



International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance

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Summary record of the 409th meeting*

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Thursday, 15 September 2022, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Mr. Albán-Alencastro

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Mr. Albán-Alencastro took the Chair.

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

Consideration of reports of States parties to the Convention *(continued)*

Additional information submitted by Uruguay under article 29 (4) of the Convention
([CED/C/URY/AI/1](#))

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Uruguay joined the meeting.*
2. **Mr. Moerzinger Pagani** (Uruguay) said that, as members of the Committee would recall, Uruguay had been the first State party to submit an initial report under article 29 (1) of the Convention, which bore testament to its commitment to promoting and protecting the rights enshrined therein. While a respectful number of States had now ratified the Convention, more needed to be done to ensure that the number of ratifications continued to grow.
3. Significant efforts had been made to give effect to the recommendations contained in the Committee's previous concluding observations ([CED/C/URY/CO/1](#)). Act No. 18.596 of 2009, which had introduced comprehensive reparation for victims of acts of enforced disappearance committed in the recent past, had been complemented by Act No. 19.641 of 2018, which provided for the creation and designation of sites of historical memory. Future reparations would be dealt with under a general system with similar attributes. The revised Code of Criminal Procedure adopted in 2017 included specific provisions aimed at protecting the rights of victims, including the right to participate in criminal proceedings.
4. The Victims and Witnesses Unit, which had been set up within the Attorney General's Office, was responsible for designing strategies to assist, protect and support victims, witnesses of crimes and their families. The Unit also provided victims with psychosocial support at the different stages of the proceedings. The Special Prosecutor's Office for Crimes against Humanity, which had been established pursuant to Act No. 19.550 of 2017, had jurisdiction over all criminal cases involving human rights violations that had occurred in the recent past. The Coordinating Office for Policies on Victims and Witnesses of Crime had been created in March 2018 with the aim of consolidating public policies in that area and bringing together programmes and services for the protection of victims and witnesses, whose implementation was overseen by the Attorney General's Office.
5. Article 17 of the Constitution, which established the right of every person to invoke the remedy of habeas corpus, was complemented by article 351 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, which defined it as a remedy which protected personal freedom of movement against any arbitrary act by any administrative authority that denied, restricted, limited or threatened such freedom, and which protected persons deprived of their liberty against torture and other cruel treatment or conditions of imprisonment which violated human dignity.
6. Under Act No. 19.822 of 2019, the National Human Rights Institution and Office of the Ombudsperson had been tasked with investigating cases of enforced disappearance that had occurred in the recent past and with searching for disappeared persons. The institution had been allocated the requisite human and financial resources and granted special legal powers to carry out its work. Under those powers, it enjoyed unrestricted access to the files and archives of the intelligence services and public and private institutions, access to all public and private establishments and could subpoena State officials and private individuals. Act No. 19.822 of 2019 also provided for direct communication between the National Human Rights Institution and Office of the Ombudsperson and the Special Prosecutor's Office for Crimes against Humanity. Inter-institutional cooperation likewise took place between the institution and the bodies of the executive branch, prosecutor's offices and the judicial branch.
7. **Mr. López Ortega** (Country Rapporteur) said that, notwithstanding the fact that Uruguayan criminal law contained a definition of enforced disappearance that was consistent with that contained in article 2 of the Convention, it appeared that several of the legislative lacunae that the Committee had identified in 2013 had not yet been remedied. For instance, the minimum penalty for the crime of enforced disappearance still did not take into account its extreme seriousness. He feared that problem would only be exacerbated by the passage

into law of the bill on home detention arrangements for defendants and convicted persons over 65 years of age, under which convicted persons in that age group who received a custodial sentence would be allowed to serve it at their place of residence. It was his understanding that perpetrators of acts of enforced disappearance committed in the recent past would also be able to benefit from such arrangements, which, in his view, contributed to a culture of impunity.

8. While the State party had taken legislative measures to regulate the exercise of habeas corpus, that remedy appeared not to be applicable in cases where deprivation of liberty was the result of non-criminal proceedings. The fact that it was left to the discretion of individual judges to decide whether to allow that remedy in such cases was a cause for concern. Regrettably, the State party had still not classified the wrongful removal of children as a separate offence or introduced a specific procedure for annulling adoptions that had originated in an act of enforced disappearance, as required by article 25 of the Convention. The remedy of judicial review, which the State party had cited as a possible means of annulling such adoptions, would likely be difficult to exercise in practice and prove to be ineffective in the majority of cases.

