



# International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

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## Human Rights Committee 145th session

### Summary record of the 4264th meeting

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

*Chair:* Mr. Soh

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(*continued*)

*Seventh periodic report of Canada*

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

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

*Seventh periodic report of Canada (CCPR/C/CAN/7; CCPR/C/CAN/QPR/7)*

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Canada joined the meeting.*
2. **A representative of Canada**, introducing her country's seventh periodic report (CCPR/C/CAN/7), said that the Government's commitment to upholding civil and political rights was embedded in all areas of jurisdiction, including the justice system and federal, provincial and territorial jurisdictions. In each jurisdiction, there was a legislative assembly elected by citizens, an executive branch accountable to that assembly and an independent judiciary. The separation of powers, the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary were the cornerstones of Canadian democracy. All Canadians enjoyed the rights and freedoms guaranteed by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which formed part of the Constitution. The Charter and the democratic institutions of Canada remained the foundation of the Government's efforts to implement the Covenant. The Constitution also recognized and affirmed the existing Aboriginal and treaty rights of the First Nations, Inuit and Métis.
3. Within that constitutional framework, the Covenant was implemented through the policies, programmes and laws adopted by all levels of government. Under the federal system, it was essential to have permanent mechanisms in place to support collaboration. The National Mechanism for Implementation, Reporting and Follow-Up on Human Rights facilitated coordination between the federal, provincial and territorial governments in the fulfilment of the obligations of Canada under the seven international human rights treaties to which Canada was a party. An intergovernmental coordination mechanism had been in place for over 50 years and had been strengthened over the reporting period with the addition of an intergovernmental committee of senior officials and a forum of ministers responsible for human rights that met every two years.
4. Engagement with partners, stakeholders and Indigenous rights holders was an important part of the process of implementing the Covenant. In October 2025, federal, provincial and territorial officials had held an online meeting with more than 130 representatives of civil society, the Indigenous communities and the Human Rights Commission to share information about the current review. In February 2026, the delegation had held an online meeting with representatives of 47 organizations to hear their views on priority issues related to the review. Governments across Canada led engagement processes on issues closely linked to Covenant obligations. Together, those processes constituted complementary forums that served to identify gaps, understand systemic challenges and inform actions to promote human rights across the country.
5. The Government was committed to upholding Indigenous rights and worked in partnership with First Nations, Inuit and Métis to advance shared priorities in the areas of health, housing, economic prosperity and climate action. The meaningful participation of First Nations, Inuit and Métis in decisions concerning land, water and natural resources was fundamental to respecting their inherent rights, advancing reconciliation and ensuring sustainable stewardship. The Government worked directly with Indigenous partners to resolve land-related issues through negotiation and the modernization of processes. In that connection, it was engaged in rights-based discussions with Indigenous groups in over 160 forums.
6. The Government acknowledged that the mistreatment and abuse of Indigenous children in what had been known as the "residential school system" had had a profound and ongoing impact on Indigenous peoples. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which had concluded its work in 2015, was a critical mechanism for confronting the harm caused by that system. The Commission's 94 calls to action provided a framework for reconciliation for governments and all sectors of Canadian society. Despite the progress made, the Government acknowledged that much more needed to be done.

7. In 2021, the Government had enacted the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act, which imposed obligations on the federal Government and set out a framework for advancing the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples at the federal level. Similar laws had been adopted by the Province of British Columbia and the Northwest Territories. In 2023, acting pursuant to the federal Act, the Government had released an action plan developed in consultation with First Nations, Inuit and Métis that included 181 measures for implementing the United Nations Declaration and further promoting reconciliation.

8. The Government viewed diversity as a strength and a source of national identity and pride. Over the previous decade, federal, provincial and territorial governments had continued to make progress in addressing discrimination and strengthening equality rights. In that connection, the Government had adopted the federal Pay Equity Act to address systemic gender-based discrimination in employers' compensation practices and the federal Accessible Canada Act to identify and remove the barriers faced by persons with disabilities.

9. Strategies and action plans had been implemented to support inclusion in decision-making through consideration of the gender, anti-racism and disability perspectives. Gender-based violence was a pervasive problem that disproportionately affected women, girls and marginalized groups, including Indigenous women, racialized women, Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and additional sexually and gender diverse (2SLGBTQI+) individuals, and persons living in rural or remote areas. In 2022, the Government had launched the first National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence.

10. The disappearance and murder of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQI+ people constituted a national crisis that all levels of government were taking action to address. In 2021, the Government had launched the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ People National Action Plan to respond to the 231 calls for justice arising from a national inquiry completed in 2019. The Action Plan had been co-developed with families and survivors, provincial and territorial governments, and Indigenous governments, organizations and communities. In response to the national inquiry, commitments had been made at the federal, provincial and territorial levels. The Federal Pathway outlined the Government's commitments to addressing the root causes of violence and was supported by annual reporting on the progress made. Several provinces and territories, including the Yukon and Ontario, had released strategies and action plans in response to the national inquiry.

11. The Government had launched numerous initiatives to protect public safety while respecting human rights. For example, it had recently established three oversight bodies to strengthen the framework of accountability for national security and intelligence agencies and to ensure that core intelligence functions operated within the bounds of the law. In 2019, the administrative segregation of prisoners had been abolished and structured intervention units had been established as a temporary measure for inmates requiring separation from the mainstream prison population. The Corrections and Conditional Release Act had been amended to establish a framework for the independent external review of decisions to place persons in structured intervention units and other matters relating to deprivation of liberty.

