



International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

Distr.: General
18 October 2022

Original: English

Human Rights Committee

136th session

Summary record of the 3921st meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Tuesday, 11 October 2022, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Ms. Pazartzis

Contents

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

Third periodic report of Kyrgyzstan

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent within one week of the date of the present record to the Documents Management Section (DMS-DCM@un.org).

Any corrected records of the public meetings of the Committee at this session will be reissued for technical reasons after the end of the session.

Please recycle A small recycling symbol consisting of three chasing arrows forming a triangle.



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

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

*Third periodic report of Kyrgyzstan (CCPR/C/KGZ/3; CCPR/C/KGZ/Q/3;
CCPR/C/KGZ/RQ/3)*

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Kyrgyzstan joined the meeting.*
2. **Mr. Baisalov** (Kyrgyzstan), introducing his country's third periodic report (CCPR/C/KGZ/3), said that, since gaining independence in 1991, his country had developed into the most vibrant democracy in Central Asia. It had a free press and the most dynamic and active civil society in the region. The current President, Mr. Sadyr Zhaparov, had won office in free and fair elections in January 2021, shortly after large-scale public protests had secured his release from jail, where he had been detained on trumped-up charges and had served 4 years of an 11-year sentence. Since his election, the President had led reforms designed to strengthen the country's democracy, including the adoption of a new constitution, in April 2021, that provided for the use of a Scandinavian-style system of preferential voting for the direct election of the country's 90 members of parliaments. The subsequent parliamentary elections, held at the end of 2021, had also been free and fair, and the elected parliamentarians represented six political parties and a wide spectrum of opinion. The Zhogorku Kenesh, the parliament of Kyrgyzstan, together with the media and civil society, ensured that the Government was held accountable for its actions and that decision-making processes were transparent and inclusive.
3. **Mr. Zyberi**, welcoming the positive developments in the State party, including the constitutional provision for the replacement of the Constitutional Court, which had been abolished some years previously, said that he wished to know whether an individual whose rights under the Covenant had been violated could petition the domestic courts for redress. He also wished to know whether, under the Code of Criminal Procedure, the State authorities could reopen a closed case if asked to do so by decision of an international human rights body such as the Committee without waiting for the victim to initiate proceedings. In addition, he wondered how the State party intended to ensure that no Kyrgyz national could be deprived of his or her citizenship in a manner incompatible with the Covenant.
4. He would welcome additional information on cases in which the Constitutional Chamber of the Supreme Court had referred to the Covenant. It would also be interesting to learn whether judges and prosecutors received training on the Covenant and the Optional Protocol and why fewer public officials had taken training courses in 2020 and 2021 than in 2019. He wondered what measures the State party had taken to give effect to the recommendations made in the views adopted by the Committee and what had been done to disseminate its views widely.
5. An update on the application of the State party's counter-terrorism laws would be welcome. It would be interesting to know, for example, how many people had been prosecuted or convicted under those laws and who those people were. It would also be interesting to know how many of the approximately 450 Kyrgyz nationals detained in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic, most of whom were women and children, had been repatriated, whether the authorities intended to repatriate all of them, and, if so, whether comprehensive rehabilitation and reintegration programmes were available for them on their return. Lastly, he asked whether the planned amendments to the Counter-Extremism Act were compatible with the Covenant and whether any action had been taken to ensure that counter-terrorism measures did not interfere with the exercise of rights and freedoms enshrined in the Covenant.
6. **Ms. Kran** said that she wished to know what steps the State party was taking to clarify in law what the scope of action of the Office of the Ombudsperson was, how long the Ombudsperson could remain in office and in what circumstances the incumbent might be dismissed. She wondered what was being done to ensure that the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles) had informed the bill that, once enacted, would regulate the Office and its activities. In addition, she wished to know why the bill, which had been presented to lawmakers in 2017, had not yet been adopted, whether local civil society organizations and

international organizations represented in Bishkek had been consulted on its content, and how the provision stipulating that liability would be incurred for undue changes to the Office's budget would be enforced. It would also be interesting to know why the State party was planning to merge the Office with the National Centre for the Prevention of Torture and what measures it would take to ensure that the merged institution would be in a position to perform the duties of its component parts effectively and independently.