9. The delegation might describe the obstacles that had prevented it from complying fully with all the Committee's recommendations, and the measures, including of a legislative nature, that it intended to take to remedy the shortcomings identified and to align its domestic legislation with the requirements of the Convention.

10. **Ms. Villa Quintana** (Country Rapporteur) said that, in its written replies, the State party had referred to numerous court cases involving investigations into suspected acts of enforced disappearance, most of which were at the pretrial or indictment stage. However, it was her understanding that only 1 of the 38 cases in which indictment had been requested concerned the crime of enforced disappearance. Of the 25 cases prosecuted under the previous Code of Criminal Procedure (Decree-Law No.15.032), 2 involved the crime of enforced disappearance; however, during the related proceedings, the defendants had been convicted of homicide under especially aggravating circumstances and not of enforced disappearance. Similarly, none of the five cases prosecuted under the new Code of Criminal Procedure in which convictions had been secured concerned the crime of enforced disappearance; those convictions had been for unlawful deprivation of liberty and abuse of authority.

11. Following its visit to Uruguay, the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances had expressed concern about the slowness of investigations and prosecutions and the pattern of impunity it had identified. She wished to remind the State party of the need to ensure that acts of enforced disappearance were investigated as such and that the perpetrators were punished for that specific crime, irrespective of the time that had elapsed since the commencement of the criminal act.

12. The delegation might explain the lack of criminal charges brought and convictions obtained for enforced disappearance, which was nonetheless classified as a continuous crime in Uruguayan criminal law. The Committee would also like to understand why, despite the legislative reforms undertaken by the State party, investigations continued to be delayed to the extent that many suspected perpetrators had died without justice having been done or been allowed to serve their sentence at home. She wondered what measures the State party planned to take to expedite investigations into suspected acts of enforced disappearance, especially when the perpetrators of such acts had been duly identified.

13. It would be useful to hear more about how the right of victims to participate in all stages of investigations, and in proceedings conducted under the previous Code of Criminal Procedure, had been guaranteed and how their right to free legal assistance, protection and other forms of support had been ensured. She wished to know what technical, logistical, financial and human resources had been allocated to the Special Prosecutor's Office for Crimes against Humanity and what was being done to build its capacity so that it could effectively deal with its heavy workload. She wondered how search and investigation activities were coordinated and how information was exchanged with the National Human Rights Institution and Office of the Ombudsperson, especially when crucial evidence or findings came to light. She wished to recall that, under article 12 (2) of the Convention,

suspected cases of enforced disappearance should be investigated *ex officio*, even if no formal complaint had been lodged with the competent authorities.

14. Bearing in mind the State party's obligation to prevent impunity for acts of enforced disappearance, she wished to know whether it had considered taking practical measures to expedite the processing of cases relating to the period from 1968 to 1985 and taking steps to prevent the repeated use of appeals and similar measures to obstruct justice and prevent the truth about those disappearances from being discovered and those responsible from being punished. The Committee noted with concern that, in some cases of enforced disappearance, the applicable statute of limitations was reported to have expired. She would appreciate clarification regarding the case law applied by the Uruguayan courts in cases of crimes against humanity, in particular enforced disappearance, and regarding the position of the Supreme Court on that matter. She would also like to know whether judicial officials received specific training on the Convention and on the Guiding Principles for the Search for Disappeared Persons.

15. The adoption of Act No. 19.822 of 2019 had undoubtedly marked a watershed moment in the search for disappeared persons in Uruguay. While she welcomed the fact that the current budget of the National Human Rights Institution and Office of the Ombudsperson was sufficient to enable it to retain the human and acquire the material resources it needed for the next five years, she wished to encourage the State party to keep the situation under review and to consider increasing its budget if the need arose.

16. The difficulties encountered by the National Human Rights Institution and Office of the Ombudsperson in transferring files from the Ministry of Defence to its premises were, however, a cause for concern, and had been raised in the institution's evaluation report submitted in August 2022. She wished to know why those files had not yet been transferred to the institution, especially when many military files were reportedly available on microfilm, and whether the State party planned to renew its agreement with the University of the Republic to allow the digitization of files to resume or to take any other measures to ensure that the institution had full and unrestricted access to all the files and key information it needed to carry out its work. Information on the activities undertaken by the Ministry of Defence or other relevant public actors to proactively seek out, identify and locate files that could assist search efforts would also be appreciated.