12. Across every area of the criminal justice system, Indigenous and black people experienced disproportionately negative outcomes, resulting in higher rates of incarceration and victimization. In 2025, the Government had released the first Indigenous Justice Strategy, developed in consultation with First Nations, Inuit and Métis. In the same year, it had launched a 10-year implementation plan for the development of a black justice strategy in consultation with black communities. Together, those initiatives would address systemic discrimination across the criminal justice system and ensure that all persons were treated equally under the law.

13. **Ms. Abdo Rocholl** said that she wished to know whether the current institutional framework ensured the effective implementation of the international obligations of Canada and, specifically, whether there was a formalized, standing procedure for implementing the Views adopted by the Committee under the first Optional Protocol to the Covenant. With regard to the case of *Nell Toussaint v. Canada* (CCPR/C/123/D/2348/2014), in which the Committee had found violations of articles 6 and 26 of the Covenant in connection with

access to essential medical care, she would be grateful to know what measures had been taken to provide redress to the victim and to prevent the recurrence of such violations. Given that the division of powers within a State Party could not be invoked as justification for failure to comply with an international treaty, she would like to know what structural mechanisms were in place to ensure that provincial legislation was reviewed in the light of the State Party's international obligations under the Covenant. It would be useful to learn whether a national framework had been established to ensure that treaty body recommendations were consistently implemented across the different levels of government. She would like to know whether the State Party would consider establishing monitoring and accountability mechanisms to ensure the implementation of the Committee's Views, including those relating to individual communications.

14. She wished to know whether section 33 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, otherwise known as "the notwithstanding clause", could be invoked to prevent provincial and territorial bills from being struck down even if their enactment would violate the Charter. She would be grateful to learn whether any safeguards were in place to ensure that the invocation of section 33 did not result in restrictions that were incompatible with the Covenant and whether persons affected by such restrictions had access to remedies.

15. In the light of reports that the proposed Québec Constitution Act (Bill 1) might introduce mechanisms that restricted judicial reviews and access to effective remedies, she wondered how the State Party ensured that all constitutional or legislative reforms undertaken at the provincial level were compatible with the State Party's obligations under the Covenant and other international treaties. She would welcome information on any measures taken to ensure that persons in vulnerable situations, including those facing socioeconomic barriers, had access to protection mechanisms.

16. The Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise could receive complaints and make recommendations but lacked the power to compel corporations to implement those recommendations. It would be useful to know how the effectiveness of investigations could be guaranteed when a company failed to cooperate and whether the State Party would consider strengthening the Ombudsperson's investigative powers. She would appreciate examples of cases in which action taken by the Ombudsperson had resulted in victims being granted redress.

17. She would like to know whether victims of human rights violations linked to companies domiciled in Canada that operated abroad had access to justice or whether they faced any significant procedural obstacles. She wondered whether the Government had assessed the possibility of establishing mandatory human rights due diligence for corporations, including those operating under the jurisdiction of another State.

18. **Ms. Donders** said that she would be grateful for up-to-date information on the implementation of the calls to action issued by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. She would be interested to hear about any measures taken to ensure the meaningful participation of the Indigenous Peoples in the implementation of the calls to action and any steps taken to promote reconciliation. She would be grateful to learn whether teacher training programmes and school curricula included mandatory courses on Indigenous history and contemporary realities.

19. She wondered when the State Party would adopt the draft law that would make it a criminal offence to deny the existence of the residential school system and whether it would address concerns about the destruction of residential school records, which could lead to the loss of very important historical data. She would be grateful for information on the number of investigations undertaken, prosecutions brought and convictions secured for offences related to the residential school system. Information on measures taken to provide reparation to victims not covered by the initial settlements would be welcome.

20. She would appreciate information on any steps taken to implement the recommendations made by the Special Interlocutor for Missing Children and Unmarked Graves and Burial Sites in 2024. It would be interesting to learn how the State Party ensured that all decisions about searches for the remains of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons were made by an independent body and in close consultation with family members and representative organizations. She wished to know how

the State Party ensured that Indigenous Peoples' access to support for the relocation of remains was not hindered by discrimination.

21. She wondered how the State Party ensured that there were sufficient human and financial resources to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act Action Plan and whether it would consider setting up an independent mechanism to monitor the implementation of the Act and the Action Plan. It would be useful to know whether legislative bodies would be required to collaborate with Indigenous Peoples in drafting any new laws that affected their rights. She would appreciate a response from the delegation to concerns about federal and provincial laws establishing special economic zones that would allow the Government to bypass environmental and consultation safeguards relating to pipelines and dams. She wished to know how the State Party ensured that such laws did not contradict the spirit and provisions of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act and the Covenant.

22. She would appreciate information on any measures taken to implement the recommendations made by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women following its meeting with the State Party in 2024, including the recommendations to develop regulations to combat online hate speech, to hold social media companies accountable for discriminatory user-generated content and to organize mandatory and continuous training relating to such offences for judges, prosecutors and police officers. She would also welcome information on any measures taken to prevent and combat hostile political movements and the rise in racist, discriminatory, homophobic and transphobic discourse. She would appreciate the delegation's comments on claims that the definition of hate crimes was too narrow and that hate crimes against racialized individuals or discrimination based on sex characteristics were not explicitly prohibited under federal law. She wondered how the State Party ensured that offences did not go unreported because victims were reluctant to disclose their ethnicity, religion, gender identity or sexual orientation. It would be interesting to learn what legal or other services were available to victims and how the State Party would address the lack of disaggregated data on victims.

