulnerable to climate change, yet Andorra was responsible for only 0.001% of global emissions. At the international level, Andorra therefore pursued a strategy based on the principle of exemplarity in climate action. Despite its limited historical responsibility, it sought to demonstrate rigorous respect for multilateral mechanisms. Under the Paris Agreement, Andorra had been the first country to submit a biennial transparency report, undergo a technical expert review and complete the full cycle of the facilitative multilateral consideration of progress. It had a target of reducing emissions by 63% from 2005 levels by 2035; international assessment had confirmed that the country's progress in that regard was adequate.

37. Domestically, those commitments were reflected in a structured legal framework, notably Act No. 21/2018 on Climate Change and the Promotion of the Energy Transition, the cornerstone of the national energy and climate policy. It was built around four main axes, including the protection of vulnerable persons through a social tariff designed to reduce the risk of energy poverty. By way of illustration, following a landslide on 31 January 2026 that had caused the closure of the only national road connecting France and Andorra, the authorities had introduced financial support for the economic sectors of the main affected towns and reductions in electricity tariffs for their residents in order to mitigate potential energy-poverty risks.

38. Additional measures included a programme supporting building rehabilitation to prevent energy poverty, subsidies for the purchase of electric vehicles, and, since 2022, free public transport for all residents. The aforementioned Act also provided for environmental sustainability, diversification and increased national production of green energy. The National Meteorological Service issued daily avalanche-risk bulletins aimed at reducing life-threatening risks, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 and its emphasis on early warning systems. Andorra also had set up preventive avalanche-triggering mechanisms to protect the population and infrastructure. With regard to the heatwave warning system, contextual factors were relevant: the country's main towns were located above an altitude of 1,000 metres. Temperature thresholds for heatwaves therefore differed significantly from those of low-altitude regions; in Andorra, heatwaves were defined at the 98th percentile of maximum temperatures, meaning peaks above 32°C, a level rarely reached.

39. There was also a long-term strategy aimed at achieving carbon neutrality by 2050, structured around decarbonization, adaptation, resilience, financing, social transition and research. The State had launched its first participatory process on adaptation in 2014, identifying climate impacts and measures. Of the 94 measures initially identified, 45 had been retained: 19 were currently being implemented, 7 had no implementation timeline, 3 required reassessment, 11 had been completed with positive results, 2 had been completed with inconclusive results and 3 had been completed but were pending evaluation. The National Agency for Climate Change and Energy currently comprised around 40 members, including representatives of the public and private sectors and civil society, a plurality that strengthened governance and enhanced anticipatory capacity.

40. **A representative of Andorra** said that it was explicitly stated in article 81 of the Code of Criminal Procedure that acts of torture and genocide and crimes against public officials were not subject to any statute of limitations. There were currently no plans to review article 112 of the Criminal Code on the punishments handed down for degrading treatment. The records of the public prosecution service did not provide reliable statistics on the number of complaints of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment received or the number of investigations conducted during the reporting period. The High Council of Justice was thus working to improve the relevant systems so that more accurate statistics could be generated.

41. One of the purposes of Act No. 31/2021 was to ensure that all citizens could fully exercise the fundamental rights and freedoms recognized in national law, including the right of assembly. Another was to regulate activities that had the potential to put persons and property at risk or disrupt public order. The organizers of demonstrations were required to

inform the authorities of their plans, not to request their authorization. That requirement had been introduced to help the authorities effectively manage public spaces, which was especially important given the country's small size and reliance on tourism. The only right affected, therefore, was freedom of movement, since demonstrators would occasionally be asked to modify the route that they planned to take.

