



International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

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Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

116th session

Summary record of the 3182nd meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Thursday, 27 November 2025, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Mr. Balcerzak

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

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

Combined twentieth to twenty-second periodic reports of Tunisia (continued)
(CERD/C/TUN/20-22; CERD/C/TUN/Q/20-22; CERD/C/TUN/QPR/20-22)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Tunisia joined the meeting via video link.*
2. **Ms. Boker-Wilson** (Country Task Force) said that the Committee would appreciate information on the scope and implementation of the Organic Act (No. 2018-50) on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, including an update on the establishment of the Committee to Combat All Forms of Discrimination and the National Commission to Combat Racial Discrimination. Given that Organic Act No. 2018-50 contained no definition of indirect discrimination, it would be interesting to know what action had been taken since 2018 to incorporate into domestic laws the forms of indirect or de facto racial discrimination outlined in article 4 of the Convention. The Committee would also welcome information on measures taken to develop a comprehensive strategy and a national action plan to combat racism, racial discrimination and intolerance.
3. The Committee would appreciate clarification regarding the national human rights institution. According to article 128 of the 2014 Constitution of Tunisia, the Higher Committee on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms was supposed to have been replaced by a new entity, the Human Rights Commission. Despite the adoption of the Organic Act (No. 2018-51) on the Human Rights Commission, it was not clear whether the Commission had actually been established and its members had been appointed.
4. The Committee would be interested to hear the delegation's comments concerning reports that, in May 2024, Tunisian authorities had launched an unprecedented crackdown on organizations and individuals that supported refugees and migrants, amid xenophobic and racist smear campaigns, and that at least 10 people remained in arbitrary pretrial detention, including 8 human rights defenders; that, in October 2024, financial authorities had opened investigations into over a dozen non-governmental organizations (NGOs), questioning staff on funding and activities that were protected by freedom of association; and that, since August 2025, Tunisian authorities had temporarily suspended at least nine civil society organizations on the grounds of purported violations of the decree on the organization of associations or for investigations into their foreign funding.
5. The Committee would appreciate updated information on the implementation of a number of decrees that included provisions aimed at combating racial discrimination and racist crimes in specific areas, namely Decree No. 2011-88 on the organization of associations and Decree No. 2011-87 on the organization of political parties, which prohibited associations and political parties, respectively, from adopting in their statutes, statements, programmes or activities any incitement to violence, hatred, intolerance or discrimination based on religion, sex or region, and Decree No. 2011-115 on freedom of the press, printing and publishing.
6. The Committee would welcome details of the measures taken by the State Party to combat racist hate speech, including in political discourse, in the media and online, and an update on the activities of the Independent High Authority for Audiovisual Communication, including progress on the project to monitor discourse of incitement in the media. It would also be interested to hear more about the implementation of legislation and policies to ensure that the police and other law enforcement agents did not engage in racial discrimination, including racially motivated violence and practices that amounted to racial profiling. Lastly, the Committee would like updated and detailed information on complaints registered with the courts or any other national institution relating to acts of racial discrimination, racist hate speech and racist hate crimes since 2020, including investigations, prosecutions, convictions, penalties and reparations.
7. **A representative of Tunisia** said that the Tunisian State guaranteed protection and access to justice for victims of racial discrimination, hate speech and hate crimes in

accordance with its international obligations and national legislation, primarily the Organic Act (No. 2018-50) on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. Tunisian courts at all levels were authorized to impose criminal penalties on perpetrators of such offences. In 2024, a total of 14 cases had been brought under the Organic Act. Ten cases had been brought before the district courts, of which 9 had been dismissed and 1 was still pending; two cases had been brought before the courts of first instance and two before the courts of appeal. There had been a total of 18 defendants involved in the 14 cases – 10 men and 8 women.

8. Social and legal assistance were provided to victims of discrimination, especially vulnerable categories such as abused children, persons with disabilities, migrants, refugees, asylum-seekers and older persons. Assistance was provided by the judicial guidance offices located in all courts of first instance. In trafficking cases, the National Authority to Combat Trafficking in Persons provided victims with counselling services, advised them on their rights and judicial and administrative procedures in a language they understood and helped them apply for legal aid. Victims of discrimination were entitled to legal aid subject to certain conditions, although those conditions were waived for some categories of victims, such as women victims of gender-based violence.