17. The limited results yielded by the State party's search activities to date – the discovery of three excavation sites and the remains of six persons – could perhaps be explained by the lengthy period of time that had elapsed since the disappearances had taken place, during which key evidence had been lost or destroyed, and by the so-called “pact of silence” that existed among perpetrators of acts of enforced disappearance and other persons who were in possession of information regarding the circumstances in which persons had disappeared and the whereabouts of disappeared persons or their remains.

18. She wished to know what measures the State party planned to take to encourage individuals who possessed such information to divulge it without fear of reprisals, and whether it might consider amending the Criminal Code or adopting other legislative measures to introduce mitigating circumstances for participants in acts of enforced disappearance who subsequently provided such information. She would appreciate clarification regarding the number of disappeared detainees recognized by the State and the circumstances surrounding their disappearances, along with details of the 44 previously unnamed disappeared persons who had reportedly been identified. The Committee would welcome information on the search for persons who had disappeared during *Operación Condor*, including any international cooperation initiatives undertaken or requested by the State party to ensure that the persons who had died in that context were identified and that their remains were returned to their families. Details of the support provided to the victims and the measures in place to enable them to participate in investigations into disappearances of Uruguayan detainees abroad would also be useful.

19. The use of new laser technology by the Uruguayan air force to identify sites where disappeared persons might be buried was commendable. She wished to know what other practical measures the State party had taken to assist in the search for disappeared persons, to protect the areas where the National Human Rights Institution and Office of the

Ombudsperson was conducting search activities and to ensure that competent State bodies supported the institution's work. The delegation might also outline the sanctions that could be imposed on persons who refused to cooperate with the institution or who hindered its work, and the guarantees in place to ensure that searches would continue until all disappeared persons had been found, regardless of the composition of the institution's membership in the future.

20. **Mr. López Ortega**, noting that the State party's definition of a victim of enforced disappearance was limited to the disappeared person him or herself, said that the definition contained in the Convention also encompassed a disappeared person's family, given that they too suffered direct harm as a consequence of the crime. He wished to know when the State party planned to act upon the Committee's previous recommendation and expand its definition accordingly.

The meeting was suspended at 3.50 p.m. and resumed at 4.10 p.m.

21. **A representative of Uruguay** said that Act No. 18.026 provided for a minimum sentence of 15 years' imprisonment for acts of enforced disappearance carried out systematically and a sentence of 2 years' imprisonment for isolated cases. The lower minimum sentence for isolated cases could be explained by the need to ensure alignment with the Criminal Code, which provided for a minimum sentence of 20 months' imprisonment for murder, and the need to allow judges to hand down sentences that reflected the particular circumstances of a case of enforced disappearance. The Act's provisions on enforced disappearance also applied to cases where the victim was a child, a situation which constituted an aggravating circumstance. Although no definitive convictions for the crime of enforced disappearance had been obtained, one military official had been convicted but had later died during the proceedings, and an interlocutory judgment had recently been handed down in a case against several military officials under the new Code of Criminal Procedure. Several prosecutions had also been brought under the previous Code.

22. The creation of the Special Prosecutor's Office for Crimes against Humanity had removed various obstacles to prosecuting the crime of enforced disappearance. For example, at its request, the Supreme Court had made use of its advance ruling mechanism in certain cases. The Supreme Court had also sanctioned lawyers who had employed dilatory tactics. The right of victims to participate in legal proceedings was recognized in Act No. 18.026, and victims received support and information on such proceedings from the Special Prosecutor's Office, the Luz Ibarburu Observatory, which often funded legal action against suspected perpetrators of the crime of enforced disappearance, and their lawyers. At no point had the courts declared the statute of limitations to have lapsed in any case of enforced disappearance. The Supreme Court had ruled that enforced disappearance constituted a crime against humanity.

23. The staff of the Special Prosecutor's Office for Crimes against Humanity received training on how to identify and handle cases of enforced disappearance. Cooperation between the Special Prosecutor's Office and the National Human Rights Institution and Office of the Ombudsperson was ongoing; the two bodies had jointly requested the adoption of measures to facilitate the excavation of military sites and had coordinated initiatives to recover documents. Act No. 18.026 established mitigating circumstances for persons who provided information on acts of enforced disappearance. The Uruguayan authorities cooperated with their foreign counterparts in several areas, including extradition, where significant formal and informal cooperation took place with the courts and other institutions in Argentina.

