



International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

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Summary record of the 3199th meeting*

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Tuesday, 14 April 2026, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Mr. Kut

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

Consideration of reports, comments and information submitted by States Parties under article 9 of the Convention

Combined sixth to ninth periodic reports of Serbia (CERD/C/SRB/6-9; CERD/C/SRB/Q/6-9)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Serbia joined the meeting.*
2. **A representative of Serbia**, introducing his country's combined sixth to ninth periodic reports (CERD/C/SRB/6-9), said that Serbia remained fully committed to the principles and values of the United Nations and regularly cooperated with all United Nations human rights mechanisms. The recommendations issued by those mechanisms were shared with all competent national authorities, and their implementation was monitored by a body set up specifically for that purpose. Serbia had extended an open invitation to the special procedures of the Human Rights Council and, in 2025, had been visited by the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and the Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises. It had developed guidelines to inform work to give effect to the pledge contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to leave no one behind, and it continued to support efforts to seek sustainable solutions for the financing of United Nations human rights-related activities. As a candidate country for membership of the European Union, it attached particular importance to the protection of human and minority rights.
3. Serbia was unable to monitor the implementation of the Convention in the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija, which, pursuant to Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), was administered by the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). It might be helpful, therefore, for the Committee to invite UNMIK to submit details of the implementation of the Convention in that province so that the information before it would be complete. It was important for the Committee to gain a comprehensive insight into the situation in Kosovo and Metohija, where members of non-Albanian communities faced numerous human rights-related challenges. The civil and political rights of Serbs in that province continued to be systematically violated, which had led to an exodus amounting to 20% of the Serb population over a period of just two years. Ethnic discrimination was being carried out by all three branches of government, denying Serbs their right to express their national, religious and cultural identity.
4. Serbia was a multinational and multicultural State in which a diverse range of ethnic, religious and linguistic minority groups lived alongside the Serb population. The Government continued to prioritize efforts to promote tolerance, intercultural dialogue, mutual understanding and respect, and cooperation. Members of national minorities had the right to elect their own national councils, of which there were currently 24. In 2025, the funding earmarked for such councils had reached 396 million dinars. Students belonging to national minorities were entitled to be taught in their mother tongue at all levels of education. Radio and television programmes were broadcast in 16 different languages. Work was under way to prepare a new action plan on the realization of the rights of minority groups.
5. The Government had joined forces with its European partners to implement a number of projects geared towards enhancing the social inclusion of members of the Roma community. Significant funds had been earmarked for such efforts, and measures had been taken to build the capacity of institutions working with that community. The most significant results had been achieved in the areas of civil registration, identity documentation and education. The Government acknowledged the challenges posed by segregation and was working to strengthen the relevant legislative framework and improve the ability of educational staff to support Roma children.
6. The adoption of constitutional amendments and other laws had helped create the conditions for citizens to exercise their rights before courts that were free from undue political influence. The Law on the Prohibition of Discrimination had been amended to strengthen the role of the Office of the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality. Steps were being taken to combat trafficking in persons, which disproportionately affected women, children,

migrants, refugees and members of marginalized communities. While the country's legislative framework was strong, challenges in implementation remained. The Government would continue to take measures to address that situation, with a view to ensuring that a zero-tolerance approach was taken to all forms of discrimination against vulnerable groups.

7. **Mr. Diaby**, speaking on behalf of the Country Rapporteur, Mr. Guissé, said that he would like to know how the State Party had applied the principle of self-identification in the 2022 census and whether it intended to apply that principle in the next census. He would welcome a description of any steps, taken or envisaged, to collect data on non-citizens, including refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless persons, and statistics on access by members of ethnic minorities, in particular members of the Roma community, to employment opportunities, healthcare and social protection.

8. The delegation might indicate whether members of ethnic minorities had been involved in the design and implementation of the Strategy for the Development of Education and the Employment Strategy 2021–2026, whether policies had been adopted to tackle inequalities in access to public services and whether the Government had established a coordination mechanism to ensure the effective implementation of such policies and strategies. In the light of reports that individuals who spoke minority languages had been denied their right to use their preferred language in administrative proceedings and when registering births, he wished to know what was being done to enforce laws concerning the use of minority languages in public life. Information on any steps that had been taken to ensure that school textbooks did not include discriminatory language or content would be welcome, as would an update on efforts to provide students who spoke a minority language with an education in their mother tongue.

