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Chair: Ms. Abdo Rocholl

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

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 40 of the Covenant

Fourth periodic report of the Islamic Republic of Iran (CCPR/C/IRN/4; CCPR/C/IRN/Q/4; CCPR/C/IRN/RQ/4)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran joined the meeting.*
2. **Mr. Najafi** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that his Government had continued its active engagement with international human rights institutions and was determined to make further progress in implementing the Covenant. Nevertheless, it continued to face enormous difficulties that were impeding the Iranian people's full and effective enjoyment of their rights under the Covenant.
3. The greatest global threat to the exercise of human rights was certain Western States' extensive and systematic instrumentalization, for political aims, of the concept of those rights and of relevant international instruments and institutions. The Islamic Republic of Iran had been subjected to the antagonistic policies and practices of the United States of America for decades, including unilateral coercive measures that had adversely affected almost all areas of citizens' lives, including employment, health, education and the right to life, and had presented a challenge to his country's unwavering commitment to protecting human rights. The United States had used threats to coerce countries and companies into complying with its unlawful, inhumane and criminal sanctions against the Islamic Republic of Iran. The resulting overcompliance with such sanctions had exacerbated the country's humanitarian disaster, with the most vulnerable members of society, particularly women and children, bearing the brunt of the harm.
4. The fourth periodic report (CCPR/C/IRN/4) had been prepared in consultation with all relevant ministries, non-governmental organizations and other relevant parties. The delay in its submission was due in part to the unprecedented coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.
5. He wished to reiterate that the Islamic Republic of Iran did not subscribe to contentious and non-consensual concepts that it considered to fall outside the purview of the Covenant. Moreover, his delegation noted with dissatisfaction that the Committee's list of issues (CCPR/C/IRN/Q/4) appeared to contain not only questions but also judgments and preconceptions, which were often presented without substantiated evidence.
6. **Mr. Gómez Martínez**, welcoming the delegation, said that he would like to know what place the Covenant occupied in the hierarchy of the Iranian legal system; how articles 4 and 61 of the Iranian Constitution were compatible with the Covenant; what awareness-raising initiatives had been carried out among the general public, government officials and legal professionals to facilitate the implementation of the Covenant; and whether the State party intended to ratify the first Optional Protocol to the Covenant.
7. The Committee would welcome information on the investigations conducted into alleged killings, torture, ill-treatment and reprisals that had reportedly taken place in the State party, including the arrest on 12 July 2022 of at least seven family members of people killed during the widespread 2019 protests; threats and attacks against individuals seeking accountability for the loss of family members in the downing of Ukraine International Airlines flight 752; and attacks on and arrests of family members seeking accountability for the deaths of their children, such as the case of Manouchehr Bakhtiari, the father of a protester killed in November 2019.
8. He wondered whether the results of investigations conducted into the death of Mahsa Amini had been made available to her family and whether the family was entitled to request and participate in an impartial judicial procedure in that regard. He would also like to know whether any investigations had been conducted into the poisoning of 1,200 schoolgirls in March 2023 and, if so, what the results had been. He would welcome information on the functions and composition of the Special Committee to Investigate the 2022 Unrest.

9. He wished to know how the bill on the protection, dignity and security of women against violence could effectively combat violence against women; what measures had been taken to prevent and investigate so-called honour crimes; and whether honour killings were permitted under article 630 of the Penal Code and, if so, whether there were any plans to remove that legal provision. He wondered how the chastity and hijab bill was compatible with the right to take part in cultural life, the prohibition of gender discrimination, freedom of opinion and expression, the right to peaceful protest, the right to access social, educational and health services and freedom of movement, and whether a special jurisdiction would be established for its implementation.

10. He was keen to know whether any measures had been taken to reduce the length of pretrial detention and facilitate prisoners' communication with their lawyers and family members, and whether disaggregated statistics were available on individuals held in pretrial detention during the reporting period. He would also welcome information on the alleged incommunicado detention of journalists, human rights defenders, lawyers, members of minority groups, dissidents and protesters, among others, in unofficial places of detention without access to judicial authorities or fundamental legal safeguards. He would appreciate a response from the State party on allegations regarding enforced disappearances; torture and ill-treatment of detainees, sometimes to extract confessions; and reports that detainees were denied medical treatment, including for injuries caused by the security forces.

