



International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

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Summary record of the 2972nd meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Friday, 21 April 2023, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Ms. Shepherd
later: Mr. Balcerzak (Vice-Chair)

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Consideration of reports, comments and information submitted by States parties under article 9 of the Convention (continued)

Combined twelfth and thirteenth periodic reports of Tajikistan (continued)
(CERD/C/TJK/12-13; CERD/C/TJK/Q/12-13)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of the Tajikistan joined the meeting.*
2. **Ms. Ali Al-Misnad** (Country Rapporteur) said that she would be grateful if the delegation could clarify why members of certain Muslim groups, including the Salafist movement and the Muslim Brotherhood, had seen their right to worship severely curtailed.
3. In the light of the apparently limited actions taken to address trafficking in persons within Tajikistan, she would like to know how legislation concerning the issue was implemented in practice. She would appreciate information about the composition, activities and funding of the Interdepartmental Commission to Combat Trafficking in Persons and the results of its work. Information about its National Action Plan for the period 2018–2021 and any steps towards a new action plan would also be welcome. In particular, she would like to know whether the State party had taken any measures to protect women and children from minority and disadvantaged groups from trafficking, and what assistance and reparations were provided to trafficking victims. She wondered whether there were any existing or planned measures to sign cooperation agreements with neighbouring countries to combat and punish cases of trafficking in persons.
4. She would like to receive data on the attendance, completion and dropout rates in primary and secondary education of children belonging to ethnic minorities, in particular the Pamiri and Jughi (Roma) communities, disaggregated by sex, ethnicity, disability and geographical location. She would also appreciate information on the number of Jughi (Roma) children enrolled in general educational institutions and on measures to promote their access to education, their attendance levels, the transition from primary to secondary school and the completion of vocational training and higher education, especially by Jughi (Roma) girls.
5. She wished to know of any measures taken to preserve and protect minority languages, culture and history and to introduce them into educational curricula and activities and the media, including measures targeting minority languages in Tajikistan other than Uzbek, Russian, Turkmen and Kyrgyz. She wondered what steps the State party had taken to compensate Pamiri students who had reportedly not been able to submit online scholarship applications when Internet access in their region had been cut off amid tensions in 2022. She would also welcome information about reports that the Government pressurized teachers and pupils not to use the Pamiri language and sent the security forces into schools to monitor compliance.
6. Concerning the identification, registration and regularization of stateless persons, she would like to receive more detailed information on the implementation of the 2019 Amnesty Act, on measures taken to grant citizenship to refugees and on the amendment of the State Civil Registration Act to ensure that the births of all children born in Tajikistan were registered, regardless of their parents' legal status or the availability of their identity documents. Information about the access to health care that stateless persons enjoyed and the social allowance provided as part of the response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic would also be welcome.
7. Lastly, she wondered whether the State party planned to ratify the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness in the near future.
8. **Ms. Li** (Country Task Force), noting the deportation of 30 Afghan nationals, including refugees, asylum-seekers and Afghans with expired visas, said that she would like the delegation to provide information on any existing or planned measures to ensure full respect for the principle of non-refoulement of Afghan nationals and to guarantee their right to access to justice. She would also appreciate information about the assessment carried out by the State party to ensure that Afghan nationals were not at risk of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, arbitrary detention or other life-threatening situations

if returned to Afghanistan. She wished to know what steps had been taken to combat the risks of abuse, sale and sexual exploitation of children, and whether any measures were envisaged to ensure adequate child protection, including access to rehabilitation for child victims and survivors.

9. The delegation was invited to provide information on the impact of the new Labour Code (2016) and the strategy developed by the State Labour, Migration and Employment Monitoring Service concerning minorities and vulnerable groups.

10. She wished to know why, if one of the parties to a marriage was a foreign national or a stateless person, they had to provide documentation proving they had resided in the country for at least one year prior to the marriage and present the marriage contract to the authorities. She wondered whether citizens of Tajikistan also had to present a marriage contract. She asked what measures were taken to ensure that the requirements did not unduly hinder the right to marriage and the choice of spouse, and whether the State party would consider reviewing the requirements.