9. It would be helpful if the delegation would comment on reports that the national councils of national minorities were granted insufficient resources for the fulfilment of their mandate and to describe what was being done to strengthen the councils' cooperation with State authorities, in particular at the municipal level. He would be interested to learn whether the State Party had generated data on the representation of members of ethnic minorities in the National Assembly, the judiciary, the law enforcement services and other public bodies, especially in regions where such minorities made up a large proportion of the population.

10. He would appreciate information on the Strategy for the Social Inclusion of Roma 2022–2030, in particular the entities responsible for the Strategy's implementation, the measures taken to ensure its effectiveness and the efforts made to promote the participation of members of the Roma community in its design and implementation. He wished to know what the State Party was doing to end the de facto segregation of Roma children in the education system, address the low attendance and high dropout rates among such children and enhance their access to higher education. It would be interesting to hear what steps had been taken to ensure the effective implementation of the legal framework establishing community-based support services for the Roma community, address the overrepresentation of Roma children in the criminal justice system, eradicate the structural discrimination faced by Roma individuals in the labour market and prevent statelessness by guaranteeing that Roma families had access to birth registration services. In view of reports that members of the Roma community often lived in precarious conditions in informal settlements that lacked access to drinking water, sanitation and electricity, he would be curious to know what was being done to improve living conditions and access to public services in such settlements and prevent the forcible eviction of Roma families. The delegation might explain what steps were being taken to prohibit child marriage in all circumstances and enforce that prohibition in the Roma community, whose members were reported to be disproportionately affected by the practice. The delegation's comments on reports of stigma and hate speech directed towards Roma individuals would also be welcome.

11. **A representative of Serbia** said that 582 of the 2,500 judges and 63 of the 780 prosecutors in the country belonged to minority groups. Responsibility for appointing judges and prosecutors lay with the High Judicial Council and the High Prosecutorial Council, respectively. The representation of minority groups was one of the key factors that the two bodies were required to take into account during the appointment process. Ensuring representation within the judiciary was proving difficult given the lack of interest in judicial

careers; in a public competition held two years earlier, no applications to fill judicial positions in areas predominantly inhabited by ethnic Albanian communities had been received.

12. The Family Law was in the process of being amended to strictly prohibit the marriage of minors. In addition, steps were being taken to strengthen laws aimed at protecting minors from rape. Under the Criminal Code, hate speech was classified as an aggravating circumstance rather than a separate offence. Efforts were being made to ensure the proper application of article 54 (a) of the Code, which set out the requirement for aggravating circumstances to be taken into account during the sentencing process. The European Court of Human Rights had commended Serbia for its efforts to realize individuals' procedural rights, including the right to an interpreter, during court proceedings. The Judicial Academy ran mandatory, in-service training courses for judicial staff, the content of which was aligned with the relevant United Nations standards and practices.

13. **A representative of Serbia** said that Serbia was a signatory to the declaration on Roma integration that had been adopted by the leaders of the Western Balkan States as part of their drive towards accession to the European Union. The Government had developed a number of national strategies in that area, the latest of which was the Strategy for the Social Inclusion of Roma 2022–2030. The effectiveness of the first two-year action plan accompanying the Strategy, which had expired in 2024, had been thoroughly assessed. An additional plan for the inclusion of Roma had been developed in cooperation with the European Union and the Council of Europe. A large number of ministries formed part of a body that had been established to coordinate efforts to improve the status of members of the Roma community and monitor the implementation of the relevant action plans.

14. **A representative of Serbia** said that the most recent population census had been conducted in October 2022 in full compliance with European standards. The questionnaire had been translated into 13 minority languages and included a number of open-ended questions concerning religion and ethnicity. The data gathered through the census had been disaggregated by gender, language, ethnic background and a number of other characteristics. During the process, the Government had worked closely with the national councils of national minorities. While the results of the census suggested that the population of most minority groups had declined since 2011, there had been a rise in the number of individuals who identified as Bosniak, Russian or Yugoslav. The Government had conducted additional studies on the ethnic composition of the population, the Roma community and migration to, from and within the country.