23. She wished to know whether the Criminal Code had been amended to ensure that intersex children were not subjected to medically unnecessary procedures without their consent, in line with the recommendations made to the State Party by the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It would be interesting to learn whether investigations were undertaken into such incidents. Information on any progress made in adopting legal provisions to provide victims with redress and adequate compensation would be welcome. She would like to know whether the State Party would organize public consultations on criminal law reforms relating to cosmetic surgery on intersex children and whether intersex persons would participate in those consultations. Were medical and psychological professionals trained in the area of sexual diversity and made aware of the adverse effects of unnecessary surgical interventions?

24. **Ms. Bassim** said that she would welcome information on legislative or other measures taken to prevent and combat discrimination on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, Indigenous status, disability, socioeconomic status, race, religion, HIV status or nationality. She would also appreciate information on measures taken to combat the discrimination and exclusion faced by migrant workers, including agricultural workers holding temporary work permits. She wondered what would be done to ensure that workers who were eligible for employment insurance were not excluded from the system or prevented from receiving their payments. It would be useful to learn whether anyone had been held accountable in the case of Joyce Echaquan, who had died in hospital on 28 September 2020 after being abused and neglected by medical staff.

25. She would appreciate a response from the delegation to reports that lethal force was used against members of racial minorities in custody. It would be interesting to know whether all such uses of lethal force were investigated and prosecuted and whether steps would be taken to prevent racial profiling by police officers, to address the overrepresentation of persons from racial and ethnic minorities in the criminal justice system and to use alternative measures to detention whenever possible.

26. She would be interested to hear about any measures taken to ensure greater representation of women, including minority and Indigenous women, in governance and private sector leadership positions. It would be useful to know what measures had been taken to tackle gender-based violence and implement the National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence. She would be grateful for disaggregated data on the number of complaints filed, investigations launched, prosecutions initiated, convictions secured and penalties handed down in cases of gender-based violence.

27. Information on the forms of psychological and social support provided to victims of gender-based violence and the geographical coverage and capacity of shelters would also be welcome. She wondered how the State Party tackled obstacles to reporting violence, such as the lack of trauma-informed policing practices, limited coordination between the police, the courts and the social services and victims' lack of access to legal and financial assistance.

28. She would like to know what measures had been taken to narrow the gender pay gap, which was particularly high for Indigenous and minority women. She wished to know what was being done to implement the Pay Equity Act and whether legislative measures would be taken to protect the staff of workplaces that were not subject to federal regulations. Had any steps been taken to implement article 3 of the Public Sector Equitable Compensation Act, which established that employers were required to provide employees with equitable compensation?

29. **Ms. Tigroudja** said that she would appreciate information on the legal safeguards applicable to the surveillance of persons in connection with counter-terrorism measures, national security or public safety. She would like to know whether the Strong Borders Act (Bill C-2) and the Combatting Hate Act (Bill C-9) would, if enacted, enhance the surveillance powers of the authorities and whether any safeguards would be established to prevent the authorities from abusing vague legal definitions of terrorism. It would be useful to learn how the no-fly list provided for in the Secure Air Travel Act was drawn up and what criteria were used to determine whether a person posed a threat to aviation security. It would be interesting to know whether persons included in the no-fly list could challenge the decision to place them on the list.

30. She would be grateful to learn what measures had been taken to identify and prevent the structural causes behind the murder and disappearance of Indigenous women and girls. It would be useful to know whether any monitoring mechanisms were implemented across the country with a view to preventing those offences and, if so, whether Indigenous Peoples were involved in those mechanisms. How did the State Party assess the effectiveness of measures to prevent the murder and disappearance of Indigenous women and girls?

31. **Mr. Quezada Cabrera** said that he would appreciate a response from the delegation to claims that the State Party's support for nuclear deterrence, as a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and in its national policies, was contrary to its obligations under article 6 of the Covenant on the right to life. He would be grateful for the delegation's comments on claims that the State Party's transfer of arms to Israel constituted a clear violation of the Genocide Convention in view of the serious violations of the right to life that had taken place in the Gaza Strip. Given that rifles manufactured by a Canadian company had reportedly been found in the possession of a party to the armed conflict in the Sudan, it would be interesting to know what measures the State Party was taking to ensure that weapons made by Canadian companies were not transferred to the Sudan.

*The meeting was suspended at 4.05 p.m. and resumed at 4.25 p.m.*

32. **A representative of Canada** said that governments across Canada took into account the particular conditions in their regions when determining how to implement international instruments such as the Covenant. By taking that approach, they were able to adjust their laws, policies and programmes over time in the light of observations made by bodies such as the Committee. Federalism enhanced the protection of human rights in Canada by encouraging the federal, provincial and territorial governments to work together to find innovative and locally appropriate solutions to human rights concerns.

33. All measures taken by governments in all jurisdictions were subject to review by the courts. Any person who believed that a government law or measure violated a right under the

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms could challenge that law or measure in court. While Charter rights were subject to reasonable limits, any laws establishing limits that were not justified could be struck down by the courts. Under the Constitution, the federal Government could not require provinces and territories to amend their legislation or policies to give effect to the Covenant when the matter concerned fell under provincial jurisdiction.

34. The Covenant served as an important source for courts to consider when interpreting Canadian laws and the Charter, despite the fact that it had not been incorporated into domestic law and could not be invoked on a stand-alone basis. The international human rights obligations of Canada, including those established under the Covenant, were increasingly invoked before and by Canadian courts, including the Supreme Court.