11. She would welcome detailed information on the impact of successive phases of the Human Rights Education Programme and its content concerning racial discrimination. It would be helpful to know what policies and plans the State party had to combat racism, promote human rights and foster tolerance, acceptance and respect for minority and ethnic minority communities in the education system, in accordance with the Convention and the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. Lastly, the Committee would like information on how the school system emphasized the concept of human rights and acceptance of, and tolerance towards, different minorities in the country.

12. **Mr. Amir** said that he extended best wishes to the delegation and the people of Tajikistan on the occasion of Eid al-Fitr.

13. **Ms. Stavrinaki** said that children without legal documentation in Tajikistan were effectively invisible to the State and consequently denied access to basic human rights, in most cases. She wondered whether the State party had relaxed requirements or introduced any other measures in order to allow undocumented children to access their rights, such as those to education and health care.

14. **Ms. Tebie** said that she would like to receive data on the numbers of members of Russian, Uzbek, Kyrgyz and other non-Tajik communities working in the civil service. She would be grateful if the delegation could provide more detailed information about recent reports that 80 Afghan refugees and asylum-seekers, including persons who had the appropriate legal documents, had been forcibly expelled without reason or due process.

15. There were reports of presidential resolutions that restricted the freedom of movement and choice of residence of asylum-seekers and refugees. Failure to comply apparently resulted in the rejection of asylum applications or the refusal to extend the validity of identity documents. She would like to know how the delegation responded to the allegations and what measures had been taken to resolve the problem.

16. **Mr. Diaby** said that information about any measures envisaged or adopted by the State party in the context of the International Decade for People of African Descent would be welcome. It would also be interesting to know the latest census figures on African persons and persons of African descent in Tajikistan and to receive disaggregated information on the prison population, indicating the proportion of minorities in that group.

17. **Mr. Yeung Sik Yuen** said that he would be grateful if the delegation could clarify exactly what the marriage contract constituted and whether it covered more than simply the rights and duties of both parties. Moreover, in an age when many people met their future spouse online, he wondered how fitting it was to impose a requirement of one years' residence in the country before marriage.

18. **Mr. Guissé** said that he would like to know whether Jughi (Roma) communities who lived apart from the rest of the population in certain districts and towns did so of their own volition or had been actively excluded. In the latter case, information on any measures designed to foster an inclusive approach towards those communities would be welcome.

19. He commended the State party's commitment to providing all citizens with education in their native language and would appreciate more information as to how the State party put that pledge into practice.

20. **Mr. Diaby**, noting that human rights defenders could be arrested if they were considered to be calling for insurrection, said that he wished to know whether the State party would consider enacting a law to protect genuine human rights defenders.

The meeting was suspended at 10.40 a.m. and resumed at 11 a.m.

21. *Mr. Balcerzak (Vice-Chair) took the Chair.*

22. **Mr. Ashuriyon** (Tajikistan) said that people living in the Pamir mountains and the Kūlob region, and other places where a toponym was used to describe the people, were not ethnic minorities but ethnic Tajiks. When the civil war had ended, despite the issuance of a presidential edict on disarmament in 1994, a large amount of weaponry had remained in private hands. In Kūhistoni Badakhshon Autonomous Province, some of the population used weapons for nefarious purposes. For instance, weapons were used to threaten civilians in order to force them to participate in demonstrations. For that reason, many demonstrations were made up almost entirely of people who had been forced to attend them. On 15 occasions, amnesties had been established for people who had violated the law governing demonstrations.

23. Individuals posing as human rights defenders were often members of organized criminal gangs who established so-called non-governmental organizations (NGOs). One such person was Ms. Ulfatkhonim Mamadshoeva, who had set up the organization Nomus Valnsof in 2016 and had committed a number of offences. Her organization's charter stated that it carried out humanitarian work, but the organization had consistently violated the Voluntary Associations Act. For instance, NGOs were required to inform the registering body within 10 days whenever they received a cash donation, but Nomus Valnsof had failed to declare a donation of 53,000 somoni (SM). Another individual who had set up an NGO had been carrying out murders, taking hostages, engaging in sedition and opposing State power. It was possible that the Committee had been misinformed about criminals who posed as human rights defenders.