15. **A representative of Serbia** said that all schools used a digital system into which the names of students could be entered in both the country's official scripts and any other script used by minority language groups. Around 6% of students attended one of the 192 educational establishments that provided instruction in a minority language. Decisions regarding children's language of instruction were made by their parents. While a minimum of 15 students were normally required to form a class, schools for children from minority groups were entitled to establish classes comprising as few as 5 pupils. Textbooks for children from minority groups were provided free of charge by the Government.

16. **Ms. Esseneme** (Country Task Force) said that she would like to know whether the judiciary and other public services had introduced quotas or similar measures to ensure the representation of individuals from minority groups. In the light of the table contained in the State Party's most recent common core document ([HRI/CORE/SRB/2022](#)), in which Muslims were listed as an ethnic group, she would welcome clarification as to whether Muslims were considered an ethnic or a religious group in the State Party.

17. **Mr. Diaby** said that he would be grateful for an explanation of the reasons for the decline in the populations of certain minority groups that had been observed since 2011. In view of the concerns raised in the report by the previous Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence on his visit to the State Party in 2022 ([A/HRC/54/24/Add.2](#)), he wished to know what the State Party had done to strengthen its cooperation with other States in handling cases of disappearance, ensure access to the relevant case files, protect witnesses against intimidation and implement the strategy and action plan for the prosecution of war crimes. He also wished to know how many cases involving potential war crimes, including those perpetrated by high-ranking officials, had

been investigated and prosecuted in the previous four years, how many of those cases had resulted in convictions and what was being done to ensure that individuals who denied war crimes were held accountable for their actions. A response to his earlier question on the national councils of national minorities would be welcome.

18. **Mr. Vicente Vázquez** said that he would welcome information on the steps that the State Party had taken to give effect to the recommendations contained in paragraphs 10, 19 and 27 (a) and (b) of the Committee's previous concluding observations ([CERD/C/SRB/CO/2-5](#)).

19. **Ms. Stavrinaki** said that, in the light of reports that Roma women continued to be affected by significant health inequalities, she would like to know what the State Party was doing to provide such women with access to health services tailored to their needs.

20. **Ms. Tebie** said that she would be interested to hear what steps the State Party had taken to guarantee the transparency of the algorithm-based system that was used to determine eligibility for social assistance and correct the algorithmic bias that had reportedly led to the exclusion of members of disadvantaged groups, in particular the Roma community, from social assistance programmes.

21. **A representative of Serbia** said that no quotas for ethnic minorities were in place within the judiciary. However, judges and prosecutors were required to participate in training courses to enhance their understanding of the cultural specificities of minority groups.

22. War crimes proceedings were monitored by the Mission to Serbia of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. According to reports issued by that body, the majority of sentences handed down following those proceedings had been consistent with the statutory punishments established for war crimes. Witness protection units had been established and were operating effectively. No witnesses had been killed or harmed. The Ministry of Justice supported witnesses' participation in trials by providing them with accommodation and financial assistance. Support was also offered by non-governmental organizations, which helped witnesses prepare for proceedings. The decline in the number of war crimes trials conducted was attributable simply to the passage of time. The International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia had been phased out; its functions were now carried out by the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals. Serbia continued to provide the Security Council with six-monthly reports on war crimes trials and matters relating to the Residual Mechanism. Cases involving high-ranking officials were tried at the international level, while the national courts handled those involving less senior officials.