24. **A representative of Uruguay** said that the remedy of habeas corpus, which had been enshrined in the Constitution for over a century, was an integral part of police procedures. The constitutional concept of habeas corpus had been further developed in the Code of Criminal Procedure, which stipulated that it was applicable in all cases of detention. Adoptions could be reviewed when there was evidence of, inter alia, violence, intimidation or fraud. An adoption could be annulled by the judge who had authorized it, taking into account the best interests of the child. Act No. 15.848, under which crimes committed by military and police officials during the dictatorship could not be prosecuted, had been declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court in 2009. Those acts, which had subsequently been classified as crimes against humanity under Act No. 18.831, were not subject to a statute

of limitations. Although Act No. 18.831 had also been declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court in 2021, that decision had since been overturned.

25. Training on international and regional human rights instruments, which was obligatory for judicial officials, covered enforced disappearance in the context of the dictatorship. Between 2018 and 2021, 865 individuals had received such training. The families of disappeared persons were undoubtedly also victims of the crime of enforced disappearance and, as such, had a statutory entitlement to participate in legal proceedings and, if necessary, could be assigned a State-appointed lawyer.

26. **A representative of Uruguay** said that the Human Rights Secretariat for the Recent Past managed its files in a manner consistent with international standards; its archives, which were constantly growing, contained documents from, inter alia, the military courts and the intelligence services. Although most of those documents existed only in hard copy, the Secretariat was working to digitize them and had so far submitted approximately 70 terabytes of digitized documents to the National Human Rights Institution and Office of the Ombudsperson. The process of digitizing files relating to disappeared detainees was ongoing. The Secretariat also assisted judicial officials in submitting documents and granted investigators and other users access to public information. There were currently 197 individuals recorded in the official register of disappeared persons.

27. **A representative of Uruguay** said that, under the Access to Public Information Act, any individual could request and receive from the State information that was of interest to them. In addition, State institutions often requested and received information from the Ministry of Defence. Information concerning criminal acts committed in the recent past was also made available to the Attorney General's Office. In 2021, documents relating to the recent past found within a unit of the armed forces had immediately been shared with the Attorney General's Office and the National Human Rights Institution and Office of the Ombudsperson before being published on the website of the Ministry of Defence.

28. **A representative of Uruguay** said that the adoption of the new Code of Criminal Procedure had prompted a reform of the Attorney General's Office. Although resources were stretched, the Office had been assigned an extra prosecutor and an additional administrative assistant to help with a large trial for acts of enforced disappearance allegedly committed in the context of *Operación Condor*. Further efforts would be made to grant the Office the support and resources it needed.

29. **Ms. Villa Quintana** said that she hoped that the individual who had been charged with the crime of enforced disappearance would soon be sentenced. The delegation might comment on the worrying trend to which she had referred in her opening remarks whereby persons initially charged with the crime of enforced disappearance ended up being convicted of another crime, such as homicide under especially aggravating circumstances, and sentenced accordingly. She would like to know under what circumstances a court might decide to classify what was ostensibly an offence of enforced disappearance as another related crime and which provisions of the Code of Criminal Procedure might have been, or might be, invoked to justify such a decision. If that trend continued, the likelihood of any convictions for the crime of enforced disappearance being secured would be slim to none. While she had taken note of the delegation's assertion that the courts had not at any time declared the statute of limitations to have expired in any case of enforced disappearance brought before them, she wondered whether that still rang true in cases where perpetrators initially charged with the crime of enforced disappearance had later been convicted of another related crime.

30. It would be useful to know approximately how long the process of digitizing and archiving documents received from the Ministry of Defence and other sources was expected to take, as the National Human Rights Institution and Office of the Ombudsperson required access to that information to carry out its search mandate. She would welcome information on the measures taken by the State party to ensure that the procedures for identifying the bodies and remains of persons disappeared outside Uruguay met all the requirements for reliable identification. Details of how the State party went about supporting the families of victims of enforced disappearance in providing DNA samples and giving their relatives a decent burial would also be appreciated.