42. The parliament was currently discussing the amendments that should be made to the Labour Relations Act to reflect the outcomes of the negotiations that had been held between trade unions and employers' associations with a view to increasing the number of companies with staff delegates and encouraging collective bargaining. The Government did its utmost to encourage employees to facilitate collective bargaining by electing their own staff representatives. Act No. 33/2018 regulated the right to strike, which was defined as a temporary interruption of work, decided jointly by employees or their representatives and exercised collectively to defend their interests. The Act also regulated the right of employers to implement lockouts in the event of a collective labour dispute. The right of all salaried workers to freely form and join trade unions was provided for in Act No. 32/2018 on action by trade unions and employers. Trade unions could be formed by groups comprising at least three individuals, who must have reached the age of majority and have Andorran nationality or be legally resident in the country. The union's constituent instrument and statutes must be notarized before being recorded in the register of trade unions, at which point the union acquired legal personality. The final step was the publication of those statutes and other information on the trade union in the Official Gazette.

43. A bill that would reduce the length of pretrial detention and prohibit the placement of minors in solitary confinement was currently being considered by the parliament. The bill would also provide for a reduction in the length of the custodial sentences that detainees would be required to serve before becoming eligible for community service, part-time release or parole. Those options would not be available to individuals who had committed very serious crimes. All persons deprived of their liberty had the right to be assisted by a lawyer from the outset of their detention. The Government ensured that State-appointed lawyers were available round-the-clock to provide legal assistance to detainees who requested such support. Detainees could also ask for their relatives to be immediately notified of their detention. Both the police and the judiciary were able to secure interpretation services, including sign language interpretation, where necessary.

44. **A representative of Andorra** said that he was not aware of any cases in which persons with mental disabilities had been forced to undergo treatment. Medical and psychiatric treatment could not be delivered without the patient's consent, except in situations in which the patient's life or the lives of others were at risk, which, fortunately, had never arisen in Andorra. All treatment received by persons with mental disabilities was voluntary and overseen by qualified medical personnel and social workers.

45. The Ministry of Social Affairs had worked with electricity companies to establish agreements providing for subsidized electricity rates for all recipients of social benefits. The discount currently enjoyed by such persons ranged from €6 to €18 per month. From November to April each year, the Ministry provided additional support to families struggling to afford the increased electricity costs by covering the difference between the average household electricity bill in the warmer months and the bills paid during cold periods when families needed to heat their homes. In certain situations, the Ministry could cover households' entire electricity bill. The same support was provided to vulnerable families whose homes were heated using oil. Electricity companies could not legally cut off a household's supply until the social services had prepared a report on the situation of the household concerned.

46. **A representative of Andorra** said that he did not know of any studies that had been conducted to examine the impact of Act No. 10/2022. Responsibility for enforcing the prohibition on the wearing of conspicuous religious signs and symbols in schools lay with each individual school board, which was made up of students, parents and staff who had been elected by the school community. Accordingly, any decision to discipline students who continued to wear items that were deemed incompatible with school life was made not by the Government, but by the school community itself. Such decisions were made only as a last resort once all channels of dialogue had been exhausted. The student concerned could, at the

request of his or her legal guardians, be enrolled in a remote education programme, which offered a quality education for children who were unable to attend school for medical or other reasons.

47. **A representative of Andorra** said that no decisions had been made regarding the decriminalization of defamation. While freedom of expression was a pillar of democracy, it was not an absolute freedom and was thus subject to restrictions in accordance with article 10 (2) of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (European Convention on Human Rights). The European Court of Human Rights had ruled that such restrictions were occasionally necessary to protect the reputation and rights of others and must be proportionate to the circumstances. The provisions of Andorran law that criminalized defamation were not incompatible with the Convention; they were applied only in exceptional circumstances and set out punishments that were proportionate to the offence. They were in no way intended to prevent public debate or legitimate criticism of the authorities. The Government would pay close attention to the Committee's recommendations and any new international standards on the topic, which could prompt changes to the relevant legal framework.

48. **A representative of Andorra** said that all staff working for the local authorities or government departments that might be required to deal with cases of gender-based violence had to receive training on that matter. While the Department of Equality Policies continued to run some training activities, most training was now delivered through a programme run by the University of Andorra. Participants received detailed information on the regulations, guidelines, protocols and indicators that had been put in place to address gender-based violence. The programme was open to government officials and any members of the public with an interest in the topic.