23. **A representative of Serbia** said that, while the country's social card register served as a source of data for the allocation of social protection allowances, the conditions for seeking such allowances were laid out in the Law on Social Protection. The register included data only on persons who had applied for social protection benefits during the previous decade. When taking decisions related to the provision of social assistance, social work centres referred not only to the data in the register, but also to information collected during field visits and interviews with potential beneficiaries. No automated decision-making tools were used in practice to determine eligibility for social assistance. Therefore, the introduction of the social card register could not be said to have had a negative impact on any sector of the population in Serbia, including on the Roma community. All Serbian citizens could exercise their right to social protection under the Law on Social Protection; the exercise of that right thus did not depend on ethnic background, information on which was not mandatory in order to apply for social benefits. Furthermore, it was possible to file a complaint related to social protection with the authorities, and any dismissal of a complaint could be appealed to the courts. Complaints could be made against social work centres not only by people whose social benefits had expired, but also by those whose applications for social benefits had been rejected or who were not satisfied with the amount of the allocations received. Free legal aid was available in respect of the complaints procedure. The personal data saved in the social card register was well protected. In line with a recommendation from the European Commission, the Government was planning to develop comprehensive instructions for social work centres relating to the Law on Social Protection.

24. **A representative of Serbia** said that article 16 of the Law on Health Insurance, which had been most recently amended in 2023, established the right to healthcare of persons who

did not automatically qualify for health insurance under article 11 of the same law or who did not meet the criteria to apply for it as family members of an insured person. That right applied to Roma persons, who, owing to their traditional way of life, did not necessarily have an established domicile in Serbia and therefore did not ordinarily qualify for mandatory health insurance. Health mediators had been working for years with Roma communities to facilitate their access to health services.

25. **A representative of Serbia** said that, during the period 2020–2025, some 50,000 identity documents had been issued in the languages and scripts of national minorities. The claims regarding shortcomings in the protection of witnesses of war crimes dated back to 2005, when the legal framework for witness protection had first been introduced. The past ten years had seen steady improvements in the protection of witnesses, as reported by the European Commission and also the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, specifically in respect of enhanced cooperation with the Office of the War Crimes Prosecutor.

26. **A representative of Serbia** said that the number of Roma children in preschool and primary school had risen by 17% over the past three years, and the results of a recent survey were expected to point to even higher figures, thanks to the adoption of affirmative action measures. Over 1,100 Roma children had been granted scholarships, nearly 300 Roma pedagogical assistants had been hired to work in public schools and special training had been given to primary school staff regarding an early warning system designed to prevent dropout of Roma children.

27. Every school had a team responsible for preventing discrimination and abuse and a protocol for the action to be taken in cases of discrimination or violence. School staff were trained in how to recognize discrimination and what action to take when dealing with related incidents. Information had been disseminated to both teachers and parents to raise their awareness about discrimination. Local governments had been involved in ensuring the enrolment of children in schools, providing support to vulnerable families and raising parents' awareness of the importance of education for their children.

28. **A representative of Serbia** said that health mediators were the crucial link between the Roma community and healthcare services. Over 93% of Roma community members had health insurance, according to data provided by the National Health Insurance Fund. The Government was working to resolve the employment and legal status of Roma health mediators.

29. **A representative of Serbia** said that the results of the seventh round of the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, to be published in the second half of 2026, were expected to provide deeper insights into the causes of poverty in Serbia. The field survey had been completed on 15 December 2025, on schedule and in accordance with the methodological standards for data collection. Importantly, the high response rates – 85.3% for the 8,000 households from the general population and 96.4% for the 2,000 Roma households that had participated in the survey – would ensure reliable survey results.

30. **Ms. Boker-Wilson**, noting that, in November 2024, the Serbian Constitutional Court had dismissed a complaint by an ethnic Albanian against the suspension of his permanent address, a decision that had been criticized by Albanian leaders as legitimizing discriminatory practices, asked what steps had been taken in response to reports of persistent discrimination against ethnic Albanians in southern Serbia, including the suspension of permanent addresses, which effectively stripped thousands of their civil rights.

31. **A representative of Serbia** said that the reports received by the Committee were not accurate. The suspension of individuals' permanent addresses could be initiated by various entities, for example, a landlord whose tenant had moved out or the judicial authorities if they were unable to serve documents on a person because he or she no longer lived at the address on record. However, before being delisted from the population register, the persons concerned were always given the opportunity to prove that they in fact lived at the address on record. During the period 2020–2026, a total of 34 permanent addresses had been suspended in Medvedja. In larger municipalities, there were, of course, more cases of address suspension, and labour migration also played a role in depopulation and therefore in address suspension.