7. In Central Asia, Kyrgyzstan alone had declared a state of emergency during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. She wondered, however, whether the pandemic had genuinely been a threat to the life of the nation. She also wondered why the state of emergency was still in force, when it would be lifted and what was being done to ensure that laws adopted in expedited fashion during the state of emergency were in line with the provisions of the Covenant. She also wished to know what measures would be taken to ensure that, under ongoing revisions to the Civil Defence Act (No. 54) of 24 May 2018, there would be no possible derogation from fundamental provisions of the Covenant such as the right to life or the prohibition of torture and slavery.

8. She wondered which State agency was responsible for considering extradition requests and on exactly what grounds the authorities could refuse them. She would appreciate examples of cases in which extradition had been refused because there had been grounds to believe that the requested person might be tortured in the requesting State. She also wished to know why Mr. Murat Tungishbaev, a Kazakh blogger critical of his Government, had been extradited to Kazakhstan despite credible evidence that he would be tortured in his country, and why Mr. Bobomurod Abdullaev, an Uzbek journalist, had been extradited to Uzbekistan despite already having been tortured there. She asked when the investigation into the abduction of Mr. Orhan Inandi, a Kyrgyz educator who had been taken to Turkey, where he had been detained and tortured, would conclude, and what steps the State party would take to provide an effective remedy for his family and punish those involved in his abduction.

9. It would be helpful to learn whether the draft human rights plan mentioned in the State party's replies to the list of issues (CCPR/C/KGZ/RQ/3) had been adopted, how the mechanism for monitoring extraditions also mentioned in the replies would work, and when it would be operational. Would that mechanism ensure that no one was surrendered to the jurisdiction of a foreign State in which he or she might be subjected to torture?

10. **Mr. Furuya**, noting that article 24 of the 2021 Constitution did not explicitly mention sexual orientation and gender identity as prohibited grounds of discrimination or the applicability of anti-discrimination provisions in the private sphere, said that he would be grateful to receive information on the status of efforts to adopt a comprehensive anti-discrimination law and specific legislation on hate speech and other hate crimes. The scope of article 313 of the Criminal Code, which penalized incitement to racial, ethnic, religious and interregional hostility or hatred, was limited, since it did not encompass, for example, sexual orientation and gender identity. Furthermore, according to reports, the provision had sometimes been used by the State to restrict freedom of speech. It would therefore be interesting to hear an explanation of how the State party was consulting with civil society to draft effective legislation on hate speech and other hate crimes while guaranteeing freedom of speech. Information on the remedies available to victims of discrimination in judicial and administrative proceedings, and on the number of complaints of discrimination lodged, would also be welcome.

11. Although the State party had made commendable progress during the reporting period in increasing women's political participation, in the 2021 parliamentary election, only 1 of the 36 single-seat districts in the country had been won by a woman and the proportion of women in the Zhogorku Kenesh was still only 21 per cent. He wished to know what concrete measures were being or would be taken to rectify that situation. Information on the proportion of women in decision-making positions in the central administration, including the number of women ministers and heads of local governments, along with an explanation of the measures that had been taken to promote women's participation in decision-making processes in fields such as education, health care and labour, would be helpful.

12. **Mr. El Haiba** said that he would like to know what measures the State party had taken in response to the large number of articles published online, particularly during the 2020

parliamentary election, that incited discrimination and hatred based on sexual orientation and gender identity. He asked whether the State party had taken steps, in addition to the seminars and round tables mentioned in paragraph 50 of its replies to the list of issues, to raise awareness of the principle of non-discrimination among civil servants and the population at large. An indication of the number of training sessions organized and the total number of beneficiaries over the previous three years would be appreciated, as would an indication of the number of investigations opened and officials prosecuted and convicted since 2020 in connection with the reported acts described in paragraph 8 of the list of issues.