11. He would welcome disaggregated information regarding allegations of arbitrary arrests and the detention of foreign and dual nationals on national security charges. He would like to know whether any additional measures had been taken to ensure that no one was imprisoned on the ground of inability to fulfil a contractual obligation, including obligations relating to the payment of dowries, and whether updated statistics were available on the number of persons detained for such reasons. He would also like to know whether the State party intended to establish a time limit for the pretrial detention of juveniles; raise the minimum age of criminal responsibility; and adopt measures to ensure that juveniles in custody were kept separate from adults.

12. Lastly, he would appreciate information on the condition of Armita Garawand and the arrest of her mother. Had Armita Garawand been receiving medical attention?

13. **Mr. Yigezu** said that he would like to know what steps the existing national human rights institutions had taken to improve the human rights situation in the country. He would like clarification on how the national Human Rights Council could be regarded as an independent national human rights institution, given that it was subordinate to the judiciary, whose officials were appointed by the Supreme Leader; allegedly reported directly to the Supreme National Security Council; and had been assigned C status by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions since 2000. He would welcome information on the status and content of the bill to establish a national human rights institution and the timeline for its adoption, and on the content of the action plan for human rights that had been adopted in August 2023.

14. He would like to know whether national anti-corruption institutions were subject to an independent oversight body; whether State actors such as the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and the charitable foundations known as *bonyads* were monitored for any possible involvement in corruption; and whether disaggregated data were available on corruption cases opened at the special court for economic crimes, in particular cases involving high-level public officials.

15. He wished to know how the existing legal framework to regulate the use of force and firearms in the State party guaranteed the right to peaceful assembly and other Covenant rights and ensured that security measures taken during peaceful protests complied with international standards, including the Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials and the United Nations Human Rights Guidance on Less-Lethal Weapons in Law Enforcement. He wondered whether the State party had taken any measures to create an independent and impartial body to investigate allegations of excessive use of force and firearms that had resulted in deaths in custody, and whether any disaggregated data were available on investigations, prosecutions and sentences against those alleged to have used such force.

16. **Mr. Soh** said that he would be grateful for disaggregated data on complaints of discrimination received during the reporting period, including information on the grounds of discrimination, the nature and outcomes of the investigations conducted and the redress provided to victims. He wished to know whether the State party intended to adopt comprehensive legislation prohibiting all forms of discrimination, including discrimination on the basis of gender, religion and political or other opinion, which were not mentioned in the Constitution.

17. It would be useful to know how the State party enforced the prohibition, under the Charter on Citizens' Rights, of the spread of hatred and whether there were plans to adopt laws expressly prohibiting hate speech and hate crimes. He would appreciate the delegation's comments on reports of hate speech by public officials and explain what steps the State party would take to discourage such speech.

18. He would welcome an explanation of how the State party's new restrictions on sexual and reproductive rights, which put women at increased risk of unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases and forced them to resort to clandestine abortion, were consistent with its Covenant obligations. It would be useful to know whether the State party intended to revise the Law on Youthful Population and Protection of Family, under which the death penalty could be imposed on anyone found to have performed abortions on a large scale. He wished to know how many individuals had faced criminal charges during the reporting period for seeking or providing abortion services and whether any of those individuals had been sentenced to death.

19. **Mr. Helfer** said that he would like to know whether the State party would consider revising the laws under which consensual same-sex relations were punishable by death or other severe penalties. He sought assurances that the State party would not harass, prosecute or impose the death penalty on human rights defenders advocating on behalf of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons.

20. The Committee had taken note of the State party's assertion, in paragraph 179 of the fourth periodic report (CCPR/C/IRN/4), that an individual's sexual orientation was a personal matter that did not concern the Government. In the light of that statement, it would welcome a response to reports that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons were frequently harassed and detained under public decency laws by State actors such as the Basij militia, and reports that gender nonconforming Iranians had been harassed, arbitrarily arrested and subjected to torture and other forms of ill-treatment while in detention. The Committee was concerned about reports that gay men and lesbians had allegedly been pressured into undergoing gender reassignment surgery and wished to know what steps the State party would take to ensure that such surgery was performed only on individuals who had freely consented to it.

21. He would appreciate an explanation of why there had been a recent increase in executions and why ethnic minorities were disproportionately represented among those who had been executed. The Committee would be grateful for official statistics, disaggregated by gender, ethnicity, age and type of crime, on the number of death sentences imposed, the number of executions and the number of prisoners on death row. It would be useful to have an update on the status of the discretionary penalty bill and other legislative proposals that would limit imposition of the death penalty to only the most serious crimes. What steps would the State party take to eliminate the application of the death penalty for other crimes?