32. **A representative of Serbia** said that the delegation could not comment on any decision by the Constitutional Court, with which the Government must necessarily comply.

The meeting was suspended at 4.45 p.m. and resumed at 4.55 p.m.

33. **Ms. Esseneme**, noting that the Constitution of Serbia provided that international human rights treaties ratified by the State were an integral part of the national legal order and directly applicable, said that she would appreciate examples of judicial or administrative decisions in which the Convention had been invoked or applied. She would be grateful for clarification of the concepts of “discrimination” and “discriminatory treatment”, as defined in the Law on the Prohibition of Discrimination, and of their alignment with article 1 of the Convention. She wondered whether the State Party might envisage a system in which the burden of proof in cases of alleged racial discrimination was reversed, so that respondents had to prove that their acts were not discriminatory. While the 2021 amendments to the Law, including the inclusion of segregation as a form of discrimination, were welcome, it was regrettable that segregation in education was not explicitly mentioned. She would like to know what measures the State Party planned to take to improve the effectiveness of the Law in addressing the educational segregation of disadvantaged social groups, such as the Roma community.

34. The Committee would appreciate information on the nature of the racial discrimination complaints submitted to the national human rights institution, referred to in paragraph 59 of the State Party’s report. With regard to the three cases relating to hate speech against national minorities that had been examined by the Council of the Regulatory Body for Electronic Media, the Committee would be grateful for information on the ethnic origin of the victims, the reparation granted to them and the penalties imposed on the perpetrators. It would like to know what measures the State Party had taken to prevent and punish hate speech in public spaces and by public authorities; in that connection, it would also like to know how the public authorities, in particular the media regulatory bodies, had responded to the unfounded, insulting and racist remarks made about the Roma community on the televised programme *Ni pet ni šest*, broadcast on the national channel Kurir on 30 October 2025. More generally, she failed to understand why the State Party had not fully implemented article 4 of the Convention, by establishing racial hate speech as a separate criminal offence.

35. Referring to paragraph 100 of the State Party’s report, she said that she would like to know how many of the cases labelled as “violent behaviour at a sporting event or public gathering”, punishable under article 344 (a) of the Criminal Code, concerned sporting events and how many concerned public gatherings and what charges had been brought in each case. She would also appreciate information on the ethnic origin of the victims and the reparation that had been granted to them, along with details of the action plan for the prevention of violence and disturbances at sports events mentioned in paragraph 102 of the report and the results achieved thus far. Additional information on the seven cases of hate crime referred to in paragraph 115 of the report that had resulted in a conviction would also be welcome. It would be useful to learn, too, what training on hate crimes was provided to judges, given that they determined the outcome of cases and did not have to align themselves with the position of the Public Prosecutor’s Office.

36. With regard to the guidelines issued to assist criminal court judges in deciding claims for compensation for material or moral damage in cases involving “serious crimes”, she would like to know what constituted a “serious crime”, whether the definition thereof encompassed racial discrimination and racist hate crimes and, if so, whether the guidelines had been used by judges to compensate victims of such behaviour. In the light of reports that many victims continued to face difficulties in obtaining adequate legal support, including in criminal proceedings, she would like to know what conditions had to be met in order for an applicant to receive legal aid; whether legal aid covered the assignment of a lawyer and the costs of proceedings; and which body was responsible for examining applications for legal aid and deciding whether or not to grant it. It would be useful to learn, too, what steps were being taken to facilitate the resolution of disputes in cases of racial discrimination and whether they included the dissemination of information on the rights established by the Convention and the complaints mechanisms available to victims of racial discrimination. Lastly, she would like to know what measures had been taken to encourage the more frequent use of audiovisual testimony and psychological assistance to victims of racial discrimination.

37. **A representative of Serbia** said that, in response to various criticisms of the Law on the Prohibition of Discrimination, new amendments to the Law had been drafted and were currently being debated publicly; it was hoped that the amendments, which provided for, inter alia, expanded powers for the Office of the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality, would be adopted by the end of 2026. The Strategy for Prevention of and Protection from Discrimination 2022–2030 and the Strategy for the Social Inclusion of Roma 2022–2030, together with the related action plans, continued to be implemented. A working group had been set up in September 2025 to improve public policy on matters relating to discrimination and the protection of vulnerable groups, including the Roma community.