24. More than 2,000 NGOs had been established but, over the previous year, 180 had been liquidated by court order while a further 104 had stopped operating owing to a lack of funds. A law on the provision of free legal assistance had been adopted and over 150,000 citizens had received such assistance. State legal aid centres had been established in every town and region in the country.

25. A total of 5,981 persons were registered as refugees in Tajikistan. Of those persons, two were Pakistani nationals, while the rest were from Afghanistan. A number of refugees who had broken the law on the presence of foreign nationals had been deported. Since early 2022, deportation orders had been subject to appeal within seven days. The Government was using the recommendations issued by the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders as the basis for developing a law on the protection of human rights defenders.

26. Article 19 of the Family Code set out the conditions applicable to marriages between Tajik nationals and foreigners or stateless persons. In such situations, a foreign national or a stateless person was required to have lived in Tajikistan for at least one year before he or she could marry a Tajik national. The parties to the marriage were also required to enter into a contract setting out their rights and duties in relation to property, housing and the raising of children, among other areas. The legal provisions on marriage between Tajik nationals and foreigners had been established to protect Tajik women against foreign men who entered into a marriage in order to facilitate their business and trade activities and then abandoned the marriage and the country when the activities had been concluded.

27. The law on birth registration required the civil registry to register the births of children whose parents were undocumented. The information on the parents that was entered on the birth certificate was taken from their marriage certificate, from their own birth certificates or from the birth certificates of any other children that they might have. Around 1,900 persons belonging to an ethnic minority were currently being held in detention, including 1,600 Uzbeks, 115 Russians, 53 Afghans, 32 Kyrgyz, 19 Turkmen and 17 Jugh (Roma).

28. A representative of Tajikistan said that article 7 of the Labour Code provided that all citizens had an equal right to employment. Employers were prohibited from turning down a job applicant on discriminatory grounds. Any individual subjected to discrimination in the area of employment could take legal action. Inspections were carried out to ensure that the provisions of the Labour Code applicable to vulnerable groups were being implemented.

29. Employers were legally required to comply with quotas for the recruitment of persons belonging to vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities, and inspections were conducted to ensure that the quotas and conditions applicable to vulnerable persons were respected. Between April and July 2020, spot inspections of hospitals in COVID-19 quarantine had been carried out to ensure that the rights of hospital staff were being upheld.

30. The Government implemented a policy to ensure the right of all citizens to engage in productive employment of their choice, irrespective of their nationality, race, gender, language, religion, political convictions, social status, level of education or property status. Support for vocational and entrepreneurial training was provided in educational settings, and social benefits were paid to curb mass and long-term unemployment. The Government had been working with trade unions, employers, associations of employees and NGOs to formulate measures to promote access to employment.

31. Article 41 of the Constitutional Act on Elections to the Majlis-i Oli (the parliament of Tajikistan) provided that election materials must be printed in the national language and the main languages of the area where the election was taking place. Local electoral commissions included members from different ethnic groups, including Uzbeks, Tartars and Russians. Persons with ethnic minority backgrounds held seats in both the Majlis-i Namoyandagon (lower chamber) and the Majlis-i Milli (upper chamber) of the parliament. The 34 members of the Majlis-i Milli included one Kyrgyz and one Uzbek, while the 63 members of the Majlis-i Namoyandagon included two Uzbeks and one Kyrgyz.

32. The Government had issued decisions establishing a State programme for the promotion of employment, to run from 2020 to 2022, and a national strategy for the empowerment of women for the period from 2022 to 2030. Women were mainly employed in education, health and agriculture, where they represented 39 per cent, 70 per cent and 45 per cent of the workforce, respectively. Average salaries had risen by 5.8 per cent between 2017 and 2021, and the number of women employed in education, health care and agriculture had also increased. Over that period, the rise in the percentage of women in employment had been higher than the corresponding rise for men.