13. He wished to know what activities had been carried out by the national referral mechanism for victims of trafficking in persons since its inception in 2019 and how many training sessions had been organized since 2020 for judges handling trafficking cases. He invited the delegation to provide information on the capacity of the 18 crisis centres mentioned in paragraph 53 of the replies to the list of issues and on the services that they offered, in addition to annual statistics, disaggregated by age, region and social status, on the number of victims they had admitted and cared for. In that connection, he asked how many State-supported shelters were currently operated in the country and what budget was allocated to them.

14. He would be grateful for information on the number of investigations opened as a result of child labour inspections, the measures taken by the State party to protect migrant children and guarantee their rights, and the number of individuals prosecuted and convicted since 2020 on charges of child sexual exploitation and abuse or under the trafficking-related provisions contained in articles 166 (4) and 167 of the Criminal Code. It would be helpful to know whether the State party intended to review those two articles in the light of concerns that they were contradictory.

15. Referring to paragraph 57 of the replies to the list of issues, he asked how many local committees on protection and defence against domestic violence were currently operational and what their impact had been to date. He would like to receive information on the 112 emergency call service, including, in particular, the number of dispatchers it employed and the percentage of men and women, the training provided to employees and the average number of calls received per day, month and year, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

16. He wondered what steps the State party was taking to eliminate forced and early marriage, which reportedly continued to take place despite being prohibited by law. He invited the delegation to explain the apparent discrepancy between paragraph 53 of the replies to the list of issues, which mentioned 18 crisis centres for women and girls, and paragraph 77, which indicated that there were only 6 such centres. He would also welcome information on State-operated and State-supported shelters for victims of domestic violence, and a response to concerns raised about the high number of cases of sexual violence against women and girls that were dismissed. Given the difference between the number of victims of domestic and sexual violence who required medical assistance and the number of recorded cases, he was interested in receiving information on the measures taken by the State party to ensure that victims had access to justice.

17. **Ms. Tigroudja**, referring to paragraph 14 of the Committee's concluding observations on the second periodic report of Kyrgyzstan (CCPR/C/KGZ/CO/2) and to reports that, during investigations into human rights violations committed during and in the aftermath of the June 2010 ethnic conflict in the south of Kyrgyzstan, confessions had been extracted from members of the Uzbek minority under torture and later used against them in court, said that she would appreciate an update on efforts to prosecute those responsible for the conflict and provide redress to the victims. With regard to the statistics provided in paragraphs 82 et seq. of the replies to the list of issues, she wished to know what the persons in question had been convicted of, what sentences had been handed down, what compensation had been provided to Uzbek and other victims, whether the persons reported missing following the events of 2010 had been found, and if they had been found dead, whether their bodies had been returned to their families.

18. In the light of numerous reports of violence, stigmatization and hate speech against ethnic minorities, it would be useful to know why the State Agency for Local Self-

Government and Inter-Ethnic Relations appeared to have received almost no complaints of such acts, what was being done to prevent inter-ethnic violence and combat the stereotypes that fuelled it, whether investigations had been launched into reports of discrimination and violence against members of the Tajik minority during border clashes in September 2022, and what steps were being taken to boost ethnic minority representation in positions of responsibility, particularly within the Uzbek community in southern regions of the country. She would also like to know what measures were in place to ensure the effectiveness of the State Agency, make its membership more inclusive, and build or restore trust in it among victims of ethnic violence. She would be grateful if the delegation could respond to concerns that recently issued guidelines on respect for pluralism and diversity did not adequately take ethnic minorities into account.