9. In accordance with Organic Act No. 2018-50, measures were taken to prevent any discrimination against individuals in custody or serving prison sentences. The Directorate General for Prisons and Rehabilitation was committed to upholding human rights and combating discrimination in prisons, in line with international standards. It provided intensive training programmes for prison staff, based on the concepts of equality and cultural diversity, and organized regular awareness-raising sessions for all inmates to promote tolerance and prevent hate speech. The Ministry of Justice ensured that foreign nationals had equal opportunities to be granted amnesty or conditional release, without any discrimination. It took any complaints of discrimination seriously and adopted the necessary disciplinary and administrative measures against those responsible, in addition to initiating legal proceedings against them.

10. **A representative of Tunisia** said that Organic Act No. 2018-50 provided a strong legal basis for prosecuting all criminal acts involving racial discrimination. A proposal on the establishment of the National Commission to Combat Racial Discrimination was currently under consideration. The aim was to operationalize the Commission by appointing the members, who would be tasked with collecting and monitoring data related to racial discrimination, reporting violations and proposing and designing strategies and policies for the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination and the eradication of racial stereotypes, in coordination with the relevant ministries and other entities. The Commission would propose action plans to prevent and combat all manifestations of racial discrimination, particularly in the fields of education, sports, health, culture and the media. In cooperation with various stakeholders, it would organize awareness-raising, training and education programmes to combat all forms of racial discrimination in public and private bodies. In addition, the Commission would issue opinions on draft legislation and regulations related to racial discrimination.

11. **A representative of Tunisia** said that the Ministry of the Interior had taken the necessary measures to ensure that the members of the security forces under its authority did not engage in any form of racial discrimination and performed their duties in accordance with the law and applicable international instruments. The regulatory framework governing the conduct of officers had been brought into line with international standards, in particular those established in the Convention. The 2023 Code of Conduct for internal security forces under the Ministry of the Interior included several provisions on combating racial discrimination and the importance of treating people without discrimination, regardless of their sex, colour, nationality or origin, social status, political affiliation or religious beliefs.

12. The Ministry sought to spread a culture of human rights among its personnel through training, awareness-raising and the exchange of best practices. Human rights, including issues related to the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination, had been incorporated into the curricula for basic and continuing education at all levels, based on relevant national legislation and international treaties ratified by Tunisia. Lessons covered the concept of “victim” in national legislation and the assistance and support mechanisms available to them, in particular under Organic Act No. 2018-50.

13. The Ministry was also working to strengthen its inspection and control system. A code of conduct and ethics for inspectors had been adopted. The Ministry's various inspection bodies were responsible for investigating and addressing violations or abuses by personnel.

14. **Mr. Guissé** (Country Rapporteur), recalling the statement issued by the Committee in April 2023 under its early warning and urgent action procedure, in which it had urged the Tunisian authorities to publicly condemn and distance themselves from racist hate speech by political actors, public and private figures and the media, and to take all necessary measures to prevent and combat all forms of racial discrimination, in particular hate speech against black Africans, incitement to racial hatred, and xenophobic and racist violence targeting mainly sub-Saharan Africans and black Tunisian citizens, said that the Committee would appreciate updated information on the legislative and policy frameworks relating to refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless persons, including the drafting of the asylum bill that had been pending since 2021, bill No. 82/2024 on regulating the expulsion of undocumented migrants, and the campaign entitled "Strengthening the security fabric and reducing irregular stay in Tunisia". Specifically, it wished to know what measures were being taken to combat racially motivated activities targeting detained migrants and asylum-seekers, to grant access to the territory of the State Party to persons in need of international protection, to respect the principle of non-refoulement and to investigate allegations of forcible removals and excessive use of force by law enforcement officials against migrants. The Committee would welcome detailed information on specific measures taken to prevent and combat migrant smuggling and on the situation of undocumented migrants. In view of reports that migrant workers, particularly those of sub-Saharan origin, faced severe restrictions in accessing formal employment due to legal requirements such as residence permits and national preference clauses, forcing many of them into informal work without social protection, and given that migrant women were particularly vulnerable to exploitation, the Committee would be interested to hear about any legislative or policy measures taken to protect migrant workers, particularly in the informal sector, from exploitation and abuse and how the State Party addressed the intersectional vulnerabilities of migrant women working in unregulated sectors.