22. He would be grateful for updated data on the number of people who had been sentenced to death for crimes that they had committed as minors and on the offences that they had committed. He wondered whether the State party would consider amending article 91 of the Penal Code of 2013, under which persons under 18 years of age could be sentenced to death for *hudud* offences, or offences against the State and religion, and *qisas* offences, which included intentional and unintentional killing. Were any guidelines provided to judges to help them assess whether to withhold the death penalty for minors who had committed capital offences?

23. The Committee would be interested to learn what the State party was doing to reduce the growing number of executions for drug-related offences. It would also like to hear the delegation's comments on the reported absence of fair trial guarantees for defendants in death

penalty cases. In view of reports that executions were carried out without notification to the families and lawyers of the persons concerned, it would like to know whether the State party had a policy in that regard.

24. **Ms. Bassim** said that she would appreciate an explanation of what was meant by the “religious rights of women” and “gender justice based on Islamic principles”, which were mentioned in relation to the Sixth Development Plan in paragraph 15 of the State party’s replies to the list of issues (CCPR/C/IRN/RQ/4). She would like to know which institution was responsible for addressing women’s issues in the State party and when it had been established. What was the composition and mandate of that institution and to whom did it report?

25. She wished to know whether women were elected or appointed to the parliament and whether seats were reserved for them. She would also be interested to hear what steps the State party had taken to support the economic empowerment of women and combat the stereotypes preventing them from fulfilling their economic potential.

26. She was concerned about reports that female genital mutilation was on the rise and wished to know what steps the State party had taken to eradicate that practice. It would be helpful to know the State party’s position on *misyar* marriages, in which women relinquished some of their marital rights, and *mut’ah* marriages, which were temporary unions. She would be interested to hear the delegation’s view on the discrepancy between the age of criminal responsibility for boys and that for girls, which were 15 lunar years and 9 lunar years respectively. She would appreciate an update on the status of the chastity and hijab bill, which clearly violated women’s rights by imposing a dress code and providing for financial and social penalties in cases of non-compliance.

27. She would like to hear the delegation’s comments on allegations that government authorities and members of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps continued to subject detainees to torture and ill-treatment, including beatings, crucifixion, deprivation of food and drink and denial of medical care, and that children detained for *hudud* and *qisas* offences had been sexually harassed. She wished to know what steps the State party had taken to end the use of torture as a means of obtaining confessions and what legislative measures it intended to implement to stop the police and other investigators from subjecting individuals in detention, particularly political detainees, to excessive force, torture and cruel treatment. She would like to know how many cases of torture or death due to torture in places of detention had been investigated and how long it took for such cases to be reported. It would be helpful to hear about the outcomes of any investigations, including those of a forensic nature. Had remedies been provided to victims and their families? Had the perpetrators been brought to justice? Lastly, she would appreciate an update on the status of the punishment bill, under which flogging was no longer authorized as a form of punishment.

The meeting was suspended at 4.10 p.m. and resumed at 4.35 p.m.

28. **Mr. Najafi** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that only the articles of the Covenant that were compatible with the Constitution would be implemented by the Government. Ratification of international treaties was the responsibility of the parliament and the Guardian Council. All international treaties, once ratified, were considered part of domestic law, and their provisions could be applied directly by the courts. A number of court decisions in which international treaties had been invoked had been compiled into a book. In addition, the Government had published guidance for judges on referring to international treaties.

29. Activities to raise awareness of Covenant rights had been organized for government officials, judges, prosecutors, law enforcement officials and prison officers. The judiciary had held training sessions for judges and law students, with a view to improving their knowledge of the Covenant. The Committee’s list of issues had been translated into the national language and could be viewed by all Iranians. The Government had not yet decided whether to accede to the first Optional Protocol to the Covenant.

30. **A representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran** said that the Government strongly rejected the allegations of murder, torture and ill-treatment in prisons, which were unfounded. Torture was prohibited under the Constitution and various articles of the Penal Codes of 1996 and 2013. A domestic legal framework had been established to prevent torture.

31. The individuals deemed responsible for the downing of Ukraine International Airlines flight 752 in 2020 had been sentenced. Compensation had been provided to the families of the victims, whether Iranian or foreign.

32. None of the family members of the individuals who had lost their lives during the November 2019 protests had been arrested. They would be arrested only if they were found to have committed an offence.

33. Corruption was not an issue that fell within the purview of the Covenant or the Committee. The Government rejected all allegations of corruption within the institutions linked to the Supreme Leader. It was committed to combating any corruption in the country and had established bodies to examine alleged cases of corruption, including a special inspection and oversight body under the Supreme Leader.