19. Turning to the issue of torture and ill-treatment, she requested an update on plans to dissolve the National Centre for the Prevention of Torture announced in June of 2022. She invited the delegation to explain why the Centre was being closed down, whether and how it had been able to implement its visiting mandate during the pandemic, and what measures had been adopted to reform the police force, and, in particular, to put an end to the systemic use of torture. She would also like the delegation to respond to reports of a lack of transparency in the process of amending the Criminal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure, and to describe the mechanisms, aside from the principle of exclusion of illegally obtained evidence, that were available to judges to investigate reports that evidence presented in court had been obtained under duress.

20. Lastly, noting that the Committee had received alarming reports of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment in juvenile centres, centres for military personnel and psychiatric facilities, she asked what measures the State party was taking to ensure that such establishments were free of physical and mental violence, including in terms of independent, prompt and impartial investigations and the provision of reparation to victims of ethnicity-based discrimination. According to information at the Committee's disposal, courts had granted reparation in only four cases since 2014.

The meeting was suspended at 4.10 p.m. and resumed at 4.40 p.m.

21. **Mr. Baisalov** (Kyrgyzstan), informing the Committee that the delegation would provide some of its replies, including disaggregated data on prosecutions and convictions for extremism and terrorism-related offences, subsequently in writing, said that, since the adoption of the first Constitution of Kyrgyzstan on 5 May 1993, there had been an ongoing national debate about legislation in the media, civil society and the Zhogorku Kenesh. The Constitution had been amended or updated several times, most recently in April 2021, when the current Constitution had been passed by referendum and had thus replaced the 2010 Constitution, which had introduced a parliamentary system without ensuring that the system was functional and met the needs of the population. Wealthy individuals had taken advantage of flaws in that system to effect an undemocratic *de facto* usurpation of the Zhogorku Kenesh. However, in late 2020, a constitutional council had been established to debate changes to the constitutional order, and, in the build-up to the April 2021 referendum, it had held numerous discussions in which the participation of civil society organizations had been ensured. Under the new Constitution, the right to citizenship was guaranteed and all provisions related to deprivation of citizenship had been removed.

22. The Government had evacuated 79 Kyrgyz children from Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic in 2021. It would communicate details of its operations in those two countries when it was appropriate to do so. It should be noted, however, that it was handling the situation in cooperation with several United Nations agencies and was committed to meeting the humanitarian needs of its citizens abroad.

23. In 2021, the Zhogorku Kenesh had elected the country's first ever woman Ombudsperson, and, at the end of October 2022, Kyrgyzstan would be hosting a large regional meeting of ombudspersons. The draft constitutional law on the Ombudsperson was under review. Steps would be taken, in consultation with United Nations agencies and domestic and international civil society organizations, to ensure the Office's full compliance with the Paris Principles. Compliance was one of the pledges that the Government had made

to support its candidacy for membership of the Human Rights Council for the period 2023–2025.

24. Prior to the adoption of the Act on the National Centre for the Prevention of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the need for such an institution had been extensively discussed, including in the Zhogorku Kenesh. Some had argued that the Office of the Ombudsperson already had the competence to receive complaints of torture, a strong regional presence and unimpeded access to all places of deprivation of liberty. However, international partners had indicated that the Office fell short of applicable standards for torture prevention mechanisms, and the National Centre for the Prevention of Torture had therefore been established. As a result of the considerable overlap between their activities, a merger of the two bodies with a view to forming a combined institution that operated in full compliance with the Paris Principles had recently been proposed. However, no such merger would take place until the operational, financial and technical independence of the Office of the Ombudsperson had been secured.

25. On 22 March 2020, a state of emergency had been declared in Kyrgyzstan in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, which had caused panic among the population. A full lockdown had subsequently been introduced. Overzealous law enforcement might possibly have given rise to a few issues, but the state of emergency had gradually been lifted and had been definitively ended, by presidential decree, on 31 December 2021. More recently, a state of emergency had been declared in Batken Province in response to aggression on the part of Tajikistan and approximately 140,000 persons had been evacuated following heavy artillery bombardments. The Civil Defence Act of 2019 was under review, and efforts would be made to find language consistent with the Covenant.