15. In view of the fact that, between June 2023 and May 2025, the Tunisian authorities had deported at least 11,500 refugees and migrants in various collective expulsions, the Committee would like to know what measures were being taken to end the practice of collective and summary expulsions and what procedural safeguards, such as the right to an individual assessment of entitlement to protection, mutual legal assistance and suspensive remedies, had been introduced or were being considered. The Committee would also appreciate up-to-date information on the Ouardia reception and orientation centre in Tunis, which was allegedly being used as an administrative detention centre where asylum-seekers and migrants were illegally detained for indefinite periods before being returned to their countries of origin or to other countries.

16. The Committee would be interested to learn about the scope and implementation of the memorandum of understanding concluded between Tunisia and the European Union in July 2023 concerning a new comprehensive strategic partnership focusing on several areas, including migration, which provided, among other things, for the training and capacity-building of Tunisian border guards.

17. **A representative of Tunisia** said that the security units responsible for border control monitored and protected the national territory in accordance with the applicable national legislation, taking into account international standards. Given that irregular migration posed a threat to security and stability due to its links to various criminal phenomena such as terrorism, organized crime and human trafficking, Tunisia, like other countries, was taking the necessary measures to address irregular migration and its repercussions in a manner that ensured respect for national sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as relevant international standards.

18. The relevant departments of the Ministry of the Interior took the necessary measures to protect migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers and safeguard their rights without discrimination. All persons present in the national territory were afforded all legal guarantees without discrimination and could lodge complaints on an equal footing with others, thus guaranteeing their right to access to justice and legal protection, as enshrined in international

instruments and applicable national legislation. Complaints could be submitted in person, by calling the National Guard (193) or the police (197), or through an international or national organization. Migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers were provided with assistance, medical care and basic necessities within the limits of available resources.

19. With regard to allegations of excessive use of force, it should be emphasized that the relevant entities within the Ministry of the Interior were committed to dealing with migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers in accordance with the law and ensuring respect for human rights by intervening promptly and effectively in the event of any violations against them and undertaking to investigate all complaints filed. Administrative investigations and criminal proceedings, where appropriate, were opened in relation to any personnel alleged to have committed a violation in the performance of their duties.

20. Despite having ratified the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol and the Organization of African Unity Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, Tunisia did not yet have a national legal framework governing asylum, which meant that refugee status determination was still conducted by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Various options were currently being considered with a view to taking responsibility for granting refugee status.

21. The memorandum of understanding between the European Union and Tunisia covered five areas: macroeconomic stability; economy and trade; green energy transition; people-to-people contacts; and migration and mobility. With regard to migration, the memorandum stressed the importance of enhancing cooperation in combating and reducing irregular migration flows and saving human lives and the intention of both sides to address the root causes of irregular migration, such as unemployment and instability. The parties agreed to promote sustainable development in disadvantaged areas with high migratory potential by supporting empowerment and employability of Tunisian people in vulnerable situations, in particular through support for vocational training, employment and the private sector, and to promote legal migration channels. Both parties agreed to continue working together to address the challenges posed by the increase in irregular migration within Tunisia and the European Union and to support the return and readmission from the European Union of Tunisian nationals in an irregular situation and the return of irregular migrants present in Tunisia to their countries of origin, in accordance with international law. The European Union agreed to endeavour to facilitate legal mobility between the two parties, including by reducing delays, costs and administrative procedures in connection with the granting of visas. Any programmes implemented under the memorandum must be in compliance with the obligations arising from international instruments duly ratified by Tunisia. Tunisia had not participated and would not participate in any international, regional or bilateral system or mechanism that contravened human rights. In 2023, in a letter to the European Commission and the Tunisian authorities concerning the implementation of the memorandum of understanding, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights had welcomed the commitment of the two parties to respecting the dignity and human rights of persons in transit and to promoting development efforts and addressing the root causes of human mobility.