35. **A representative of Canada** said that the National Mechanism for Implementation, Reporting and Follow-Up on Human Rights comprised a federal, provincial and territorial committee with a ministerial forum responsible for providing strategic guidance, a committee of senior officials tasked with overseeing the implementation of follow-up actions and recommendations and a committee of technical experts supported by a standing federal secretariat. The Government had strengthened the engagement of civil society and Indigenous organizations by holding a day of dialogue with ministers, conducting regular exchanges with organizations that submitted shadow reports and holding ongoing dialogues with a view to improving the Mechanism. With a view to increasing transparency, the Government was piloting a public database that tracked the implementation of recommendations made by United Nations agencies.

36. **A representative of Canada** said that the Government was committed to engaging constructively with the Committee in individual communications procedures and always gave serious consideration to the Committee's Views and recommendations. The Government had accepted the Committee's Views on the majority of communications involving Canada and had dissented from them on only a small number of occasions.

37. A standard procedure was in place for considering the Committee's Views. As part of that procedure, legal counsel engaged in discussions with operational and policy officials to analyse the Views. The Views were published online and follow-up submissions were sent to the Committee to set out the Government's response to them. Where appropriate, a submission outlining the Government's position on the substance of the Views was also sent to the Committee.

38. The Government had considered in good faith the Committee's Views in the case of *Nell Toussaint v. Canada* (CCPR/C/123/D/2348/2014) but had not been able to agree with the Committee's reasoning. The reasons for that disagreement had been set out in detail in the Government's submissions. The Government's consideration of that particular communication was now complete.

39. **A representative of Canada** said that refugees, protected persons, asylum-seekers, victims of trafficking in persons and other eligible migrant groups were covered by the Interim Federal Health Programme until they qualified for provincial or territorial health insurance. Starting on 1 May 2026, beneficiaries of the Programme would be required to cover part of the cost of supplemental health products and services covered by the Programme. Basic health services, such as hospital and physician care, would remain free of charge. No changes would be made to the groups that were eligible for the Programme.

40. **A representative of Canada** said that the Government fully recognized the central importance of the right to life and the ways in which it was interdependent with other human rights. At the same time, the Government considered that interpretations of article 6 of the Covenant should remain anchored in the text that States had negotiated when the Covenant had been adopted. Article 6 was crafted to protect the inherent right to life and to ensure that no one was arbitrarily deprived of life. In considering the question of positive and negative rights, it should be noted that differing approaches to rights were set out in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. In particular, it should be noted that the former treaty emphasized the progressive realization of rights, while the latter treaty did not. The Government remained committed to constructively engaging with the Committee on how best to advance the right to life within the agreed legal framework established by the Covenant.

41. **A representative of Canada** said that Canada did not possess, use, control, develop, produce, stockpile, transfer or host nuclear weapons. National law and policy prohibited the development, acquisition or possession of nuclear weapons and the Government aimed to ensure that nuclear weapons would never be used again. It pursued a step-by-step approach to halt the spread of nuclear weapons, reduce stockpiles and ultimately eliminate them. In that connection, it had played a leading role in negotiating a fissile material cut-off treaty and had also advocated the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and participated in the review process of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

42. Canada had one of the strongest export control systems in the world. All applications for permits to export controlled items were reviewed on a case-by-case basis in accordance with a robust risk assessment framework. The Minister of Foreign Affairs denied applications for export permits if she determined that there was a substantial risk that the item could be used to commit or facilitate serious violations of international law. That framework was applied to all applications for export permits, including for exports to the Gaza Strip or the Sudan.

43. With respect to the Gaza Strip, the Government was committed to the goal of achieving comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East. Since 8 January 2024, the Government had not approved the export of any arms to Israel that could be used in the current conflict in Gaza. In 2024, the Government had suspended export permits for parts destined for Israel that could be incorporated into items used in Gaza. All permits suspended in 2024 remained suspended. In 2025, two permits had been granted for items used in the Israeli anti-missile system known as the Iron Dome. The granting of those permits was not inconsistent with the Government's export policy as that policy did not apply to mechanisms used to defend civilians, such as the Iron Dome.

44. **A representative of Canada** said that, under section 33 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, also known as "the notwithstanding clause", legislatures at the federal, provincial and territorial level could declare that new laws would have effect for a period of up to five years notwithstanding certain provisions of the Charter. It could not be invoked in connection with the democratic rights protected by the Charter, including voting rights. Some legislatures had introduced bills to restrict the application of that section, which had been the subject of sustained debate in recent years and had – in some cases, successfully – been challenged before the courts, including the Supreme Court of Canada. Her Government had concerns about the use of section 33, designed as an exceptional measure, to prevent courts from deciding whether new legislation respected citizens' rights. Although it prevented courts from declaring laws invalid, it did not completely block access to the courts. A variety of remedies were available under the justice system, including court orders striking down unconstitutional legislation as well as declaratory judgments; remedies could also be sought before tribunals and administrative decision makers. The Supreme Court of Canada would soon hear a case relating to the question of whether courts could review the consistency of laws with rights and freedoms protected by the Charter even when section 33 had been invoked. Provincial and territorial governments were responsible for the implementation of all the country's international human rights obligations in their respective areas of jurisdiction.