34. **A representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran** said that the Constitution established a duty for the State to guarantee the welfare of all citizens, protect them from discrimination, uphold equality before the law, eliminate discrimination and create equal opportunities for women and men. Article 20, in particular, recognized the equal rights of men and women in the social, cultural, political and economic spheres, based on Islamic principles. Government entities had a shared responsibility to fulfil those constitutional rights in their respective areas of competence.

35. Between 1 January 2021 and 30 June 2022, the State Inspectorate had received 79,359 complaints, 89 per cent of which had been processed and resolved. Of those, 6.7 per cent had been related to discrimination. Judicial oversight of State action fell to the Administrative Court of Justice, which was competent to deal with complaints lodged in respect of government decisions or actions. Detailed information on relevant cases could be provided at the Committee's request.

36. The Charter on Citizens' Rights protected the rights of religious and other minorities and prohibited incitement to hatred, in particular with regard to children. The Charter also prohibited discrimination based on ethnic origin, social status or political affiliation in employment, education and access to information, among other areas, and highlighted the value of intercultural communication. Under legislation for the promotion of virtue and the prevention of vice, insults or physical attacks based on religion constituted punishable offences.

37. **A representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran** said that the Covenant did not cover issues relating to sexual orientation, nor was there any global consensus on the matter. The Islamic Republic of Iran shared the view of other States members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation in that regard and the delegation would not discuss such issues with the Committee.

38. **A representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran** said that a series of legislative, executive and judicial measures had been taken to create conditions in which women could prosper and thrive. The general policies of the Sixth Development Plan were intended to guarantee equal enjoyment of legal, social and cultural rights; the Seventh Development Plan paved the way for removing barriers to women's development. Under the Sixth Development Plan, a gender perspective was included in all sectoral policies, plans and programmes. The Office of Vice-President for Women and Family Affairs had been mandated to monitor compliance with gender justice requirements by relevant executive offices and to prepare annual reports to the parliament and the Cabinet of Ministers. Gender justice indicators had been developed for that purpose.

39. Legislation had been amended to reduce working hours for mothers of children with disabilities and to enable Iranian women married to foreign men to request Iranian citizenship for their minor children. The Office of Vice-President for Women and Family Affairs was promoting women's empowerment in different areas, including by promoting greater participation in management and decision-making. Regulations governing the right of married women to travel abroad had also been amended in that context. Jobs were being restructured to help women reconcile work and family responsibilities. There were no legal barriers to women's representation at the highest political level; to obtain such positions, candidates must gain public favour.

40. National development plans provided for gender-responsive budgeting. Various programmes had been rolled out to support women and families in vulnerable situations; implementation was ensured and monitored in cooperation with civil society organizations and the private sector. Over the past year, many executive entities had allocated additional resources for women's empowerment. Women's representation in tertiary education, medicine, business and science had increased tremendously. There were 1,121 women judges and 2,500 women board members of knowledge-based companies; 24 per cent of the country's patent holders were women. A plethora of institutions such as social and cultural centres, women's affairs units in various ministries, women and family committees and local women's offices, among other entities, worked to promote women's empowerment at all levels of government.

41. **A representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran** said that a range of legislative, judicial and administrative measures had been taken to enforce the legal prohibition of violence against women. Action focused, in particular, on prevention, prosecution and victim support. The Civil Code recognized spousal violence against women as a ground for divorce; article 50 of the Youthful Population and Protection of the Family Law criminalized forced marriage. A legal ban on early marriage, which typically occurred in rural areas and among nomadic groups, would be insufficient to eradicate that practice and would affect the right to an identity of children born of early marriages. Campaigns to bring about cultural change were necessary.

42. The sexual exploitation of women was criminalized under the Countering Human Trafficking Act. Harassment of pregnant women, sexual intercourse without the woman's consent, female genital mutilation and other acts of violence against the physical, sexual and psychological integrity of women and girls were prohibited. Domestic legislation also covered issues such as parental neglect resulting in sexual harassment or abuse of children, child abuse on the Internet and other violations of the rights of the child in the digital environment. Child victims were taken to safe locations and the perpetrators were stripped of parental visiting rights and punished.

43. There was no legal impunity for honour killings and the victims' families were entitled to bring criminal charges against the perpetrator. The harassment of women by judicial officers or lawyers was also strictly prohibited. Crisis hotlines, counselling services and other support structures were in place to assist women and families in crisis. There were 33 shelters for women victims of violence and 53 centres delivering support to girl victims. A bill criminalizing different gender-based crimes was currently under consideration.