22. **A representative of Tunisia** said that Tunisia had ratified the most important international instruments relating to trafficking in persons, in particular the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. The Organic Act (No. 2016-61) on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Persons was aligned with relevant international standards and was intended to prevent and combat all forms of exploitation to which persons, especially women and children, might be subjected. It set out penalties for perpetrators and protective measures and assistance for victims.

23. The National Authority to Combat Trafficking in Persons had been established within the Ministry of Justice pursuant to the Organic Act. The National Authority's membership comprised representatives of various ministries and competent entities, members of civil society working in the field of human trafficking and a media expert; since 2024, it had been headed by a senior judge. The National Authority received an annual allocation from the budget of the Ministry of Justice. In 2024 and 2025, the human resources framework had been strengthened and logistical and technical support had been provided. The National Authority, with the support of international organizations and in cooperation with the relevant

ministries, had organized training sessions, workshops and train-the-trainer courses for a range of stakeholders, including judges, prosecutors, ministerial staff and police officers, on the proper application of the Organic Act and the protection of victims' rights. In 2025, in collaboration with international partners such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, a significant number of basic and specialized training courses had been organized for criminal court judges from various governorates, including on such aspects as distinguishing between the offences of human trafficking and migrant smuggling.

24. Several programmes had also been implemented to raise public awareness of the dangers of trafficking in persons and to showcase the work of the security forces in dismantling trafficking networks and protecting the rights of victims. Tunisia regularly sent high-level delegations to participate in international and regional meetings, conferences and training activities, thus helping to strengthen international and regional judicial cooperation in that area. The National Authority continued to work on developing a national strategy to prevent trafficking in persons and the corresponding implementation mechanisms. It also collected data on human trafficking for inclusion in a database. The National Authority received notifications of suspected human trafficking, some of them from international organizations, and forwarded them to the competent judicial authorities. In 2024, approximately 200 trafficking cases had been brought before the Tunisian courts, and convictions had been handed down against more than 60 people, including both foreign and Tunisian nationals. The National Authority also referred requests from trafficking victims wishing to return voluntarily to their countries of origin to the relevant authorities.

25. **Mr. Guissé** said that, in view of reports that there was no procedure in place to identify victims of trafficking among sub-Saharan migrants who were arrested, which naturally exposed them to the risk of detention and deportation, the Committee would welcome information on the implementation of the Organic Act (No. 2016-61) on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Persons, including any plans to introduce a protocol for the early identification of victims of trafficking. He would also appreciate a response to his question on the Ouardia reception and orientation centre, as well as the delegation's comments on a number of individuals who had been arbitrarily detained at the centre, including the former head of an association of African students in Tunisia, a student from Cameroon, who had been detained in March 2024.

26. **Ms. Boker-Wilson** said that she would appreciate a response to her question on the status of the State Party's national human rights institution and the crackdown on NGOs in Tunisia. While the information provided by the delegation on the number of prosecutions in 2024 was appreciated, she would still like to have statistics for 2021–2023 and 2025 and would like to know whether any of the cases brought in 2024 had involved racial discrimination by police officers. She would also welcome information on the roll-out of any policies to combat racial discrimination since 2018.

27. She would be interested to hear the delegation's response to the disturbing reports about violations during maritime interceptions in Tunisia involving reckless, unlawful and violent actions by the Tunisian coastguard, as well as reports of sexual and gender-based violence and of torture and ill-treatment by Tunisian security authorities, particularly during interceptions and expulsions. She would also like to know whether the State Party had any specific legislation protecting the rights of migrant workers.

28. **Mr. Yeung Sik Yuen** said that the delegation might comment on reports that the decree on cybercrime issued in 2022 had introduced harsh penalties for the vague and overly broad offence of spreading false news and rumours and was being used to silence the media and those critical of the Government. It might also provide an update on the situation following the President's dissolution of the Supreme Judicial Council in 2022 and the dismissal of 49 judges and prosecutors.