26. **A representative of Kyrgyzstan** said that the Constitution was fully in line with the Covenant and reflected all the human rights set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments. Its second section was entirely devoted to human and civil rights, freedoms and duties. Under the new version of the Constitution, the Government had an obligation to raise and take care of orphaned children and children without parental care until they reached the age of 18 years, ensure that they received primary, secondary and higher vocational education free of charge and provide them with social security. In addition, where the relevant international instrument had duly entered into force for Kyrgyzstan, all persons now had a constitutional right to submit communications to international human rights bodies if they believed that their rights and freedoms had been violated.

27. In 2021, the Non-Profit Organizations Act had been amended to strengthen public confidence in non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and increase the transparency of their activities. NGOs were now required to report information regarding their income and assets to the appropriate government agencies, and Kyrgyzstan had become a member of the Open Government Partnership and was implementing an open data policy under which certain types of data were to be made openly available in a machine-readable format. The greater transparency on the part of NGOs that would result from those measures would facilitate cooperation between the Government and civil society. Similar reporting obligations were imposed on NGOs in many European countries. In view of those considerations, the Government considered that the Non-Profit Organizations Act was fully consistent with human and civil rights and freedoms.

28. **A representative of Kyrgyzstan** said that a comprehensive review of national legislation had been carried out by presidential decree. The review had been entrusted to a specially established inter-agency expert group that had included independent experts and civil society representatives. The expert group had recommended that, of the 330 laws that had been evaluated, 235 should be amended, 15 should be declared null and void, 60 should be declared null and void after new laws had been adopted to replace them, and 20 should not be amended. In the light of those recommendations, 43 bills were currently at the drafting stage, 15 had been submitted for public consultation, 39 had been submitted to government agencies for approval, 95 had been submitted to the Office of the President and 21 had been submitted to the Zhogorku Kenesh.

29. The Act on Protection against Unreliable (False) Information established reasonable restrictions to protect the constitutional right of all persons to honour and dignity that were in keeping with the provisions of article 19 (3) of the Covenant establishing the circumstances in which such restrictions were permitted. The Act regulated relations between persons who had been adversely affected by unreliable information and the owner of the website on which the information had been published and set out their respective rights and duties. It required the owners of websites not to spread unreliable information and established procedures for minimizing risks such as reputational damage and job loss. In Kyrgyzstan, there were more than 25,000 NGOs, many of which represented and protected the rights of specific groups. Journalists could report on the problems and achievements of Kyrgyzstan without restriction or censorship.

30. Kyrgyzstan had ratified eight of the nine core international human rights treaties and, with the support of relevant government agencies, independent experts and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), was currently drafting reports for submission to the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. The president of the Coordinating Council on Human Rights had established a working group to implement the recommendations of the Committee against Torture and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

31. An evaluation of the Human Rights Action Plan for the period 2019–2021 had shown that its implementation was 68 per cent complete. A new action plan for the period from 2022 had been drafted on the basis of the Sustainable Development Goals, recommendations received through the universal periodic review process and following visits by the special procedures of the Human Rights Council, and the actions provided for in the previous action plan that had yet to be implemented or required ongoing implementation. The new action plan had been submitted to the Office of the President for approval and was expected to be adopted in the following weeks.

32. The Committee had received approximately 100 individual communications concerning Kyrgyzstan and had adopted views on many of them. Article 451 of the Code of Criminal Procedure stated that a criminal case could be reopened if an international body found that human rights and freedoms had been violated during the original court proceedings. All complaints were considered in accordance with national law.

33. **A representative of Kyrgyzstan** said that new versions of the Criminal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedure, the Penalties Enforcement Code, the Code of Misdemeanours and the Code of Infractions had been adopted in 2017 and had entered into force on 1 January 2019. After law enforcement and judicial bodies, lawyers and civil society organizations had subsequently identified internal contradictions in the new provisions, in the biennium 2019–2020 20 laws had been adopted to introduce a total of nearly 300 amendments to the codes in question.