49. In 2025, the support service for victims of gender-based violence had provided assistance to 359 women. Women were not required to leave their relationship or file a complaint in order to obtain access to the service. The service's shelter houses could accommodate two families, who were entitled to stay there for three to six months while they searched for longer-term housing with support from the service. While Andorra did not have a court that specialized in dealing with gender-based violence, training was provided to all judicial personnel *inter alia* to prevent revictimization. There was no specific national plan on gender-based violence; the authorities had, however, developed guidance and protocols outlining the responsibilities of each department and the steps to be taken when a victim filed a complaint, went to hospital or contacted the victim support service. The reservation to article 30 (2) of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence had been withdrawn. Regulations were being drawn up to ensure that individuals whom the courts had recognized as victims of gender-based violence would receive compensation from the perpetrator or, in the event that the perpetrator was unable to provide such compensation, the State.

50. Andorra had ratified the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, established a support service for victims and adopted its own law and protocol to tackle the issue. The protocol established that any suspected cases of trafficking should be referred directly to the police and the public prosecution service so that they could conduct investigations and determine whether trafficking had occurred. Once the existence of trafficking had been confirmed, the victims were referred to the support service, which provided them with accommodation and social, psychological and legal assistance and conducted the necessary risk assessments. A working group had been set up to promote the organization of training for professionals involved in detecting and handling suspected cases of trafficking and run awareness-raising activities to address the fact that the public prosecution service had not confirmed any cases of trafficking despite evidence that it did occur in Andorra.

51. Support for Syrian refugees had been provided in accordance with Act No. 4/2018, which had later been adapted to facilitate the reception of people fleeing Ukraine. The Act provided for the establishment of the Refugee Support Service, which offered refugees social, psychological and legal assistance and access to housing and healthcare. Refugees were also given a special two-year permit to support their search for work. Once the initial two-year

period elapsed, they became eligible for ordinary permits that granted them the same access to services as the rest of the population.

52. **A representative of Andorra** said that the age of criminal responsibility was currently 12 years old. Minors were deprived of their liberty only as a last resort and for the shortest possible period. The use of alternatives to detention meant that no minors had entered prison since 2017. Such alternatives included participation in an educational programme for young offenders for a period of between six months and two years. The minors concerned remained in their family environment, which enabled them to improve their social skills and existing relationships and ensured their full integration into society. The educational programme was run by professionals from public and private institutions based in the minor's community. An individualized workplan was drawn up taking into account the minor's personal, family, academic, employment, health and social situation. Every three months, a technical juvenile justice team provided the relevant judge and the public prosecution service with a report assessing the minor's efforts to comply with the workplan. A final report outlining whether the minor had achieved the goals set out in the workplan was issued once he or she had completed the programme. One of the activities completed as part of the programme was community service, the aim of which was to encourage minors to make positive and useful contributions to society. Minors could complete between 30 and 150 hours of community service, doing no more than six hours per day so that it did not interfere with their employment or schooling.

53. The residential education centre known as La Gavernera housed minors between the ages of 12 and 18 who had been placed in State care. It was an open facility and could house up to 22 individuals. The Government also owned two apartments in which up to eight minors could stay. The 24 minors who were currently being housed in the centre and the apartments attended school, went to medical and psychological appointments, visited their families and were able to engage in extracurricular activities of their choosing. Siblings were kept together whenever possible. The immediate action protocol had been introduced in 2020 to guide professionals handling cases of child abuse. The professionals concerned received training to help them detect cases that would require the activation of the protocol. Such cases were referred directly to the police since they involved potential criminal offences. The increase in the number of cases handled in recent years reflected the fact that more cases were being detected as a result of the efforts in the area of training and prevention. In 2025, the authorities had handled 28 cases involving the sexual assault of children and 8 cases involving their physical abuse.