38. The Government sought to fight against segregation and hate speech in particular. Entities involved in the fight against all forms of discrimination included the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality and the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue. Specific measures, such as awareness-raising training for members of the parliament, had been introduced under a recent action plan to combat hate speech. “Serious crimes” included hate crimes, as well as modern slavery and ethnic cleansing. Anyone who had been a victim of discrimination, including hate speech, could file a complaint with the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality, who would investigate the incident and could even institute proceedings on their behalf. It was also possible for civil society to lodge a complaint on behalf of the victim.

39. **A representative of Serbia** said that the Government had committed to strengthening freedom of expression and freedom of the media in Serbia over the period 2019–2026. In 2020, it had adopted the Strategy for the Development of the Public Information System in Serbia for the period 2020–2025 and, in 2025, it had brought all three of its media laws into line with relevant international standards and European Union regulations, including the Audiovisual Media Services Directive, representing significant progress in terms of governance, transparency and accountability in the media. Hate speech was prohibited under the media laws. The Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications devoted significant efforts to combating hate speech, ensuring equality and preventing discrimination in the media. The Law on Electronic Media specifically provided that the Regulatory Authority could impose penalties on a media service provider if it violated the law and published content that openly or covertly incited discrimination, hatred or violence on the grounds of race, colour, origin, nationality, language or any other actual or presumed personal characteristics. The Press Council, now recognized by the Law on Public Information, could impose penalties on media outlets for violations of rules, regulations or professional or ethical standards. For the first time, video-sharing platform services were referred to specifically in the Law on Electronic Media. The most effective way to combat hate speech was to enhance media and digital literacy.

40. **Ms. Esseneme** said that the Committee was already aware of most of the State Party’s laws and policies. For the purposes of its dialogue with the State Party, it was interested mainly in how such laws and policies were implemented in practice and what results had been obtained.

41. **Ms. Tlakula** (Follow-up Rapporteur), referring to paragraphs 16 and 17 of the Committee’s previous concluding observations ([CERD/C/SRB/CO/2-5](#)), said that, while the responses provided by the State Party in its follow-up report ([CERD/C/SRB/CO/2-5/Add.1](#)) and in paragraphs 113–117 of its combined periodic reports were to be welcomed, they were not entirely satisfactory, as they did not include information on the implementation and impact of article 54 (a) of the Criminal Code, statistics on the penalties imposed on the perpetrators of hate crimes or information on the remedies provided to victims of such crimes. In addition to that information, the Committee would be grateful for details of the work of the Council for Monitoring the Implementation of Recommendations of United Nations Mechanisms for Human Rights mentioned in the State Party’s combined periodic reports (para. 7).

42. **Ms. Ali Al-Misnad** said that she would appreciate further information about how the early marriage of Roma girls affected their chances of attending university.

43. **Ms. Tebie** said that she would like to know whether the necessary regulations were now in place to implement the system for the transmittal of court decisions in discrimination

cases to the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality and, if so, how many such cases related to racial discrimination. It would also be useful to learn what steps the State Party planned to take in order to afford the Commissioner the power to initiate ex officio investigations into cases involving discrimination, in line with his mandate and the recommendations of international institutions. Lastly, she wondered whether the Commissioner shared information with the Protector of Citizens (Ombudsman) regarding ongoing investigations and follow-up to recommendations.

44. **Mr. Diaby** said that he would like to know what mechanisms were in place to respond to acts such as the painting of hate-motivated graffiti targeting Bosniak and Croatian minorities in Novi Pazar and Vojvodina. It would be useful to learn how the State Party planned to resolve the issues with access to health services experienced by various ethnic groups, including the reportedly low vaccination rates among Roma children. Lastly, he would like to know whether, following the judgment of the European Court of Human Rights in the case of *Sejdić and Finci v. Bosnia and Herzegovina*, the State Party's electoral legislation had been amended to guarantee the equal political participation of all ethnic minorities.