45. **A representative of Canada** said that the 2025 Québec constitutional bill had passed the public consultation phase and would next be studied in detail by a parliamentary committee before ultimately being voted on by the province's National Assembly. The bill would introduce a codified constitution, with supremacy over all other laws of the province, that was aimed at protecting the Québec nation and its values and civil law tradition. It would reaffirm equality between men and women, strengthen the constitutional autonomy of Québec in conformity with the Canadian Constitution and affirm the principles that underpinned the province and its democratic system. The constitution would incorporate existing rights and liberties in addition to upholding the collective rights of the Québec nation with due regard for the anglophone community, internationally recognized rights and the Québec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms. Many of the principles that it would incorporate were already reflected in other laws.

46. **A representative of Canada** said that the Government endeavoured to ensure that all citizens had access to justice through the provision of criminal and civil legal aid, State-

funded counsel and public interest funding. Individuals could submit complaints of discrimination to federal, provincial and territorial human rights commissions and tribunals, which had been designed to provide an expeditious and accessible process for the resolution of such complaints against public or private sector actors in areas of daily life such as employment, housing and access to services. Complainants did not need to have legal representation or any specialized legal knowledge. For example, the Newfoundland and Labrador Human Rights Commission, which provided free, accessible services throughout the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, investigated claims of discrimination and harassment under the province's Human Rights Act and raised public awareness of human rights. All provinces and territories operated publicly funded programmes to provide free or heavily subsidized legal assistance to persons with limited means. In the 2023/24 period, more than 487,000 applications for legal aid had been approved, and legal aid lawyers had provided services to unrepresented persons in more than 1.42 million cases. In 2024, the Government had committed an additional 440 million Canadian dollars (Can\$) over five years for criminal legal aid – an increase of 63% – and had increased funding for legal aid in immigration and refugee cases by 136%. The Government had renewed a federally funded programme to provide financial support to individuals and groups bringing before the courts cases that helped to clarify rights protected under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, including language-related rights.

47. **A representative of Canada** said that the Government worked with relevant stakeholders to ensure that the Canadian approach to responsible business conduct, which applied to all Canadian companies active abroad and included preventative legislative measures and dispute resolution mechanisms, was implemented consistently and effectively. Companies seeking the assistance of the Trade Commissioner Service must sign a declaration of integrity, violation of which could result in restricted access to services. Companies that refused to cooperate with the Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise risked suffering reputational damage as a result of the findings and recommendations that the Ombudsperson published.

48. **A representative of Canada** said that up-to-date information on the progress achieved by the Government in following up on the calls to action issued by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission could be found on the website of the Department of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs. In March 2026, the National Council for Reconciliation had been established as an independent organization led by Indigenous persons that was mandated to promote reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous citizens and to oversee progress made in follow-up to the calls to action. The Government had designed an extensive curriculum on anti-racism and intercultural competency for all public servants in the Canada School of Public Service.

49. **A representative of Canada** said that, in Saskatchewan, education on the treaties signed between First Nations and the Crown had been compulsory from pre-kindergarten to grade 12 since 2007. The Saskatchewan Ministry of Education had worked with the Office of the Treaty Commissioner, teachers and elders to develop an updated learning resource kit, released in 2018, to ensure that Indigenous perspectives and ways of knowing were incorporated into the curriculum from kindergarten to grade 9. In June 2022, the Ministry had brought together 20 members of Indigenous communities representing every language group in Saskatchewan to update the province's native studies curriculum for grades 10–12.

50. **A representative of Canada** said that the Government unequivocally condemned any denial that the residential school system had existed or of the harm that it had inflicted on Indigenous Peoples. On 31 October 2025, a bill to criminalize the wilful promotion of hatred against Indigenous Peoples by condoning, denying, downplaying or justifying the residential school system in Canada or misrepresenting facts related to it through statements communicated other than in private conversation had been reintroduced to Parliament and was currently being reviewed by the Government. Violations would be punishable by a maximum of 2 years' imprisonment. From 2026, the Government would spend more than Can\$ 5 million over three years establishing a programme to combat denialism in relation to residential schools, primarily through educational measures.

51. The Government had funded a campaign to inform participants in the Independent Assessment Process that their records could be preserved in the archive of the National Centre

for Truth and Reconciliation if they so consented. In recent years, the Government had concluded several settlements with plaintiffs who had not received compensation under the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement, including former day scholars of such schools.

52. **A representative of Canada** said that the government of Saskatchewan recognized the harmful legacy of the residential school system, which included intergenerational trauma. Together with the federal Government, it had recently signed agreements in principle to provide former students of Île-à-la-Crosse Residential School – which had not been covered by the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement because it had not been operated by the federal Government – and their families with compensation, including for legal costs, and to promote reconciliation, education and commemoration in the community. In November 2025, the Premier of Saskatchewan had acknowledged the province’s role in operating the school and made a public apology to all of its former students. In February 2026, four town hall meetings about the claims process had been held across the province.

53. **A representative of Canada** said that the Government had provided Can\$ 342.2 million to support survivor-centric efforts led by Indigenous communities to identify unmarked burial sites associated with residential schools and memorialize those children who had not returned home. In late 2024, the Independent Special Interlocutor for Missing Children and Unmarked Graves and Burial Sites associated with Indian Residential Schools had submitted her final report; one of the 42 recommendations contained therein concerned the establishment of a federal framework to ensure the respectful and culturally appropriate treatment of unmarked graves and burial sites. Work in that connection formed part of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act Action Plan 2023–2028. Statistics Canada was building an expanded system to gather statistics on justice that would cover policing, courts and the correctional system.