54. **Mr. Yigezu** said that he would be grateful for a response to his earlier questions on accession to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol thereto and the establishment of a legal framework governing asylum and refugee status determination.

55. **Mr. Carazo**, noting that he was deeply troubled by the treatment of Vanessa Mendoza Cortés, said that the Committee would welcome a copy of the judgment providing for her acquittal. He wondered whether the reprisals faced by Ms. Mendoza Cortés had had a chilling effect on civil society's engagement with the United Nations human rights mechanisms, since no civil society representatives had attended the review, and just one submission had been received from civil society in the run-up to it.

56. **Mr. Quezada Cabrera** said that he would like to know whether persons who had been acquitted after being unjustly accused of an offence were able to claim compensation under the State Party's laws and seek some form of reparation from the State. He would also like to know whether measures had been put in place to ensure that public meetings and demonstrations could take place in conditions that allowed for full enjoyment of the right to freedom of assembly.

57. **Mr. Ndiaye** said that he would welcome more detailed replies to his earlier questions on pretrial detention, the use of non-custodial measures, material conditions in prisons, exceptions to the 48-hour custody limit, prison health services, the appointment and promotion of judges and the disciplinary regime applicable to them, the functioning of the public prosecution service, legal aid, access to interpretation and translation services, support for persons with disabilities involved in judicial proceedings and the civic participation of foreign nationals and members of vulnerable groups.

58. **A representative of Andorra** said that Andorra currently had no plans to accede to the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees or the 1967 Protocol thereto. The fact that a lack of resources had forced the Government to prioritize the ratification of certain conventions over others did not diminish the importance of those that were not currently deemed a priority. The protections set out in the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees were already provided for under Act No. 4/2018 on Temporary and Transitional Protection on Humanitarian Grounds, pursuant to which Andorra had welcomed a significant number of Syrian and Ukrainian refugees. Some of those refugees had regularized their situation and obtained ordinary residence and work permits.

59. The Department of Multilateral Affairs and Cooperation was responsible for promoting the participation of Andorran civil society actors in the universal periodic review and interactive dialogues with the United Nations human rights treaty bodies. The Department recognized that many organizations in Andorra had limited budgets that affected their ability to participate in such events and would thus continue working to address that situation. The delegation would provide the Committee with a copy of the judgment in the case of Vanessa Mendoza Cortés, which was available in Catalan.

60. **A representative of Andorra** said that all cells in the country's prison offered access to ventilation and were equipped with cameras and an intercom. Detainees had access to water at all times and received food at every mealtime. All medical personnel who worked in the prison were public health employees. The prison was now served by two psychologists, who worked for a combined total of 70 hours per week. All medical professionals working in prisons had a duty to respect patient confidentiality. Individuals involved in judicial proceedings who were deaf or unable to speak Catalan were provided with free access to an interpreter. Any documents that needed to be signed by a non-Catalan-speaking detainee had to first be translated by a sworn translator. Measures to reduce the use and average duration of pretrial detention were currently being considered by the parliament.

61. **A representative of Andorra** said that Andorra appeared to be one of the few countries that had succeeded in ensuring that every person with disabilities was able to exercise his or her right to vote. That milestone had been achieved thanks to the adoption, in 2023, of regulations providing for measures such as the organization of transport to take persons with disabilities to polling stations, the introduction of accessible voting methods and the delivery of assistance for anyone who needed it to vote. The regulations had been developed in cooperation with associations of persons with disabilities and had been successfully implemented during the elections held in April and December 2023.

62. **A representative of Andorra** said that the review before the Committee was an important exercise in accountability and an opportunity for Andorran institutions to reflect on their work. While the Committee's recommendations did not have binding force in Andorra, the Government attached significant importance to them and would use them to help identify priority areas, refine the relevant legal and institutional frameworks and strengthen the protection of civil and political rights. The delegation's participation in the dialogue reflected the firm commitment of Andorra to multilateralism and the human rights treaty body system. It would endeavour to submit any outstanding replies within 48 hours.

*The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.*