31. Although the mandate of the National Human Rights Institution and Office of the Ombudsperson to search for disappeared persons was limited to the period from 1968 to 1985, she wondered whether, in the light of the obligations the State party had assumed upon ratifying the Convention, it planned to draft a policy to prevent enforced disappearance that would draw on both the painful lessons of the past and the lessons recently learned by the institution. In its preliminary findings following its visit to Uruguay, the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances had indicated that a number of children and adolescents had allegedly disappeared following stays in State-run shelters. The delegation might explain what steps had been taken to investigate those claims and establish the whereabouts of those children.

32. The Committee would be interested to learn whether the State party had adopted legislative or other measures to ensure the effective application of existing protection measures and to extend those measures to all persons referred to in article 12 (1) of the Convention. Lastly, it would be useful to know which legislative provisions governed the suspension of officials who were suspected of having committed or been involved in an offence of enforced disappearance to ensure that they were not in a position to influence the progress of investigations.

33. **Mr. López Ortega** said that it would be helpful to learn who would carry out the task of handling and processing the huge volume of documents that were to be digitized and archived. He wondered whether the State party might consider issuing a public call for information about acts of enforced disappearance and possible burial sites in an attempt to counteract the effects of the so-called “pact of silence”. The Convention drew a distinction between acts that constituted enforced disappearance under article 2 and the wrongful removal of children under article 25; the State party should take care not to overlook that distinction or its specific obligations towards children.

34. He wished to know whether victims were obliged to show evidence of suffering or injuries to be eligible to receive compensation. The delegation might respond to allegations received by the Committee that victims were often forced to choose between receiving compensation from the State and receiving their ordinary retirement pensions, and that victims who accepted compensation were expected to renounce their right to take further legal action against the State. He would also appreciate clarification as to whether persons who had been disappeared but had later been released and children who had been victims of human rights abuses committed between 1968 and 1985 were entitled to reparation.

35. The Committee had been informed that memorials to disappeared persons had been vandalized on numerous occasions. He would be interested to learn whether such incidents had been investigated and whether any prosecutions had been brought or convictions obtained. He wished to know whether past crimes and lessons learned were addressed in the national curriculum with a view to promoting the values of citizenship and democracy in the country’s schools.

36. **Ms. Villa Quintana** said that she would like to know whether the State party had taken any measures to protect persons who had provided information about burial sites from reprisals.

37. **A representative of Uruguay** said that cases of missing persons that did not constitute cases of enforced disappearance were investigated in accordance with a protocol established by the Ministry of the Interior. Any person who disappeared from their home without informing anyone was considered missing. Cases were referred to the International Criminal Police Organization where necessary, and searches continued until the individuals were found.

38. In cases where minors went missing from institutions run by the Uruguayan Institute for Children and Adolescents, a specific protocol was followed. The minor’s absence was reported to the police and a search strategy was adopted, taking into account the nature of the situation and the risks faced by the minor in question. Such cases were referred to the Public Prosecution Service for further investigation if there was any suspicion of criminal activity.

39. There was currently no official policy on the prevention of enforced disappearance; he would welcome the Committee’s recommendations in that regard.

40. **A representative of Uruguay** said that the vast majority of the victims of the dictatorship had been tortured or killed by State agents but had not been subjected to enforced disappearance. It was difficult to predict whether there would be an increase in convictions for the crime of enforced disappearance in the future. However, the Special Prosecutor's Office for Crimes against Humanity had moved forward in its approach to the legal aspects of enforced disappearance, taking into account the requirements of international law, and judges tended to support the sentencing proposed by prosecutors. It therefore seemed likely that case law in that area would evolve and the number of convictions for the crime of enforced disappearance would increase.

41. All the courts in Uruguay, including the Supreme Court, were against the application of a statute of limitations in respect of acts of enforced disappearance, particularly where they constituted a crime against humanity. No term of limitation had been applied in any case of enforced disappearance thus far, and there was no foreseeable reason that might cause the judiciary to change its current approach.

42. In cases involving the wrongful removal of children, a number of legal provisions could be invoked, including provisions relating to the removal and acquisition of civil status. Nevertheless, the Government would take into account the concerns raised by the Committee about the need to harmonize domestic legislation with the relevant provisions of the Convention.

43. The alleged vandalization of memorial sites was deeply regrettable. Steps would be taken to ensure that the incidents were investigated and that the perpetrators were prosecuted and punished.

44. **A representative of Uruguay** said that she wished to clarify that the files on human rights violations during the dictatorship were kept by the Human Rights Secretariat for the Recent Past, not the Ministry of Defence. The process of transferring the files to the National Human Rights Institution and Office of the Ombudsperson was taking a long time because the institution had requested that they should be provided in digital format. The Secretariat had set up a digitization team and hoped to deliver all the files to the institution within one year.