34. In 2020, the Office of the President had established a working group to carry out an analysis of the codes that had entered into force in 2019. Its 68 members had been drawn from the procuratorial bodies, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the State Committee on National Security, the Ministry of Justice, the Supreme Court, local courts, civil society, NGOs and academia. The working group had decided that new versions of the Criminal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedure and the Code of Infractions were needed.

35. The working group had found that many of the offences established under the version of the Criminal Code that had entered into force in 2019 had carried two penalties, namely a custodial sentence and a fine, so contradicting the principles of fair punishment and double jeopardy. In 2020, there had been over 1,300 criminal cases in which both a custodial sentence and a fine had been imposed. The combined amount of the fines had exceeded 113 million soms. However, as convicted offenders serving custodial sentences typically had neither the means nor motivation to pay the fine, the greater part of that amount had remained unpaid. Under the various codes that had entered into force in 2019, the penalties for certain offences had also been harsher. For example, disorderly conduct committed by a group of persons had carried a penalty of 5 to 7.5 years of imprisonment, forcing judges to impose custodial sentences where alternatives might previously have been available. In addition, the

investigative and judicial bodies had identified contradictions within the various codes with regard to the grounds and procedure for terminating criminal proceedings through reconciliation between the parties.

36. In 2020, 9,170 incidents of domestic violence had been recorded. Under article 75 of the Code of Misdemeanours, domestic violence was punishable by a fine, punitive labour or community service. However, even after the imposition of one of those penalties, some perpetrators continued to pose a threat to their families. Under the new version of the Code of Misdemeanours, a person could be detained on the basis of a court decision. As a result, law enforcement officials could detain perpetrators of domestic violence for up to seven days, thereby ensuring immediate protection for the victims.

37. The entry into force of the various codes in 2019 had created problems of application at the pretrial stage. For example, once an offence had been reported, a full pretrial investigation had sometimes been conducted prior to a decision on whether to institute criminal proceedings having been taken. The impact of that particular problem had been felt most keenly by business entities. In addition, the previous version of the Code of Criminal Procedure had not covered the procedure for instituting criminal proceedings and the grounds on which a decision not to institute criminal proceedings might be taken and had not established a specific time frame for the pretrial stage, resulting in excessive red tape and unjustified delays. By contrast, the codes now in force provided for a single register of offences in which all reported offences were entered in a digital database and for a pretrial investigation to be conducted within a specified period once a report had been recorded. Various other improvements had been made to the applicable provisions. Furthermore, in application of the updated Code of Criminal Procedure, new standards providing for a juvenile justice system in which minors who committed lesser offences were no longer tried by the courts were already being implemented.

38. With regard to the extradition procedure in Kyrgyzstan, which was outlined in paragraphs 109–117 of the replies to the list of issues, requests for the extradition of foreign nationals accused or convicted of crimes in foreign States were considered by the Procurator General or his or her deputies, in accordance with international treaties to which Kyrgyzstan was a party or on the basis of the principle of reciprocity. Pursuant to article 532 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, such requests could be refused if there were grounds for believing that the person concerned was at risk of being subjected to torture in the requesting State. Other grounds for refusal included the existence of an application for refugee status or a failure by the requesting State to submit additional information or data deemed necessary to make a decision as to extradition. The procedure for appealing an extradition decision was set out in the Code of Criminal Procedure.

39. With reference to the individual extradition cases mentioned previously, Mr. Tungishbaev and Mr. Abdullaev had been extradited to Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, respectively, in accordance with the Convention on Legal Assistance and Legal Relations in Civil, Family and Criminal Matters. Kazakhstan had provided guarantees that Mr. Tungishbaev's rights would be respected, including his right to legal representation, and that he would not be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. The decision on his extradition had been found lawful and had been upheld on appeal. Mr. Abdullaev had been extradited to Uzbekistan where he had subsequently been released. An investigation into criminal negligence on the part of border officials was under way in the case of Mr. Inandi, but it must be emphasized that the Kyrgyz authorities had had no involvement in his abduction and there had been no extradition.