29. **Ms. Stavrinaki** asked what measures the State Party was taking to ensure that, in cases where persons, especially immigrants, had either suffered violence or been reported missing, the families or other interested parties had access to justice.

30. **Mr. Tlemçani** said that he would welcome information on the reported suspension of the activities of a number of civil society organizations that worked with migrants, including the Tunisian Forum for Economic and Social Rights and the Tunisian

Women's Association for Democracy, as well as the detention of Ms. Saadia Mosbah, the president of the anti-racism association Mnemty, and of Ms. Sherifa Riahi, former director of the association Terre d'asile Tunisie.

31. **A representative of Tunisia** said that Organic Act No. 2016-61 was in line with international standards and was applied by the Tunisian courts. The National Authority to Combat Trafficking in Persons had issued guidelines for stakeholders, including commercial transporters, labour inspectors, child protection specialists, social workers, border control authorities and all those involved in monitoring and reporting trafficking operations. The National Authority played an important role in facilitating communication between the various entities involved at the national level, coordinating their efforts and representing them at the national and international levels.

32. **A representative of Tunisia** said that foreign nationals enjoyed the same legal protections as Tunisians. Irregular migrants and asylum-seekers arriving from neighbouring countries were treated in accordance with international human rights law and international humanitarian law. Military units operating to protect Tunisian land, sea and air borders were committed to applying the law relating to entry into areas under Tunisian jurisdiction, without discrimination between migrants and asylum-seekers and Tunisian citizens. Persons found to be entering the national territory unlawfully were immediately handed over to the internal security forces, which referred them to the competent judicial authorities for legal proceedings to be brought against them, in accordance with national law and international agreements ratified by Tunisia.

33. During search and rescue operations at sea, military units sought to respond to calls for help and distress signals issued by all parties with the speed and efficiency required to save human lives. They ensured that individuals, especially women and children, received the necessary medical and psychological care as quickly as possible in a manner that respected their dignity and human rights. The Ministry of Defence ensured that all military personnel were aware of the relevant obligations arising from national and legal instruments in the fields of human rights, international humanitarian law and international law relating to the protection of refugees, in addition to keeping abreast of all developments in that field and organizing training courses on the subject.

34. **A representative of Tunisia** said that Tunisia had ratified all the main International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions related to migrant workers and precarious work and was making efforts to eliminate all forms of precarious employment in compliance with its obligations under those instruments. A law enacted in 2025 had introduced amendments to the Labour Code concerning the regulation of employment contracts and various measures to protect workers from precarious employment and abuse. Under the Labour Code, no distinction was made between Tunisian and foreign workers in terms of rights and obligations, and the labour inspectorates of the Ministry of Social Affairs addressed all violations accordingly. When conducting inspections, they sought to identify exploitation or abuse of workers, applying penalties in accordance with the laws in force. Efforts were being made to protect the rights of workers in the informal sector, in particular migrant workers.

35. **A representative of Tunisia** said that measures had been taken to improve the situation of refugees, migrants and asylum-seekers with regard to employment. Tunisia had ratified more than 60 international conventions relating to labour and economic and social rights, including all eight ILO fundamental conventions. Employment was a priority in various economic and social policies. The Government was committed to promoting social cohesion by supporting vulnerable and marginalized groups. The National Employment Strategy and the five-year development plan for 2026–2030 focused on achieving equal employment opportunities for all in all regions, in line with the specific characteristics of different groups, in order to reduce unemployment and create decent jobs with fair wages. Articles 258–268 of the Labour Code governed the employment of foreigners in Tunisia and the procedures in place to protect their rights. Specific legislation that included provisions on the employment of foreign nationals and the provision of decent work for migrants had been enacted, such as the laws on investment and mining. Projects related to the protection of migrant workers' rights had been undertaken in the framework of international cooperation programmes, such as the ILO Fair Recruitment Initiative. The Government of Tunisia had

submitted a voluntary national report on its progress in implementing the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, which included addressing the causes of migration.