54. **A representative of Canada** said that the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act of 2021 provided that the Government must consult and cooperate with Indigenous Peoples to ensure that existing and new national legislation was consistent with the Declaration, issue annual progress reports on implementation of the Declaration and develop an action plan to implement the Act, which had been finalized in 2023 and contained 181 measures supported by federal funding and other resources, including the establishment of a mechanism for monitoring the safeguarding of Indigenous rights.

55. **A representative of Canada** said that the Building Canada Act and the One Canadian Economy Act had been developed and would be implemented within the clear legal and human rights framework that ensured respect for section 35 of the Constitution regarding Aboriginal and treaty rights and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

56. **A representative of Canada** said that, in response to the troubling increase in hate speech and hate crimes in recent years, governments at all levels were taking steps to address hate in all its forms and its impact on victims, their families and communities. Their efforts built on the country’s legal and policy framework to combat racial and religious discrimination, hate crimes and hate speech, which included protections in the Criminal Code, section 15 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which established that all persons were equal before the law, and the country’s human rights legislation, which provided protection against discrimination at all levels of government. In September 2025, the Government had proposed a bill, that was currently being studied by Parliament, to add four new hate-related offences and a definition of hatred to the Criminal Code. The Government had recently committed Can\$ 26 million to support police training on combating hate crime.

57. Despite the failure of a bill proposed by the previous Government in 2024 to compel online service providers to protect children from harmful content, the current Government remained committed to protecting citizens from such content and, in addition to working on a legislative framework in that area in the near future, would continue international collaboration to ensure that online platforms were accountable and transparent.

58. **A representative of Canada** said that the Government was making progress in efforts to increase the availability of disaggregated data. Thus far, it had been established that age and gender were the most significant predictors of how likely people were to report crimes

to the police. Efforts were being made to communicate with citizens more regularly to gather additional data on underreporting. More information, including disaggregated data on perceptions of safety in public and private spaces, would be made available in March 2026. Police officers were receiving training on recognizing and recording hate crimes.

59. **A representative of Canada** said that criminal law and provincial and territorial healthcare legislation included provisions governing consent to medical procedures, violation of which could result in criminal, civil and misconduct proceedings. The Government was aware of the recommendations made by some experts and activists that unnecessary surgical procedures on intersex infants' genitalia, which might violate their bodily integrity, should be postponed until they could participate meaningfully in decisions to perform them. However, the prohibition of all such surgeries could have unintended consequences, including the prevention of medically necessary or gender-affirming care and uncertainty as to the stage at which meaningful consent could be given. It was critical for legislative reform in that area to be informed by relevant medical evidence, legal considerations and lived experience. The Government welcomed the sharing of international best practices and perspectives on approaches to protecting the rights and bodily integrity of intersex children. Pediatric Urologists of Canada had published a policy document in which it highlighted the ethical issues associated with the performance of purely cosmetic surgical procedures on children and recommended the exercise of caution in such decisions.

60. **A representative of Canada** said that the Government was committed to collaborating closely with Indigenous partners to close long-standing gaps in service provision and expand Indigenous communities' control over how services were designed and delivered. More than 13,000 housing projects and 800 water and wastewater projects were currently under way. A total of 97% of public water systems on reserve met national guidelines. In child and family services, the Government now prioritized prevention, family preservation and kinship care. The proportion of children from First Nations communities entering care for the first time had fallen from 19% in 2016 to 15% in 2023 and the proportion of children placed in kinship care had risen from 16% to 28%. In the previous 10 years, funding for on-reserve primary and secondary education under the Education Savings and Community Outreach programme had increased by 112%.

61. Following the death of Joyce Echaquan, which had highlighted the urgent need for change in the healthcare system, the Government had worked with Indigenous partners to hold a national dialogue to identify and determine the root causes of obstacles to Indigenous People's access to high-quality, non-discriminatory healthcare. It was committed to implementing Joyce's Principle with a view to eliminating such obstacles and to working in partnership with Indigenous communities, investing in essential services and promoting Indigenous self-determination. Initiatives launched to address racism against Indigenous persons in the healthcare system included the provision of support for Indigenous midwives and efforts to ensure the availability of patient advocates and health system navigators to improve access to culturally safe care and provide support in Indigenous languages.

62. **A representative of Canada** said that the Government remained committed to safeguarding the rights of temporary foreign workers, who enjoyed the same workplace protections as Canadians and permanent residents while they were in the country. The Seasonal Agricultural Worker Programme was a long-standing agreement with Mexico and 11 Caribbean countries that provided benefits to both sending and receiving communities and to seasonal workers themselves, who could work in Canada while retaining close ties to their home communities. There was also a diverse range of programmes for year-round temporary work and permanent residents in Canada.

63. **A representative of Canada** said that both the Black Justice Strategy and the Indigenous Justice Strategy had been developed in collaboration with relevant stakeholders and placed an emphasis on the provision of community-based, culturally appropriate services. In recent years, the Government had provided funding to six provinces to support the use of impact of race and culture assessments – individualized reports that helped criminal justice professionals, including judges, understand how systemic factors like marginalization, racism and poverty might have affected black and other racialized offenders, including their interaction with the justice system. The Government had also supported the development and piloting of approaches designed specifically to help black persons navigate the justice system,

provide support to black victims of crime and develop diversion, conferencing and bail supervision programmes adapted to the needs of young black persons. In addition, it had recently renewed funding for the Indigenous Justice Programme and the Indigenous Courtwork Programme, and had provided funding over three years for efforts to build the capacity and encourage the engagement of Indigenous persons in relation to the implementation of the Indigenous Justice Strategy. The Government had also provided funding to support community justice centres in three provinces; those centres integrated justice, health, employment and social services to address the root causes of crime, divert persons accused of non-violent offences away from incarceration and connect them with social support services. British Columbia now had a network of 15 Indigenous justice centres and one virtual Indigenous justice centre, which had been opened in partnership with the British Columbia First Nations Justice Council, providing free legal services to all Indigenous persons regardless of their eligibility to receive legal aid.