45. The number of technical, administrative and professional staff working for the National Human Rights Institution and Office of the Ombudsperson had increased steadily since its establishment. It was currently staffed by over 90 people. Changes had been made in 2021 to allow for promotion through a competitive examination. Some members of staff had been seconded to the institution from government ministries; however, they did not represent those ministries or serve as liaisons to them.

46. **Mr. Moerzinger Pagani** (Uruguay) said that the bill on home detention arrangements for defendants and convicted persons over 65 years of age mentioned previously had been submitted to the parliament in 2021 and was currently before the relevant parliamentary committee.

47. **Mr. Ravenna**, noting the delegation's claim that the vast majority of the victims of the dictatorship had been tortured or killed but had not been subjected to enforced disappearance, asked whether, in the cases that had been classified as murders, the victims had been killed publicly or had been disappeared before they had been killed.

48. **Ms. Villa Quintana**, noting that the delegation had stated that 197 people had been reported disappeared, asked whether those cases of disappearance would be prosecuted individually or collectively.

49. **The Chair** asked whether Act No. 18.026 was applicable, either fully or partially, to recent disappearances.

50. **Mr. López Ortega** said that he would like to know why charges of enforced disappearance had been brought in only three cases, despite the existence of the Special Prosecutor's Office for Crimes against Humanity. The data suggested that there was some sort of technical obstacle to the application of the relevant legal provisions. How could the delegation be confident that offences of enforced disappearance would be classified as such in the future?

51. **The Chair** asked whether the 197 victims of enforced disappearance included Uruguayans who had disappeared in other countries of the region in the context of *Operación Condor*.

52. **A representative of Uruguay** said that serious violations of human rights had begun in 1972 when a law allowing military courts to try civilians had been passed. Many members of armed groups had been arrested, detained in military or police premises, tortured and tried by the military courts without due process. The situation had worsened following the coup d'état in 1973. The executive branch had subsequently issued a decree outlawing several political groups. Members of those groups had been arrested and subjected to unlawful detention and torture. In 1975, secret detention centres had been established. The persons held in those centres were considered to have been subjected to enforced disappearance.

53. A large proportion of the 197 victims of enforced disappearance had been disappeared in other countries of the region in the context of *Operación Condor*. Only around 20 per cent of the victims had been disappeared in Uruguay. Most cases involving persons who had been disappeared in Argentina had been tried some 10 years previously. One case involving prestigious Uruguayans who had been disappeared in Argentina was being retried as part of a larger case. Various other cases involving victims who had been held in secret detention centres in Uruguay remained pending.

54. Act No. 18.026 was applied in all cases of enforced disappearance. He wished to assure the Committee that it was indeed possible to bring charges of enforced disappearance. He was aware that many of the cases that had been tried as murder could have been classified as cases of enforced disappearance and he had tried to raise awareness of that fact within the judiciary. However, bringing about a change in mindset would take time and he preferred to pick his battles, focusing on those that he was likely to win. The question of how to classify an offence was secondary to the main aim of any prosecution, which was to establish the truth.

55. **Mr. Moerzinger Pagani** (Uruguay), thanking the Committee for the interactive dialogue, said that, since the country's return to democracy, efforts had been made by each successive Government to address the sensitive issue of enforced disappearance, with varying degrees of success. The events of the past were duly remembered and formed part of the country's national identity. The Government considered the Convention to be of great importance, not only as a tool for dealing with the past but also as a means of protecting potential victims, and believed that it should be ratified more widely. As the delegation had explained, steps were being taken to ensure that pending cases of enforced disappearance were resolved. He acknowledged, however, that the painful memories of past events might not be sufficient to prevent the recurrence of such events and that it could be necessary to enshrine stronger guarantees in law.

56. **The Chair**, thanking the delegation for its readiness to engage in constructive dialogue, said that the Committee would share its concluding observations with the State party as soon as they had been adopted. The State party could request factual corrections to the concluding observations within 24 hours of receiving them. The Committee was counting on Uruguay to help to promote the wider ratification of the Convention. It stood ready to work with all States parties, victims of enforced disappearance and civil society actors to further the implementation of the Convention around the world with the aim of eradicating enforced disappearance.

The meeting rose at 5.50 p.m.