36. **A representative of Tunisia** said that, although steps towards the establishment of the Human Rights Commission had been taken, the parliament had never elected its members. The most important human rights institution was currently the Higher Committee on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, established in 1991. As the new Constitution of July 2022 did not provide for the establishment of a constitutional human rights body, there were no constitutional grounds for establishing a new institution, especially as the Higher Committee had sufficient resources to carry out its work.

37. The delegation rejected the references by some Committee members to the repression of the activities of associations. The freedom to establish associations was guaranteed under article 40 of the Constitution. Legally established associations worked in partnership with State institutions and ministries to achieve common goals, and many received funding from the State budget. The arrests of the association representatives mentioned had not been related to association activities but to offences committed. The Tunisian Government had submitted responses to a number of communications in that connection from special procedures of the Human Rights Council, particularly the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, which were available on the website of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. The activities of certain associations had been suspended in accordance with Decree No. 2011-88 on the organization of associations after they had failed to comply with written warnings requesting them to complete all the administrative and legal procedures required by law.

38. **A representative of Tunisia**, referring to the alleged violations in the expulsion of migrants, said that in the Secretary-General's report on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration ([A/76/642](#)), Tunisia was cited as an example in terms of saving lives and decent work.

39. **A representative of Tunisia** said that an important element of the Tunisian approach to irregular migration was the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programme, implemented in cooperation with the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The Government was committed to ensuring that irregular migrants returned to their countries of origin in a voluntary and safe manner that preserved human dignity and was in line with the country's international obligations. Since January 2025, the Programme had facilitated the voluntary return of 7,668 migrants: 6,011 men, 978 women, 324 girls and 355 boys. Since its launch in 2023, it had facilitated the return of more than 17,000 migrants. Under the Programme, all returning migrants received individual support tailored to their needs, including psychological and social support, economic assistance and referral to community services in their country of origin. During the review of the national report of Tunisia on the implementation of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights in October 2025, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights had welcomed the cooperation between Tunisia and IOM to ensure the voluntary return of irregular migrants to their countries of origin.

40. **Ms. Boker-Wilson** said that the Committee would appreciate information on the review of educational curricula to include the values of human rights, democracy, freedom, equality, tolerance, dialogue and coexistence and the rejection of violence, extremism and hatred, including efforts to combat racial discrimination across all school curricula and teacher training programmes. It would also welcome an update on any progress made in the formulation of a national action plan aimed at disseminating a culture of diversity and coexistence and at endorsing the concepts of equality and non-discrimination on racial grounds, as mentioned in the State Party report. Lastly, the Committee would be interested to hear about measures taken to raise awareness among the general public, civil servants, law enforcement officers and judicial authorities about the importance of ethnic and cultural diversity and tolerance.

41. **A representative of Tunisia** said that the Ministry of Education was committed to raising awareness and providing training on combating racial discrimination in the education system and spreading a culture of citizenship, peace and human rights through a series of measures. Reference documents had been prepared based on an approach that respected

children's rights and promoted their protection from all forms of violence and discrimination. A democratic awareness kit had also been developed for primary and secondary education; its purpose was to raise awareness of democratic values, educate pupils about citizenship and teach them to live with others and reject violence and hatred. A code of conduct on peace and citizenship had also been drawn up for all educational institutions.

42. **A representative of Tunisia** said that the Ministry of Justice had developed an education programme on human rights, including the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination, for the judiciary and prison and police officers. The principles of the Convention had been incorporated into the human rights component of the basic judicial training curriculum. Between 2022 and 2025, trainees had completed assignments on various topics related to combating racial discrimination, including victims in racial discrimination cases and the status of refugees in Tunisian law. In the context of continuing education, the Higher Institute of the Judiciary organized lectures, seminars and specialized courses on a range of human rights-related issues. Between 2022 and 2025, 1,311 judges, of whom approximately 16 per cent were women, had participated in training courses on human rights and combating racial discrimination. The Ministry of Justice and the judiciary participated in activities organized by the Euro-Arab Judicial Training Network and the European Programme for Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals on issues related to human rights and combating racial discrimination.