40. In total, the authorities had brought over 1,000 cases in connection with the inter-ethnic violence that had occurred in 2010. As detailed in paragraphs 82 to 101 of the replies to the list of issues, a number of those cases, which involved persons from several different ethnic groups, had resulted in court proceedings. However, no cases of unlawful detention had been identified.

41. Pursuant to the new Code of Criminal Procedure, allegations of torture in places of detention were examined by prosecutors and the security authorities. In accordance with the Manual on the Effective Investigation and Documentation of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Istanbul Protocol), a cooperation

mechanism had been established to facilitate communication between police officers, medical establishments and experts in relation to allegations of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Instructions for the use of psychological and psychiatric evaluations to document and verify allegations of torture had also been issued.

42. **A representative of Kyrgyzstan** said that reforms were being carried out within the Ministry of Internal Affairs with a view to enhancing public trust in the Ministry and the police and bringing practices into line with the Constitution and current legislation, including with regard to equal opportunities and non-discrimination. The Kyrgyz Republic was home to persons from many different ethnic groups who contributed to the richness of the country's culture. All persons in the Kyrgyz Republic, irrespective of their ethnic origin, had equal rights and opportunities to gain access to employment in State and municipal services. Within the Ministry, persons belonging to ethnic minorities made up a significant proportion of the workforce. Moreover, the representation of women in the Ministry had increased in recent years.

43. Addressing violence against women and children was one of the Ministry's priority areas of action. A new department for the prevention of domestic violence had been created, new standards had been introduced, including for preventive detention and penalties for perpetrators, and training and awareness-raising had been carried out. A number of crisis centres and shelters around the country provided victims of violence with medical, legal and other support services. In addition, an inter-agency schedule of activities had been drawn up to prevent homelessness and neglect among children, including raids to tackle child labour.

44. Efforts made to prevent and combat trafficking in persons had included the establishment of a specialized unit within the Ministry as well as various national mechanisms and the adoption of an anti-trafficking law. In addition, guidelines and instructions for the identification of victims, the protection of victims' personal data and the provision of assistance and rehabilitation had been developed, an information campaign had been carried out, and training sessions on trafficking-related topics and international cooperation and exercises on preventing trafficking had been organized with the support of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and had been attended by members of law enforcement, lawyers and other experts. In the first nine months of 2022, four cases of trafficking had been identified.

45. **A representative of Kyrgyzstan** said that the right to gender equality and non-discrimination was enshrined in the Constitution and legislation. With regard to political participation, a 30 per cent minimum quota had been introduced for the inclusion of women on candidate lists put forward by political parties for elections under the proportional system. At present, women occupied 19 seats in the Zhogorku Kenesh. Although only one woman had been elected under the majority system, women did occupy deputy minister roles and they also held 43 per cent of administrative posts in the State sector. Owing to the nature of the majority system, it was not possible to establish a quota for women in single-member constituencies. However, the Central Commission for Elections planned to take steps to strengthen the capacity of women candidates to ensure their equal participation. In addition, there were ongoing information and awareness-raising campaigns aimed at overcoming negative stereotypes about the political participation of women.

46. Efforts were being made to identify children who were living in vulnerable situations, including those involved in child labour or exposed to the worst forms of child labour. Several hundred such children had been identified over the past years and appropriate individual child protection plans had been drawn up. In addition, a 24-hour hotline had been set up to provide information and psychological support to children and their parents and there were 18 crisis centres in the country providing assistance to women victims of domestic violence. State budgetary support was awarded through an annual tender process, with the amount of support provided having increased significantly in recent years.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.