64. **A representative of Canada** said that, like all provinces and territories, Manitoba had made extensive use of restorative justice initiatives to address the overrepresentation of Indigenous and black persons in the criminal justice system. The province's legislation mandated the development of a wide range of restorative justice programmes that provided culturally relevant, trauma-informed support focused on traditional practices and healing; such programmes, which had been developed in collaboration with Indigenous communities, reduced recidivism and helped victims to heal. The Restorative Justice Branch in Manitoba provided access to more than 100 restorative justice options, including Indigenous justice programmes, community justice centres and a youth healing lodge designed to connect young persons to their culture and support young people struggling with addictions, mental health and housing problems through traditional healing practices. There were plans to establish a similar lodge for adults.

65. **A representative of Canada** said that the National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence was a 10-year framework spanning all levels of government that had been developed in collaboration with Indigenous partners, front-line service providers, experts and advocates. It was focused on prevention, support for victims and their families, promotion of a more responsive justice system, implementation of Indigenous-led approaches and provision of social infrastructure and an enabling environment. In the first year of the Plan, 729 organizations had received national funding for prevention and support efforts. In recent years, a number of amendments had been made to the Criminal Code with a view *inter alia* to strengthening penalties for sexual assault and intimate partner violence, combating technology-facilitated sexual offences and protecting the private information of victims of gender-based violence. Requirements for judicial staff to receive training on sexual assault law had also been introduced. Bill C-16, which had been proposed in 2025, would criminalize engagement in patterns of coercive and controlling behaviour and classify as femicide forms of killing that had a disproportionate impact on women and girls, including the killing of intimate partners in contexts of coercive control, killing in the context of sexual violence or exploitation and killings motivated by hate on grounds of gender.

66. The Government issued annual reports on progress made in implementation of the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ People National Action Plan, and Indigenous leaders took part in an annual progress review. In the Yukon, an annual accountability forum was held to discuss the territorial government's strategy regarding the Action Plan.

67. **A representative of Canada** said that, like all provincial and territorial governments, the government of Manitoba recognized the importance of undertaking searches for the remains of murdered Indigenous women safely and in a trauma-informed manner with a view to protecting victims' dignity and providing closure to their families. In 2025, the provincial and national governments had provided Can\$ 20 million to fund such a search at a landfill site.

68. **Ms. Donders** said that she wished to know whether the State Party had encountered any obstacles in its efforts to obtain the cooperation of the Roman Catholic Church in investigations into allegations of abuse and deaths of children in residential schools for Indigenous children and, if so, how it had addressed them. She wondered what measures the State Party had taken to effectively end the use of sexual orientation and gender conversion

therapies in practice. It would be useful to know how wide-ranging the campaign to inform participants in the Independent Assessment Process that their records could be preserved had been and to what extent the campaign had been made accessible to persons with limited literacy and persons with disabilities. She would welcome more information on consultations that had been initiated with a view to amending criminal law to ensure that medical procedures could not be performed on intersex persons until they were able to consent to them.

69. **Ms. Tigroudja** said that she would appreciate an explanation of the judicial guarantees in place with respect to surveillance carried out by the State Party to combat terrorism and protect national and border security and the safeguards in place to prevent groups such as activists from being silenced through designation as terrorists. She wished to know what steps the State Party had taken to follow up on the recommendation issued by the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in its most recent concluding observations (CRPD/C/CAN/CO/2-3) to repeal legislation permitting persons whose sole underlying condition was a mental illness to receive medical assistance in dying.

70. **Mr. Quezada Cabrera** said that he wished to know how the State Party ensured under its arms export control process that weapons or components thereof that it legitimately exported to third countries were not re-exported to conflict zones where violations of international humanitarian law were occurring or might occur.

71. **Ms. Bassim** said that she would welcome more details of the Federal 2SLGBTQI+ Action Plan. She wondered what measures the State Party had taken during the reporting period to ensure greater participation and representation of women, including Indigenous women and women from minorities, in governance and private sector leadership positions.

72. **Ms. Abdo Rocholl** said that she wished to know what legal mechanisms were in place to ensure that the State Party's international obligations were binding in practice throughout the country. She wondered how the State Party ensured the availability of effective remedies if the Covenant could not be directly invoked before the courts and the Committee's views were not legally binding under national law. Given that application of section 33 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms could prevent courts from striking down laws that were incompatible with fundamental human rights, she would welcome clarification as to how the right to an effective remedy was ensured in such circumstances. Lastly, she wished to know whether there were mandatory legal consequences for companies based in Canada that refused to cooperate with investigations into alleged human rights violations abroad.

73. **A representative of Canada** said that the Government had consistently supported calls for entities including the Catholic Church and other religious orders to share documents in their possession related to residential schools, including with the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation. In 2024, the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, which had been involved in the running of a large number of such schools, had signed an additional agreement on record sharing with the Centre. The "My Records, My Choice" campaign to inform participants in the Independent Assessment Process that their records could be preserved had been court-ordered and run by the class action administrator with input from the Centre. All awareness-raising content, including pamphlets and radio and television advertisements, was available on the campaign website.