43. **A representative of Tunisia** said that the Ministry of the Interior attached great importance to human rights training and capacity-building for its personnel. Ongoing training for law enforcement officers included comprehensive programmes on human rights, based on the relevant international instruments and national legislation. Both basic and continuing training programmes included practical exercises, such as simulation exercises, role-playing and case studies. The Ministry had organized several study and awareness days on the Code of Conduct for internal security forces for personnel at all levels; between 2024 and September 2025, 118 training courses had been run at the central and regional levels, attended by 2,261 people.

44. **A representative of Tunisia** said that efforts were being made at all levels of government to spread a culture of tolerance. The Ministry of Religious Affairs, for example, worked with religious leaders of all faiths to promote a culture of acceptance of others, regardless of colour or beliefs. Religious leaders organized educational activities and events with a view to bringing people together and fostering dialogue, without discriminating between Tunisians and migrants. Such activities had been attended by many migrants from sub-Saharan Africa. The Ministry encouraged religious leaders to stress in their sermons the need to respect humanity, preserve its dignity and avoid discrimination and exclusion that bred tension and alienation.

45. **A representative of Tunisia** said that the National Migration Observatory attached to the Ministry of Social Affairs organized training courses for social workers who came into contact with migrants in vulnerable situations and for labour inspectors to enable them to properly protect the rights of migrant workers. The Observatory also conducted research on migration, including on such issues as the exploitation of migrants and the social nature of migration for certain groups. The Observatory had concluded a number of bilateral agreements with research centres at Tunisian universities with a view to encouraging students to engage in research in the field of migration.

46. **A representative of Tunisia** said that large numbers of foreign students, especially from sub-Saharan Africa, were welcomed into higher education institutions in Tunisia every year. In the 2022/23 academic year, students from sub-Saharan Africa had made up 81.8 per cent of the African student population, and African students had made up 80 per cent of the foreign student population. Throughout Tunisia, at the beginning of the academic year, a special day, attended by students, professors and university officials, was organized to welcome and integrate students into the university environment with a view to promoting a culture of non-discrimination, tolerance and acceptance of others. In 2019, a guide had been developed for foreign students studying at public and private Tunisian universities to introduce the various university services, accommodation, transport and activities, including cultural and sporting activities, on offer.

47. **Mr. Guissé** said that he would like to know what specific legislative, judicial or other measures the State Party was taking to address the cultural legacy of slavery, which persisted in the use of surnames that marked the descendants of enslaved people, such as the prefix “Atig” meaning “liberated by”. It would also be interesting to hear whether any efforts were being made to raise public awareness of the situation of black Tunisians. He would also appreciate a reply to his earlier question on the Ouardia centre.

48. **Ms. Boker-Wilson** said that she would like clarification on whether the establishment of religious associations was permitted in the State Party, given that there appeared to be a Jewish association in operation, and on the situation of the Baha’i faith specifically.

49. **Mr. Sibande** said that he would welcome an update on the situation since February 2023, when the President had said, in a statement before the National Security Council, that the arrival of sub-Saharan migrants was part of a criminal plot to make Tunisia just another African country and not a member of the Arab and Islamic world, sparking a wave of violence against migrants and asylum-seekers. He would also like an update on the 80 people – political opponents, activists, lawyers, journalists, human rights defenders and social media users – reportedly detained on political grounds and information on any measures taken to ensure that people were not imprisoned for their political beliefs.

50. **Mr. Yeung Sik Yuen** said that he would like to hear a response to his question on the composition of the Supreme Judicial Council following the events of 2022.

51. **Mr. Diaby** said that he would welcome information on the situation of black Tunisian children, who were often the victims of bullying at school, whether there were any measures in place to protect them and what steps the State Party intended to take to represent the diversity of the Tunisian population in textbooks. He would like to know what was being done to ensure the operationalization of the National Commission to Combat Racial Discrimination.

52. Recalling General Assembly resolution 48/134 on national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights, he wondered whether the State Party was prepared to reconsider its position in order to ensure that Tunisia had a national institution that was fully compliant with the Paris Principles.

53. In his capacity as focal point for reprisals, he had received reports of intimidation against a dozen people in connection with their participation in the preparations for the dialogue with the Committee. The delegation might comment on those reports and mention any measures taken to protect members of civil society against reprisals.