44. **A representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran** said that the Youthful Population and Protection of the Family Law provided, among other things, for the establishment of childbirth facilities, fertility care, job security and flexible working hours for mothers, and food baskets for families in need. It also established a prescription requirement for contraceptives. Pregnant women, particularly those who were over 35 years of age or had a family history of chromosomal anomalies, could request prenatal screening. Voluntary permanent sterilization for medical reasons was permitted, and reversible sterilization was permitted upon request.

45. Abortion was prohibited except in cases of severe fetal anomaly or risk to the life of the pregnant woman. Any request for an abortion registered with a medical provider was reviewed by a three-person parliamentary committee; requests were granted only in exceptional circumstances. Article 61 of the Youthful Population and Protection of the Family Law criminalized acts against the integrity of the fetus.

46. **A representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran** said that the death penalty was imposed only for very serious crimes, most notably drug-related offences. With the adoption of the 2016 amendment to the Anti-Narcotics Law, many of the crimes that had previously carried the death penalty were now punishable by life imprisonment. Drug offences and other serious offences committed by juveniles were regulated by articles 88 and 89 of the Penal Code. Penalties took account of the perpetrator's age; children between the ages of 9 and 12 were treated differently from those between the ages of 12 and 15 or 15 and 18. Instructions had been issued recently to judges and forensic experts handling murder or drug-related

crimes committed by juveniles. Local peace commissions played an important role as alternative dispute settlement mechanisms.

47. All persons accused of having committed an offence had the right to be assisted by counsel at all stages of the proceedings. Court-appointed counsel was assigned if the accused was unable to pay. All judgments rendered by lower courts could be appealed to the Supreme Court of Justice; the right to judicial review was enshrined in the Code of Criminal Procedure. All hearings were public, with the exception of those concerning public indecency, disruption of public security or private matters.

48. **A representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran** said that the carrying and use of firearms by law enforcement officers was strictly regulated and restricted to specific situations provided for by law. The Law on the Use of Weapons by Officers of the Armed Forces in Necessary Cases stipulated that only officers who were appropriately trained and in good physical and mental health were entitled to bear arms. The Law also established mechanisms to deal with the unlawful use of firearms and recognized citizens' right to file complaints. Any unlawful use of firearms that resulted in harm to innocent citizens was prosecuted and victims were afforded compensation.

49. The use of weapons by police and security officers to deal with illegal assemblies was authorized only in exceptional circumstances and when the organizers of those assemblies had failed to respond to formal warnings and ultimatums. In such cases, police and security forces were required by law to ensure that they acted in accordance with the principles of necessity and proportionality. According to the report of the fact-finding investigation by the Iranian parliament, the death of Mahsa Amini had been in no way connected with excessive use of force by law enforcement personnel.

50. **A representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran** said that torture and other inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment were prohibited under the Constitution, laws and regulations. Moreover, the Legal and Judicial Affairs Department had drafted an amendment to the Penal Code to align national legislation on the prohibition of torture more closely with international human rights standards. Allegations concerning the widespread use of violence against persons deprived of their liberty were unfounded and were firmly denied by the Government. With respect to corporal punishment, according to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, torture did not include pain or suffering arising only from, inherent in or incidental to lawful sanctions. Furthermore, neither the Convention against Torture nor the Covenant defined corporal punishment as a form of torture. Although the Legal and Judicial Affairs Department had prepared a new bill abolishing certain forms of punishment, including flogging, such sanctions would remain lawful in the country until such time as that legislation was enacted. He did not wish to address any more questions on the subject of torture.

51. **A representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran** said that, pursuant to a recent amendment of the Code of Criminal Procedure, pretrial detention could be ordered only in relation to cases concerning five specific crimes. The ordinary duration of pretrial detention was restricted to 2 months for serious crimes and 1 month for other offences, although the detention could be extended at the prosecutor's request. In such circumstances, the accused person was given 10 days to appeal against such a request. The total duration of pretrial detention could not exceed 2 years for serious crimes and 1 year for other offences. Inspectors could order the termination of pretrial detention at any time and, should the prosecutor oppose that decision, the case would be brought before a judge to rule on the lawfulness of the detention. The law also provided for the right of persons who were subsequently proved innocent to obtain redress for damage suffered during their detention. Since the amended legislation had come into effect, there had been a notable reduction in the use of pretrial detention.