33. Following the implementation of legislative measures to favour women's applications in competitions for civil service vacancies, the number of women working in the civil service had increased significantly. As at 1 January 2020, almost a quarter of civil servants had been women. Over 1,000 women were in managerial positions, a woman was head of the Executive Office of the President, 5 women were heads of department, 24 women were deputy heads of ministries or departments, 4 women were heads of regions, 62 women were deputy heads of cities, regions or districts, 45 women were heads of local autonomous government bodies and 81 women were deputy heads of such bodies. Following the most recent parliamentary elections, 7 women held seats in the Majlis-i Milli, 12 women held seats in the Majlis-i Namoyandagon and 542 women held seats on city councils. A total of 81 out of 427 judges were women and 13 of those women were presidents of court.

34. The population of Kühistoni Badakhshon Autonomous Province was around 232,000, which was 10 per cent higher than it had been in 2010. Between 2018 and 2021, over 2,000 new jobs had been created in the Province and over SM 1 billion had been spent on establishing over 1,000 new facilities, including 70 educational facilities, 50 health-care facilities, 50 transport facilities, 63 sports facilities, 25 cultural and leisure facilities, 352 trade and services facilities and 342 facilities of other kinds. More than 70 companies had also been established. Around 51 per cent of the resources allocated to the Province came from the State budget. The housing allowance in the Province was more than 14m² per person, compared with 12 m² in the rest of the country.

35. The Government had adopted a strategy for the social and economic development of the Province for the period between 2021 and 2025. In accordance with the strategy, over 135 new facilities would be established at a total cost of SM 5 billion and 46 new projects

would be implemented, including social projects costing SM 250 million and economic development projects costing SM 350 million. Since the Province was a tourist destination, over SM 4 billion would be allocated to the development of tourism infrastructure. Four projects costing a total of over SM 18 million would be implemented to protect the environment. As at 1 March 2023, over 230 facilities related to industry, education, health care, transport, sport and agriculture, among other areas, had been established at a total cost of over SM 900 million.

36. A project to develop the city of Khorugh, funded by the Government, the Swiss Cooperation Office and the Aga Khan Foundation, had been initiated on 1 May 2020 and would continue until September 2025. Over SM 150 million would be invested in the city to improve the water supply and other infrastructure. Funds were also being invested in reconstruction of the road connecting the Darvoz, Vanj and Rūshon districts. About 20 per cent of that work had already been completed. A hydroelectric station was being constructed. An educational facility for persons with disabilities had been established in Rūshon district. A total of 30 children – 18 Kyrgyz and 12 Tajiks – were currently studying there. A further 229 children, including 92 who had a disability, were studying at another institution in Dushanbe.

37. A purchasing agency guaranteed an uninterrupted food supply for Kūhistoni Badakhshon Autonomous Province. More than 10,000 tons of food and oil products and 1,500 tons of flour were delivered each year, including to remote areas, and the goods were sold at low prices. More than SM 15 million had been allocated from the State budget for the purpose of guaranteeing stable food prices and a stable food supply.

38. In 2022, some 205,000 disadvantaged persons had benefited from a programme of targeted social support totalling more than over SM 82 million; subsidies amounting to SM 3 million had been paid to 7,600 persons from all regions of Kūhistoni Badakhshon Autonomous Province. The State budget also covered the salaries of teachers, doctors and social-sector staff. In Khatlon Province, benefits amounting to about SM 30 million had been allocated to all regions in which ethnic minorities, including the Jughi (Roma) community, resided. Low-income and vulnerable groups, including ethnic minorities, were the main recipients of benefits.

39. **A representative of Tajikistan** said that more than 50 NGOs, such as the Bureau for Human Rights and the Rule of Law, the Nota Bene Foundation and the League of Women Jurists of Tajikistan, were involved in the promotion and protection of human rights. They had participated in the preparation of the report by submitting comments and proposals, many of which had been included in the final version. They also participated in carrying out the national plan of action on implementation of treaty body recommendations.

40. Work on ratifying the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness had been included in the plan to implement the recommendations of the third cycle of the universal periodic review process.

41. The regulations governing freedom of movement for ethnic minorities were applicable only to the permanent place of residence of refugees. For instance, more than 1,500 Afghan families resided in Tajikistan. With a view to ensuring their safety, they all lived within about 17 kilometres of Dushanbe. They enjoyed freedom of movement for purposes of education and employment.