45. **A representative of Serbia** said that guidelines on the implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights had been issued, and the drafting of guidelines on the implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights was under way. In 2023, three judgments at the national level had been issued to directly apply the two Covenants: two had related to the right to health and the right to a lawyer, respectively; the third, handed down by the High Court in Belgrade, had upheld the right of the Roma national minority to be protected from eviction.

46. Victims of hate crimes could be given the status of "extremely vulnerable witness" and could be heard by the courts virtually, without the presence of other parties to the proceedings if necessary. Special rules governed the participation of children in legal proceedings, to avoid their secondary victimization. The Judicial Academy had conducted a number of training sessions for judges and other judicial personnel on anti-discrimination legislation and on the criminal prosecution of hate crimes in particular. It planned to issue guidelines on reparation for non-material harm in cases of discrimination and to offer training webinars on discrimination. Unfortunately, data on victims disaggregated by ethnic background were not available because there was no obligation to provide such information.

47. **A representative of Serbia** said that, over the period 2020–2025, the Ministry of the Interior had filed 110 criminal complaints against 93 persons for instigating national, racial or religious hatred; the acts in question had targeted 58 persons of Serbian ethnic origin, 9 Muslims and 6 Albanians. During the same period, the Ministry had filed four criminal complaints for physical assault and battery; the acts in question had respectively targeted two Serbs, one Albanian, and a group of Serbs and Croats. Also during the same period, the Ministry had filed 20 complaints involving anonymous threats, 14 of which had been resolved; 36 complaints related to verbal conflicts, all of which had been resolved; and 33 complaints for graffiti, 11 of which had been resolved. The acts in question had targeted Serbs in 26 cases, Muslims in 17 cases, Croats in 10 cases and Roma in 8 cases.

48. Sporting events were regulated by the Law on Public Assembly. The Government had established a national council on the prevention of violence and misbehaviour by spectators at sporting events and worked closely with the Committee on Safety and Security at Sports Events of the Council of Europe and the European group of experts for football safety and security. Since 2021, 865 of the 183,000 sporting events recorded in the country had been deemed of higher risk, resulting in the adoption of special measures by the organizers and the Government to prevent unwanted incidents. Somewhere between 50 and 150 criminal complaints were filed annually in relation to safety and security at sports events. Since 2011, the Ministry of the Interior had maintained an electronic database of persons who had committed crimes and misdemeanours involving violence at sporting events. The database currently contained data on 6,287 people, 1,852 of whom were deemed to pose a "significant risk". Special measures were imposed on such individuals, such as a ban on entry to certain sporting events. The Ministry of the Interior participated in Project Stadia, an INTERPOL initiative for enhanced security and safety arrangements at major international events,

including sporting events, and had signed the Council of Europe Convention on an Integrated Safety, Security and Service Approach at Football Matches and Other Sports Events in 2016.

49. Since 1 January 2024, travel documents in machine-readable format had been issued to persons who had been granted asylum, thus affording them freedom of movement in the whole territory of Serbia. Sixty-one such documents had been issued thus far.

50. Lastly, since 2020, 3,340 persons of Roma background had applied to various posts in the Ministry of the Interior, and 611 members of national minorities, including Roma, had been recruited. The Constitution provided that all persons living in Serbia were equal, regardless of nationality.

51. **A representative of Serbia** said that the vaccination rate for Roma children was similar to that of the general population. For example, for the bacille Calmette-Guérin (BCG) vaccine, which was administered to infants under 1 year old, vaccination rates were 94.3% and 98% for the Roma community and for the general population, respectively.

52. **A representative of Serbia** said that the Council for Monitoring the Implementation of Recommendations of United Nations Mechanisms for Human Rights, established in 2014, had 28 members, including, as permanent members, the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality, the Ombudsman, the Commissioner for Information of Public Importance and Personal Data Protection, and the Serbian Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The Council had presented the recommendations of the Committee to the National Assembly in public hearings, and it planned to do the same with the Committee's forthcoming recommendations. To do so was a requirement of the European Union integration process. The Council had submitted voluntary reports, to which local governments provided inputs, on the implementation of the recommendations of various human rights treaty bodies to the European Commission.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.