52. The Government denied all allegations of illegal detention. Arrested persons could be held for up to 24 hours, after which they must be either released or brought before a judge. Any further period of detention could be ordered only by the judge, who was also responsible for ensuring that the legal proceedings were conducted in full accordance with fair trial guarantees. Moreover, regulatory and judicial boards had been established to ensure that all places of deprivation of liberty complied with regulations on minimum standards for

detention conditions. The Government rejected all allegations concerning the arbitrary detention of foreign and dual nationals, who could enter and leave the country freely, provided that they obeyed the law.

53. **Mr. Gómez Martínez** said that he would appreciate specific examples of cases in which the Covenant had been invoked in national courts. He also wished to know how many judges had received training on the Covenant over the previous five years. It would be useful to know whether the State party collected data on the number of deaths of women as a result of gender-based violence and whether it had set up a public institution or observatory to monitor those offences. Lastly, he wished to reiterate his question as to whether Mahsa Amini's family had been able to take part in the judicial investigation into her death.

54. **Ms. Kran** said that, in view of the fact that restrictive measures had been directed against a member of the State party's delegation by the Council of the European Union earlier in the year, it would be helpful to know what measures the Government planned to take in respect of persons who were the subject of international sanctions for alleged human rights violations. Specifically, the delegation should indicate whether the Government intended to investigate substantiated allegations of human rights violations by Iranian nationals against whom restrictive measures had been imposed by the European Union and whether steps would be taken to ensure that they were punished for any wrongdoing.

55. **Mr. Helfer** said that, regrettably, the delegation had not replied to the Committee's questions concerning lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons. It was the long-held position of the Committee and other United Nations bodies that the term "other status" in article 2 of the Covenant applied, among other things, to sexual orientation and gender identity, and States parties were thereby obliged to prohibit any discrimination on those grounds. The delegation's decision not to engage with the Committee on those issues was especially disappointing given that the State party had already provided written information concerning the situation of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons. The Committee would like to know how the State party reconciled those written declarations with the domestic prohibition of consensual same-sex relations and with reports that gay and lesbian Iranians were pressured into undergoing gender reassignment surgery.

56. He would be interested to know which serious crimes would continue to be subject to the death penalty under the new bill mentioned by the delegation. He would also welcome clarification as to the role played by articles 164 and 352 of the Code of Criminal Procedure in guaranteeing the right to a fair trial.

57. **Mr. Yigezu** said that he would welcome further information on the activities carried out by inter-agency human rights bodies in the State party, including specific examples of the ways in which they had protected the human rights of Iranian citizens. He also wished to know whether the national Human Rights Council was institutionally and financially independent and whether a time frame had been set for the establishment of a national human rights institution.

58. Although corruption was not explicitly mentioned in the Covenant, it was a crime that undermined civil and political rights, and the Committee would therefore welcome a response from the delegation to its questions relating to that issue. It would also appreciate a more complete response to its requests for information concerning the excessive use of force by law enforcement officers. For example, he wished to know whether any investigations had been carried out into the deaths that had occurred during the mass protests of September 2022, including by the special committee that had been formed by presidential decree, and, if so, what the outcome had been.

59. **Mr. Soh** said that he would be interested to know the grounds on which complaints of discrimination tended to be made in the State party. He also wished to know whether the State party had taken any measures to combat hate speech and hate crimes against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons and, if not, whether it would consider taking such action. He would welcome the delegation's comments on allegations that public officials, religious leaders and the State media were guilty of making homophobic remarks and inciting hatred and violence against such persons. It would be useful to know how the State party intended to discourage such acts and whether it ensured that those responsible were brought to justice.

60. **Ms. Bassim** said that she had been surprised to hear one of the members of the delegation say that he did not wish to receive any more questions about the prohibition of torture. It would be helpful to know whether that was simply a personal preference or whether it reflected the State party's attitude towards the subject of torture.

61. She wished to hear more about the Government's stance concerning *misyar* and *mut'ah* marriages, in relation to women's rights. It would also be useful to know whether the Government planned to raise the minimum legal age for marriage to 18 years for both men and women and to abolish the legal provision enabling parents and guardians to obtain authorization for their children to be married before they reached the minimum legal age.

62. **A representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran** said that his Government's position regarding torture was very clear. Not only was torture strictly and unambiguously prohibited, but confessions obtained through torture or ill-treatment were not admitted in evidence. Furthermore, the Penal Code contained clear provisions on torture victims' right to redress.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.