54. **A representative of Tunisia** said that the delegation categorically rejected the claim, repeated by several members, that a racist campaign was being waged against sub-Saharan migrants in Tunisia. The treatment of migrants was humane and lawful; arrests were made only in cases involving acts that constituted offences punishable under Tunisian law. All arrest, judicial and detention procedures were carried out in accordance with the fair trial and other provisions of Tunisian law, which applied to all persons present on Tunisian soil. Following a series of amendments made in 2016, the Code of Criminal Procedure was now in line with international standards. Migrants who committed offences in Tunisian territory were entitled to the same legal protections as Tunisian citizens. Under the Act (No. 2001-52) on the Organization of Prisons, upon admission to prison, individuals were assigned to cells on the basis of sex, age, offence and status as first-time or repeat offenders. Foreign prisoners were entitled to comprehensive medical care on an equal footing with Tunisian prisoners.

55. **A representative of Tunisia** said that, in accordance with the law on associations, the establishment of religious associations was not permitted. There were no Jewish associations operating in the country, only administrative councils that organized the practice of the Jewish faith in synagogues. The Baha’i community had submitted an application for the establishment of a Baha’i association, but it had not been granted, in accordance with the law.

56. **A representative of Tunisia** said that, in response to the racist acts against sub-Saharan migrants that had been promoted online in 2023, the Government, in coordination with civil society, had activated hotlines for the reporting of violations

committed during that period. Affected persons had been able to request assistance and legal advice through the hotlines.

57. During the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the Government, in cooperation with national and international organizations, had conducted a campaign to ensure the provision of vaccinations and assistance to migrants from sub-Saharan Africa, regardless of their immigration status, within the limits of available resources. Priority had been given to persons accompanied by children, pregnant women and persons with disabilities. A dedicated website had been set up to provide information and support to foreigners in Tunisia during the pandemic.

58. **A representative of Tunisia** said that a committee had been set up to determine the best interests of migrant children in the context of voluntary return. It comprised representatives of the Office of the Delegate for Child Protection, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and IOM. The safety and well-being of the child were given top priority in any return decision. The committee reviewed the child's case, including the reasons for migration, how he or she had arrived in Tunisia and his or her family situation, while also evaluating the security conditions in the country of origin, the individual's desire to return and the availability of protection, care and a secure environment, as well as the possibility of social and educational reintegration. A written decision was then issued approving the return or postponing the decision until corroborating information was received. Provision was made for follow-up after the child's return, in coordination with the child's family, the relevant authorities and the IOM office in the country of destination.

59. **Ms. Tlakula** (Follow-up Rapporteur) said that, in its concluding observations, the Committee would request the State Party to provide information, within one year of the adoption of those observations, on measures taken to follow up on a number of recommendations. The Committee hoped that the State Party would comply with the request, as it had not submitted a follow-up report after the last review in 2009.

60. **Mr. Guissé** said that the Committee was grateful to the delegation for what had been a very constructive dialogue, despite the initial technical difficulties. It regretted, however, that the dialogue had not taken place in person. Given that more than 15 years had passed since the previous dialogue, there had been much to discuss. Hate speech and the stigmatization of migrants had been among the main issues raised by the Committee, in line with the statement it had issued in 2023, its general recommendation No. 35 (2013) on combating racist hate speech and the forthcoming joint general recommendation developed with the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families on general guidelines for eradicating xenophobia towards migrants and others perceived as such. He hoped that additional written information would be forthcoming on some of the questions that had not been fully addressed during the dialogue.

61. **A representative of Tunisia** said that his delegation appreciated the comments made by the Committee during the dialogue. The National Commission for the Coordination, Preparation and Submission of Reports and Follow-up to Recommendations on Human Rights would work in cooperation with all relevant national institutions to follow up on the implementation of the recommendations made in the Committee's concluding observations and evaluate the progress made in incorporating them into national policies and strategies. Tunisia valued its cooperation with the Committee and welcomed its support, particularly in the areas of training and awareness-raising.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.