42. **Mr. Ashuriyon** (Tajikistan) said that the authorities would continue to work with representatives of civil society in preparing reports to treaty bodies and in developing plans of action to implement their recommendations. The aim was to guarantee the best possible conditions for all residents, regardless of whether they were citizens or stateless persons.

43. **A representative of Tajikistan** said that more than 1,000 supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafist movement in Tajikistan had participated in armed conflicts in Afghanistan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Iraq and had collaborated with international terrorist organizations such as Da'esh and Al-Qaida. They used propaganda and fundamentalist Islamic ideology to recruit citizens. Pursuant to a ruling by the Supreme Court, the Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafist movement were deemed to constitute terrorist organizations and their activities were prohibited.

44. Mr. Kholiknazarov was a member of Commission 44, a criminal organization that was in close contact with gangs in Kühistoni Badakhshon Autonomous Province and with terrorist factions, in particular the National Alliance of Tajikistan, which had been labelled a terrorist organization by the Supreme Court. Criminal proceedings had been instituted against Mr. Kholiknazarov on a number of charges, including sedition, justification of extremism and promotion of the activities of extremist terrorist organizations. Mr. Mamadshoev had also participated in Commission 44. The law enforcement authorities had found evidence of his involvement in criminal organizations, such as the National Alliance of Tajikistan, and in the perpetration of serious offences similar to those of Mr. Kholiknazarov.

45. Vigorous action had been taken to combat trafficking in persons, although Tajikistan was not a country of destination. Five national anti-trafficking plans had been adopted; the current plan covered the period from 2022 to 2024. Between 2017 and 2022, the law enforcement agencies had uncovered 327 instances of trafficking in persons. Criminal proceedings had been instituted against 239 perpetrators, of whom 189 were women and 50 were men. In the same period, the courts had considered 260 criminal cases, while law enforcement agencies had identified 297 victims of trafficking in persons (198 females and 99 males, including 61 children). In cooperation with the International Organization for Migration, 31 victims had been returned to Tajikistan from the United Arab Emirates, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Kazakhstan. They had been provided with medical, psychological and social assistance, and with legal aid during the criminal proceedings. Support had been provided to 48 child victims to pursue their secondary and higher education.

46. More than 20 national and international bodies were engaged in measures to combat trafficking in persons in Tajikistan. With the support of the Embassy of the United States of America, the Ministry of the Interior had established a centre in order to improve coordination of relevant action among all stakeholders. A database had been developed in 2015 to analyse and monitor crimes of trafficking. The Ministry had also set up two national hotlines for victims. A social services centre for victims of trafficking and domestic violence had been established by the Ministry of Health and Social Protection. A training course on action to combat trafficking had been provided in 2020 for 152 law enforcement officers, of whom 139 were men and 13 were women. The Law Faculty of the Tajik National University had also introduced a special 48-hour course on action to combat trafficking.

47. The Government Interdepartmental Commission to Combat Trafficking in Persons was composed of senior representatives of relevant ministries and departments and had been run by the Ministry of the Interior since March 2023. Each year, the Commission submitted proposals to the Government on policies to prevent trafficking and to eradicate conditions that facilitated trafficking.

48. Tajikistan complied with its obligations related to the granting of refugee status to asylum-seeking foreigners and stateless persons. The Refugees Act had been amended several times in order to align its provisions with international norms. For example, refugees were entitled to social benefits, employment and business support for a period of three years, during which they were issued with a document confirming their status.

49. The Code of Administrative Offences had also been amended. Article 497, as amended, contained the sanction of an administrative offence and a fine, whereas the previous version had prescribed the penalty of administrative deportation. However, violations of the rules of residence by refugees and asylum-seekers could lead to expulsion.

50. All foreigners, including Afghan nationals, who entered the country as refugees or asylum-seekers were entitled to receive a permanent residence permit pursuant to Act No. 1471 of 2018 on the Legal Status of Foreign Citizens and Stateless Persons in the Republic of Tajikistan. Pursuant to Government Decision No. 27 of 31 March 2020, foreigners and stateless persons who had been resident in the country for at least six months were entitled to request a permanent residence permit. Asylum-seekers received a temporary certificate for three months. Between 2018 and 2022, 11 Afghan refugees, 1 Turk and 1 Ukrainian had been granted permanent residence permits.