74. **A representative of Canada** said that conversion therapies, which were harmful to victims and were considered to violate the rights to integrity and dignity of the person, had been illegal in Québec since 2020 and in the rest of Canada since 2022. The relevant law adopted by Québec prohibited conversion therapies aimed at altering sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. Between 2021 and 2023, Québec had implemented an action plan to prevent and combat conversion therapies with measures including an awareness-raising campaign conducted on the radio and online. A number of complaints mechanisms had been established to protect the rights of LGBTQ+ and questioning persons in relation to such therapies.

75. **A representative of Canada** said that the first Federal 2SLGBTQI+ Action Plan, which had been launched in 2022, had included a commitment to undertake public consultations – which had not yet been held – on possible amendments to the Criminal Code

in a number of areas, including the protection of the bodily integrity of intersex children. Healthcare legislation was the responsibility of the provinces and territories.

76. **A representative of Canada** said that, in 2020, the Yukon had passed the Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Protection Act, under which the practice of conversion therapy, including non-consensual surgical procedures related to gender identity, was punishable by a fine of Can\$ 10,000 or up to 6 months' imprisonment. The territory had also established strong policies on sexual orientation and gender identity in its school system and a strategy for LGBT2S+ inclusion with a view to putting an end to conversion therapies through cultural and educational measures.

77. **A representative of Canada** said that the Government did not carry out mass surveillance, and risks of overreach by the security services were mitigated through a robust framework of oversight and accountability mechanisms designed to uphold democratic principles and protect individual rights. Any intrusive activities, such as individual surveillance or data collection, required judicial authorization. The National Security and Intelligence Review Agency conducted comprehensive reviews of the activities of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service to ensure their compliance with laws and policy, the Intelligence Commissioner provided quasi-judicial oversight of certain authorizations and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service reported to the Minister of Public Safety, who answered to Parliament.

78. **A representative of Canada** said that Canadian legislation on assisted dying had been designed to balance respect for the autonomy of eligible persons with the need to protect vulnerable persons from any encouragement to end their lives. Before the restriction on medical assistance in dying for persons whose sole underlying condition was a mental illness was lifted on 17 March 2027, a special joint committee of the Senate and the House of Commons would assess the suitability of assistance in such cases and report to Parliament on 2 October 2026. Civil society organizations and citizens would have an opportunity to express their views on the issue as part of that process.

79. **A representative of Canada** said that the list of goods and technologies that required an export permit was compiled using technical parameters based on the country's international commitments in that area. All permit applications for controlled items were reviewed under a risk assessment framework that incorporated criteria set out in the Arms Trade Treaty and reflected in the Export and Import Permits Act. As was the case in most countries, once goods left Canada and entered another country's economy, they became subject to that country's export controls. The Government assessed the risk of diversion as part of its export control regime and cooperated with other States regarding preventive measures, including through the country's membership in multilateral export control regimes.

80. **A representative of Canada** said that it was a priority for the Government to achieve a gender balance in the Cabinet and promote women to key positions. Women currently headed a number of key ministries. The proportion of female members of Parliament had increased from 20% in 1997 to 30% in 2023. The Government had invested nearly Can\$ 7 billion in the Women Entrepreneurship Strategy, which was aimed at eliminating systemic barriers faced by women entrepreneurs and women in leadership positions. Since the Strategy's launch in 2018, women had made use of it more than 316,000 times and benefited from more than 25,000 loans and grants.

81. **A representative of Canada** said that the value of non-judicial entities such as the Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise lay in their accessibility, flexibility and ability to foster dialogue and encourage the provision of remedies without requiring litigation. Canada also had a strong and evolving framework of laws to support responsible business conduct, violation of which could, in some cases, result in summary conviction and the imposition of fines.

82. **A representative of Canada** said that the government of Québec recognized the need to improve the quality and accessibility of healthcare and social services provided to First Nations and Inuit persons. Following the death of Joyce Echaquan, in November 2020, the government of Québec had invested Can\$ 15 million over five years to promote cultural safety in the healthcare and social services systems, including through mandatory training, which had been completed by more than 97% of staff. A reconciliation committee had been

established with a view to ensuring equitable and non-discriminatory access to services for the Atikamekw People of Manawan. A law enacted in Québec in 2024 provided that all healthcare and social services establishments must take into account the realities specific to First Nations and Inuit women and girls and their families to ensure their cultural safety.

83. **A representative of Canada** said that the Passenger Protect Programme, which was based on a rigorous assessment of the threat posed by individuals based on their activities, had been designed to safeguard national security while minimizing infringement of mobility rights. The Secure Air Travel Act provided that individuals could have air travel restrictions lifted if they could demonstrate that they did not present a threat and could appeal negative decisions. The Government was required to review the validity of restrictions in place on individuals every 90 days. The Supreme Court of Canada had dismissed the challenge made to the constitutionality of the Act and the Passenger Protect Programme. Following a review in 2024, the National Security and Intelligence Review Agency had concluded that all individuals affected by the Programme had been treated reasonably and fairly and that unnecessary restrictions on their mobility had been limited.

84. **A representative of Canada** said that courts throughout Canada interpreted laws at all levels of government, including with respect to remedies, using the Constitution, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and international human rights law.

*The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.*