51. **A representative of Tajikistan** said that the country's legislation guaranteed the right of all persons, including stateless persons, to receive, free of charge, a full range of high-quality health services, including reproductive health care, disease prevention, diagnosis and

treatment, control of communicable diseases and primary health care. Social welfare services were delivered by means of an electronic database that covered 223,000 households.

52. The World Health Organization had recently certified Tajikistan as free of poliomyelitis and malaria. In the mountainous regions, 95 per cent of the population could reach a medical facility within 10 minutes and they were fully covered by emergency health care. Mobile medical services were also provided in remote areas. Communicable diseases such as tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS were effectively covered. Lack of identity documents did not impede the delivery of planned or emergency health care. Basic health care was provided by about 12,000 physicians, of whom more than 2,500 were family doctors, and there were also about 36,000 nurses, 9,000 of whom worked in family medicine. At least 95 per cent of the population, regardless of their status, had received four vaccinations during the COVID-19 pandemic. Disadvantaged families had received targeted subsidies in 2022.

53. **A representative of Tajikistan** said that educational services were provided for all ethnic groups. The State policy on multilingualism enabled all groups and ethnic minorities to study in their mother tongue or to select some other language. School and university curricula took into account the culture and traditions of ethnic groups. Programmes on the Tajik language and culture were also provided for foreigners and ethnic minorities. Ethnic groups could apply for State grants to facilitate their access to education.

54. Pursuant to article 41 of the Constitution, basic general education was compulsory for all children from ethnic minorities, including Roma children, who studied in the same schools as other citizens and could choose their language of study. A total of about 1,200 Roma schoolchildren were enrolled in schools throughout the country. A working group had been established to promote the enrolment of Mugat and other ethnic groups. Steps were also being taken to encourage young people from ethnic minorities to attend higher education.

55. Although members of the Jugh (Roma) community had permanent residency, they were nomadic and often exercised their right to freedom of movement, causing their children to miss school. By law, Roma children could enrol in any mainstream school, and any act that prevented their enrolment constituted a violation of the Criminal Code. The Constitution prohibited discrimination on grounds of race, nationality or ethnic origin, and all ethnic groups had the right to use their mother tongues freely. Tajikistan had ratified a number of international instruments on the rights of ethnic minorities. The country's 685 schools for ethnic minorities provided education to 20,000 students, and the Ministry of Education and Science monitored the use of textbooks in languages other than Tajik and worked with ethnic groups to improve education in those languages. The history, geography and literature of ethnic minorities' countries of origin were included on the curriculum. The Government intended to adopt a plan of action on training for teachers at ethnic minority schools, and work was under way to improve the qualifications of teachers in minority languages.

56. **A representative of Tajikistan** said that all human rights matters came under the mandate of the Ombudsman, and foreigners and stateless persons could address the Ombudsman's Office. The Office could request the Supreme Court, the Supreme Economic Court or the General Prosecutor's Office to launch administrative or criminal proceedings against officials whose decisions violated human rights or freedoms. It could also take part in judicial proceedings and had been involved in seven criminal cases in 2022. The Office monitored prisons and other places of detention; in 2022, it had received 16 complaints from detainees or their family members and had investigated 6 of those through in-situ visits.

57. **Mr. Ashuriyon** (Tajikistan) said that the Ombudsman submitted an annual report to all executive, legislative and judicial bodies detailing the human rights violations that had occurred during the year.

58. **Ms. Ali Al-Misnad** said that she would appreciate specific statistics on the number of women from minority groups who held positions in Government, as well as information on the assistance provided to students who had suffered when Internet access had been restricted. It appeared that Kuhistoni Badakhshon Autonomous Province enjoyed a level of administrative independence, and the Committee wished to know the reason for the conflict in the region.

59. **Ms. Li** said that it would be useful to know whether the State party planned to ratify the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, and what measures were in place to protect women and children during the deportation process, particularly from sexual exploitation.

60. **Mr. Ashuriyon** (Tajikistan) said that, given its remote location, Kūhistoni Badakhshon Autonomous Province enjoyed certain administrative privileges under the Constitution, as well as additional funding and increased levels of pay. The necessary conditions to accelerate development were therefore in place, but more investment was required in order to improve living standards in the region.

61. The rights of persons subject to deportation were protected by guarantees and safeguards set out in legislation. Appeals against deportation decisions could be lodged free of charge within seven days and must be examined by the court on the day they were received; the decision of the court must be executed within three days.

62. **A representative of Tajikistan** said that women comprised 24.2 per cent of the civil service, while persons of Russian, Uzbek, Kyrgyz and other nationalities comprised 6.2 per cent. Men of those nationalities occupied 3.4 per cent of higher-level positions, although none were held by women from ethnic minorities.

63. **A representative of Tajikistan** said that ratification of the two conventions on statelessness would be considered as part of a plan to implement the recommendations of the third cycle of the universal periodic review process.

64. **Mr. Ashuriyon** (Tajikistan) said that the lengthy conflict in Kūhistoni Badakhshon Autonomous Province was due to sedition by criminal factions. The Government's operations there had led to a significant reduction in crime, notably murder, robbery and drug trafficking.

65. **Ms. Essene** said that it would be useful to know what was the format of the visiting legal clinics mentioned in the combined periodic report, who led them, whether the clinics had addressed any cases of racial discrimination in 2019 and, if so, what the outcome had been. She also wished to know whether the Ombudsman's Office acted as the principal plaintiff in court proceedings or the joint plaintiff with victims. Lastly, she would welcome clarification as to whether the Family Code's protections for Tajik women who married foreign men also applied to Tajik men who married foreign women.

66. **Ms. Tebie** said that it was important to have exact figures of the number of civil servants from ethnic minorities. She wondered whether imposing a place of residence on refugees and asylum-seekers violated freedom of movement as enshrined in the Convention.

67. **Mr. Diaby** said that he wished to know whether the State party had taken any action as part of the International Decade for People of African Descent, whether the 2020 population and housing census had collected data on persons of African descent, and whether disaggregated data were available on ethnic groups within the prison population.

68. **The Chair** said that he encouraged the State party to recognize the Committee's competence to examine individual complaints.

69. **Mr. Ashuriyon** (Tajikistan) said that the provisions for Tajik citizens who married foreigners applied to men.

70. **A representative of Tajikistan** said that the restrictions of Internet access in Kūhistoni Badakhshon Autonomous Province had not caused significant difficulties within education institutions.

71. **A representative of Tajikistan** said that the Ombudsman's Office did not act as a party in legal proceedings but rather ensured that victims' procedural rights were upheld.

72. **A representative of Tajikistan** said that no action had been taken under the International Decade for People of African Descent because there were no such persons in Tajikistan.

73. **Mr. Ashuriyon** (Tajikistan) said that the prison population included 1,914 persons from ethnic minorities, including 1,600 detainees from Uzbekistan, 115 from the Russian

Federation, 53 from Afghanistan, 32 from Kyrgyzstan, 19 from Turkmenistan and 17 from the Jughi (Roma) community. They enjoyed the same rights and conditions as Tajik inmates.

74. **Ms. Ali Al-Misnad** said that she hoped that the State party would take into consideration the Committee's concerns regarding the human rights of minorities in Tajikistan, particularly the Pamiri community; those concerns had also been voiced by other international bodies. Force, imprisonment and torture would not resolve the problems in Kūhistoni Badakhshon Autonomous Province.

75. **Mr. Ashuriyon** (Tajikistan), welcoming the Committee's recognition of the progress made in Tajikistan and the issues that it faced, said that there had been insufficient time to share all of the Government's achievements, such as its adoption of a national human rights strategy that incorporated the Sustainable Development Goals and recommendations made by treaty bodies. The interactive dialogue would assist the Government in fulfilling its human rights obligations, and the Committee's recommendations would be discussed with a broad range of State officials and civil society representatives. Since 2012, the Government had adopted more than 20 action plans to implement the recommendations of United Nations human rights bodies, and it would continue to improve its legislation and implement the provisions of the international instruments to which it was party.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.